

**The Urban Regeneration of Metropolitan Lille**  
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## 1. Lille métropole

Lille Métropole is a large urban region in the heart of northern Europe, which extends over part of France and Belgium as far as Rostand, Holland. Two languages – French and Dutch - are spoken in the area and it covers three regions, Nord – Pas de Calais on the French side and Flanders and Vallon on the Belgian side.

It has around two million inhabitants, including 1.2 in France. With 42% of the population below the age of 25 years, it is the youngest area of France. The population is multi-lingual, with 3.2% foreign residents. The principal historic centres in this region are Lille, Tourcoing and Roubaix in France, Tournai and Kortrijk in Belgium. The French administrative region consists of two departments: Nord and Pas-de-Calais. They are situated around the *préfecture* of Lille, which is the largest city in the region.

Unlike most of the large *métropole* in France, which are organised with a centre and surrounding suburban area, the *métropole* of Lille has a city centre of modest proportions and numerous smaller centres around it, including Roubaix and Tourcoing, which create a polycentric layout.

The *Lille Métropole Communauté Urbaine* (LMCU) was created in 1968 in order to resolve the problems caused by the fragmentation of the area into small towns. This institution forms the centre of the administrative and political framework for the management and development of the French part of the area and brings together eighty-five municipal districts. It has the purpose of planning and coordinating the main metropolitan public services and is responsible for planning strategy, investment, economic development, environmental services and urban regeneration.

The area has always had a strategic role, thanks to its position on the border with Belgium and Holland. The process of industrialisation began in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, making the area one of the most important regions for heavy industry in France, thanks to the presence of coal mines, steel works and traditional textile manufactory.

The area has been victim of an economic decline which began in the 1960s with the crisis in the textile industry, followed by the oil crisis of 1974. Between 1975 and 1984 there has been a reduction of 180,000 jobs and the unemployment level has risen to 14%. In particular, between 1993 and 2003 the textile and clothing sectors have lost 37% and 68% respectively of their workforce. The impact has been devastating because the area was not able to foresee the implications of the crisis, adapting and diversifying its economic structure. The crisis pushed many parts of the metropolis, such as Roubaix and Tourcoing, into a spiral of poverty and of urban and economic decay.

The level of unemployment in the region dropped considerably between 1994 and 2001, but subsequently made a slight improvement. In 2005 the amount of work available in Lille grew by 1.8%, compared with 5% at national level.

	<b>Unemployment level 31/12/04</b>	<b>Variation 12/03-12/04</b>	<b>Variation 12/99-12/04</b>	<b>Variation 12/94-12/04</b>
Lille arrondissement	12.9%	+0.2%	+0.3%	-1,1%
Work area of Lille	12%	+0.3%	+0.3%	-0,7%
Work area of Roubaix-Tourcoing	14.4%	0%	+0.1%	-1,8%
Nord-Pas-De-Calais Region	12.9%	0%	-1.4%	-2,9%
French metropolitan cities	9.9%	0%	-0.3%	-1,8%

Source: Agence de development et de urbanisme de Lille Métropole

During the 1980s, the LMCU and municipal authorities in the area launched a development programme which followed a strategy of cooperation between authorities through projects that aimed to unify the area. A series of events and decisions that have taken place since the 1990s have helped to trigger a new dynamic process of development, taking the direction of a conversion to the tertiary sector. This process has coincided with a new approach to strategic planning and production.

The concept of *Ville Renouvelée*<sup>1</sup> was created during this period, which forms the basis of the regeneration policies pursued by the LMCU and by the State since 1991. The strategy consists of carrying out an efficient management and use of potential resources available in the declining areas in order to improve their prestige. In the context of sustainable development, the purpose is to reconstruct the city upon the city, reusing its resources.

The *Ville Renouvelée* policy takes the form of a strategy extending to cover the agglomeration and a set of specific initiatives in the most critical areas:

- For the agglomeration, there is a desire to limit any urban expansion into natural or agricultural areas, giving priority to investment in remaining areas and promoting a sense of interdependence within the agglomeration.

<sup>1</sup> This concept is now one of the key aspects of the law on “solidarity and urban regeneration” of 2000 (SRU law)

- In the most critical areas, the purpose is to identify specific projects on the basis of the needs of the inhabitants and the potential resources available for the development.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Re-examine the urban and economic activities of the area
- Improve abandoned and polluted areas
- Improve the urban road system
- Co-ordinate and integrate approaches involving public participation and action
- Programmes for the renewal of areas and public buildings

The renewal policy is a central aspect of urban development, which is based upon a long-term commitment of local authorities and is aimed at increasing the trust of inhabitants and investors. The *Ville renouvelée* operates at local and regional level (*Contrat de Ville*, *Gran Project de Ville*, *Zone Franche Urbaine* and projects by the National Urban Regeneration Agency) or at European level (Urban I).

The *Schéma Directeur* is the main document in which the *Ville Renouvelée* is contained. This is a strategic plan drafted in 1997 and 2003, in which the development priorities for the metropolitan area are described up to 2015:

- international collaboration
- accessibility, through the strengthening of infrastructures at inter-regional level and within the region
- urban quality, conservation and improvement of the environment
- economic development, through the balance between industry and tertiary activity
- solidarity

In the last twenty years the region has received investment from central government and the European Union. The development of infrastructures has helped the re-launch of the area: the opening of the canal to the English Channel in 1994, the development of the TGV between Paris, Lille, and as far as London, Brussels, Amsterdam and the Rhineland (with the opening of Lille Europe station in 1994) and the improvement of the road network. Thanks also to its central position in the region, at the centre of the London-Brussels-Paris railway, there has been a recent re-launch of tourism.

In the context of European regeneration policies, ten districts of the cities of Tourcoing and Roubaix have been included in the Urban I programme for 1994. The URBAN programmes are modelled on a creative and innovative approach to the problems of urban redevelopment. These programmes have a high level of participation, seeking to involve the local population in all stages of the decision-making process. The programme was started in the *Zone de l'Union*, between Roubaix and Tourcoing, which has become the second development centre in the Lille agglomeration. The initial budget was 19.6 million Euros, 7 of which from the European Union, 7.1 from the State and 5.5 from the Region.

The actions carried out in Tourcoing have been the following: in the Epidème district, redevelopment of public spaces has been started with the creation of parks and a business services centre; social mediation and integration actions have been commenced, through seminars and actions involving the inhabitants; in Virolois a social centre has been set up and renovation has begun on the Youth and Culture Centre; in the Bourgogne district there has been a renovation of the social centre and organisation of a seminar to involve inhabitants in the projects.

At Roubaix, in the Epeule district, abandoned premises have been reused and training programmes have been started for traders; allotment gardens, a public park and a community centre have been created, and an abandoned area of land has been brought back into use for economic and cultural activities. In the Hommelet district, spaces have been created for cultural and social activities and a promotional film has been made for unemployed people.

The desire to attract private investment is clearly seen in the process of defining the main urban development projects that involve the ICT sector, other “creative” industries and the health sector. The regeneration is based on promoting creativity, favouring the transition from the manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based economy, also through the re-use of redundant industrial buildings.

The task of attracting investment has been entrusted to “centres of excellence”. Lille Métropole is carrying ahead several projects in this respect. Various examples are:

- The *Eurosanté* centre, an area dedicated to biology and health situated to the south of Lille, where there are seven hospitals, three university faculties (medicine, biology, dentistry), a specialist school for biomedical engineering and seventy five businesses specialising in the biomedical sector, in hospital supplies and in biomedical engineering. Along with Lyon and Toulouse, Lille is the French city with the highest number of advanced training institutions and schools of architecture, engineering and journalism. The universities of Lille are attended by around one hundred thousand students.
- *Haute Borne*, a centre for research and teaching and which offers services connected with the technological and scientific activities of the University of Lille 1.
- *Euratechnology*, situated to the south-east of Lille on the banks of the River Deule is a centre created to offer services for ICT-based businesses.
- *Euralille*, an international business centre opened in 1994 which includes forty five thousand square metres of space for hotels, a hundred thousand of commercial space, nine hundred for housing and one hundred and ten thousand for public infrastructures, as well as services, cultural and university centres.
- *Site de l'Union*, formerly an industrial site in the centre of *Lille Métropole*, on the border with Roubaix and Tourcoing, is the centre for textiles, marketing and distribution, providing accommodation for firms involved in the textile and distribution sector, in the graphic arts and in activities based on marketing; it also assists in the creation of new businesses in the tertiary, artisan and industrial sectors. Training, trade and research centres are helping to bring economic force to the area. Among the most important of these are the Centre Européen du Textile Innovant (CETi), a textile learning and teaching centre, an incubator and various specialist services

based in marketing. These services strengthen those that already exist in the area, such as *Le Fresnoy* and the CRRAV, a regional audiovisual resource centre.

### **Le Fresnoy**

This is a top-level artistic audiovisual training centre, under the artistic direction of Alain Fleisher. It was opened in 1997, co-funded by the Ministry of Culture and by the Nord-Pas de Calais Region, with the assistance of Tourcoing Municipal Authority. Created by Bernard Tschumi, it is situated what used to be a popular entertainment area, where the population would meet on a Sunday to dance, skate or see films. In the 1970s it entered into a period of crisis, as a result of the closure of shops and businesses.

*Le Fresnoy* has all of the production and post-production equipment in the field of picture and sound:

- a thousand square metres of film studios
- editing room
- sound creation studio
- film and video mixing room

The centre carries out a variety of activities:

- training: within the centre is a school for artists who come from various sectors of arts production, such as the plastic arts, cinema, photography, video, architecture, music, dance, ...
- production: thanks to the availability of professional technological equipment, the centre carries out artistic projects; the theoretical and practical field of work uses audiovisual languages on traditional, film-based and electronic supports (photography, cinema and video). Each of the artists at the school have a budget and production and distribution resources for carrying out their project. In addition they take part in the creation of projects together with guest artists-teachers.
- organisation of exhibitions and events: each year La Grande Nave and its adjoining spaces host three international exhibitions and various events, such as shows, concerts and meetings. These events include the annual "Panorama" exhibition, between the end of June and early July, which shows all of the year's productions by the young artists at Le Fresnoy and the guest artists-teachers.
- cinema seasons
- educational activities for schools
- media centre

The objective of regenerating the area is not only to increase its attractiveness but also to improve the population's trust in the city and to strengthen the sense of belonging to the area. This is the reason behind the participatory nature of many of the initiatives.

In addition to investment in large projects and infrastructures, the management of large events has been of fundamental importance. In order to give symbolic strength to the regeneration, Lille was a candidate for hosting the Olympic Games and it has been a European Cultural Capital. Large-scale events, as well as contributing towards changing the image of the city at national and international level, have also helped to change local perceptions. In fact, in 2004, the title of European Capital was given not just to the city of Lille but was shared with the entire region. This occasion has encouraged an increase in the pride of citizens in relation to *Lille Métropole* and a recognition of the changes that have taken place. During 2004 many derelict buildings were transformed into places of cultural production, called *Maisons Folies*<sup>2</sup>. Many of these were situated in the districts that were involved in the *Ville Renouvelée* project since the role of art and cultural was regarded as central to the quality of metropolitan life.

The latest stage in the regeneration of *Lille Métropole* is its inclusion in the national project for setting up centres of competitiveness, promoted in 2004 by the *Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire*<sup>3</sup> (CIADT), in order to encourage territorial development.

According to the definition of the CIADT, a centre of competitiveness is the result of a combination of three ingredients – businesses, training centres and research units - over the same area. In addition, three decisive factors are necessary: partnerships, R&D projects and international visibility. The government has set up a series of measures to help centres of competitiveness to emerge and to strengthen those which already exist. Financial aid of 1.5 million Euros has been provided over three years for the development of the centres. Ministers are required to apply 25 to 30% of the funds to innovative projects.

The LMCU has taken part in the project and has secured the establishment of five centres of competitiveness in the area:

- UpTex: an Innovative Textile centre, associated with the *Zone de l'Union* area with the aim of being a platform for technological skills, R&D and training which makes it possible to respond to the needs of the textile sector. The two principle lines of research and development will be aimed at the creation of innovative materials and the promotion

<sup>2</sup> *La Condition publique* in Roubaix was chosen as a *Maison Folies*.

<sup>3</sup> Inter-ministerial Committee for Territorial Management and Development

of production flexibility in order to respond swiftly to the consumer. Alongside the centre of competitiveness there have been created: the CETI, the *Quartier et Faubourg des Modes*, and the management of the *Zone de l'Union* for the high quality textile industry;

- **Commercial Industry:** the centre is associated with the *Zone de l'Union* and *Euratechnologies* sites. *Lille Métropole* is the area with the largest number of distribution companies in France with 110,000 employees and 55% of the national labour force in the sector, and more than thirty long-distance distribution and sales companies at international level (Auchan, La Redoute, Décathlon, Trois Suisses, Kiabi, Leroy Merlin etc).

The top ten companies in the metropolis in terms of business figures are the following:

Company name	Business	Business figures (M€)
Auchan France	Hypermarket	150 309
ATAC	Supermarket	3 671
Leroy Merlin France	Retail business	2 326
Castorama France	Retail business	2 220
Eurauchan	Business intermediary in food products	1 998
Petrovex	Purchase centres excluding food	1 661
La Redoute	Mail order sales	1 439
Supermarchés Match	Supermarkets	1 407
Dalkia France	Heat production and distribution	1 381
Ingram Micro	Sale of Computer and information equipment	985

Around 330 researchers work in laboratories, such as LIFL – a computer laboratory of great importance to Lille, IRCICA – research institute for advanced news and communications components, INRIA – research institute, LAGIS – automation, information engineering and signal laboratory, IEMN – electronics, microelectronics and nanotechnology institute.

This centre aims in particular to develop four areas of research: optimisation of the logistics chain for the traceability of products, the personalisation of the client relationship, the management and processing of news and development of e-services.

- **Nutrition Health Longevity:** in connection with the *Eurasanté* centre, a feature of the centre is the group of around twenty companies in the agricultural food and bio-technology industry that are concerned with human health, favouring the creation of 8,200 jobs in the region and 29,000 jobs around the world. This centre has the objective of positioning the region among the most innovative areas for “food and health” in Europe. Among the companies in the group are Bonduelle (agricultural food), Lesaffre (yeast production), Razzo (starch production), Genfit (biotechnology).
- **I-trans:** the objective with which it was launched was to become the main European centre for the planning, construction and maintenance of railway systems. Lille Metropole is the top French region in terms of railway transport (30% of national production, with 10,000 jobs, four construction companies and around a hundred subcontractors). It includes about forty partner firms including Bombardier, Alstom, Arbel Fauvel Rail, SNCF, RFF, Réseaux Ferrés de France, etc.
- **Domestic materials:** the centre focuses on chemical research and production of new materials for domestic use; in particular it is concerned with innovation of glass, pottery and paper materials in order to improve their properties and function, aiming at making them non-stick, easily cleanable, solid, recyclable, light and bacteria-free. It includes two world leaders in their sectors (the Arc International and Moquette companies) and brings together a network of regional SMEs (Système Productif Local/Métiers de la céramique de Desvre, papetiers de la Vallée de l'Aa, etc), with 27 firms and 790 researchers.

## 2. Roubaix case study

### 2.1 Introduction

Roubaix is an industrial city in the north-east of France close to the border with Belgium. It has a population of around 100,000 inhabitants and is about 15 km from the centre of Lille, the provincial capital. The two cities, along with Tourcoing and Villeneuve d'Ascq, are unified and form the heart of the metropolitan area. Roubaix and Lille were the most important textile cities. Roubaix concentrated on the production of woollen textiles and expanded in particular in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The population grew from 8,000 inhabitants in 1806 to 125,000 in 1900; initially the city attracted immigrants from other parts of Europe, then from North Africa. During the years of the two world wars and of the depression, the French textile industry saw an economic decline, but the real period of crisis began in the 1970s as a result of foreign competition. Several local companies survived the crisis, changing production and moving from the textiles sector to distance distribution and sale.

Employment in the textile industry dropped from 54,000 jobs in 1973 to 8,000 in 2000. The population of the city diminished and the proportion of foreign residents increased. Factories and shops closed. There was a lack of new investment and 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> of commercial spaces closed during the 1990s. The property market collapsed.

The economic problems of Roubaix were exacerbated by a process of abandonment of the Lille metropolitan area which began in the 1960s. The wealthier residents gradually left the heart of the industrial area and were replaced by a poorer population of foreign origin, attracted by the availability of public services. In the meantime, large retail outlets gradually attracted business in places outside the centre, bringing about, alongside the economic crisis, a reduction in retail businesses in the centre of Roubaix in the mid-1990s.

In the early 1990s, Roubaix was described as "the worst city in France" and was facing three levels of crisis:

- Economic, due to the collapse of the textile industry which led to a high level of unemployment, the closure of retail shops in the centre and a drop in house prices.
- Environmental, with urban decay provoked by economic stagnation, poverty and population movement. Unlike other French cities, in which there were problems in the outer-city areas (banlieues), Roubaix suffered inner city decay, as in Great Britain.
- Social, as a result of increased poverty, social marginalisation, high racial tension and a significant reduction in the population caused by emigration towards other cities.

## 2.2 Cultural investment at Roubaix

From the 19<sup>th</sup> Century up to the 1970s, there was a very low level of cultural activity in the city, due to the lack of cultural institutions. As from the 1970s and 1980s there has been investment in the arts, with the launch of a process of city planning. This process led, in an early stage, to the opening of a media centre, the *Colisée* and the *Ballets du Nord*. Then, in the 1980s, the *Atelier Populaire d'Urbanisme*, a residents action group, promoted an urban programme in conjunction with the Municipal authority that was more in line with the local textile traditions. Thanks to national public funding, the largest textile factory in France was transformed into the *Archives du Monde du Travail*, the *Euroteleport* was created, and also several universities.

An expansion policy was implemented in the 1990s which centred on the *Dans le Rue de la Danse*, *Samirami*, *Theatre en scene*, *l'Oiseau Mouche*, *Art point M* and its art centre. Culture is currently at the centre of several community projects and is used as a means for various strategies, both in terms of the economy as well urban redevelopment. Special attention has also been given to the arts in relation to the principal buildings such as the *Lycée Jean Rostand*, the future *Multiplex Village Road Show*, the creation of the *Saison Video* as part of *La Condition Publique* and the International Communications Centre situated in the *Eurotèleport* centre.

## 2.3 The importance of Lille in the regeneration of Roubaix

The urban regeneration of Roubaix cannot be examined without considering that of Lille, since the city stands within the Lille metropolitan area which is governed by the *Lille Métropole Communauté Urbaine*. The LMCU and Roubaix Municipal authority have shared responsibility for the development of the area. The reason for this joint strategy is connected with the fact that Lille could not attract investment if it continued to be associated with the decline of Roubaix and Tourcoing. It therefore felt the need to promote the development of the whole area.

The renewal of the city is attributed to P. Mauroy who was Prime Minister (1981-1984) and mayor of Lille (1973-2001). The *Lille Métropole Communauté Urbaine*<sup>4</sup> (LMCU) played a strategic role. In 1989 a "metropolitan agreement" was reached between the mayors of eighty-five cities, and in particular of the four main cities, and central government for the launch of a new *Contract de Ville* in the region. On the basis of the agreements, the cities undertook to support public investment in *Euralille* and agreed that the region be introduced onto the market in association with *Lille Métropole*, while LMCU agreed to expand the metropolitan railway system to Tourcoing and Roubaix and to undertake urban redevelopment in both centres, following the principle that the projects would be extended to the whole region. The agreement recognised the metropolitan area as a polycentric city.

There were financial benefits for Roubaix which had low tax revenue. In fact, most of the income of local authorities in France come from taxes relating to the professional associations and property taxes, which were low in Roubaix during the period of decline. With the LMCU it was possible to share the tax revenue and obtain resources for Roubaix from

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<sup>4</sup> LMCU was created in 1967, along with thirteen other metropolitan authorities. Its objective was to plan and coordinate public services at metropolitan level. The LMCU is now responsible for strategic planning, investment, economic development, environmental services and urban redevelopment processes.

central government, public agencies and financial institutions. In 1993 the *Comité Grand Lille*<sup>5</sup> was created by the industrial company Bonduelle, which brought together the key figures in Lille and played an important role in ensuring that all sectors were involved.

## 2.4 The regeneration of the city centre

Roubaix city centre has a large number of redundant buildings, such as former factories, empty shops, 19<sup>th</sup> century streets and abandoned commercial and civic buildings. In the early 1990s, the area lost value as a result of its negative external image, the high level of unemployment and the few opportunities on offer. The principal aim of the actions undertaken was to make the city centre a place that could attract private investment.

The aspect upon which most activity was concentrated was to change the image of the city, based on the principle that culture was a central part of the process of urban regeneration. In general terms, the strategy of Roubaix, and of the whole region, was based on identifying and strengthening the positive factors in order to increase competitiveness and pursue sustainable development.

Bearing in mind the numerous problems, the strategy necessary for regeneration brought together various aspects:

- 1 redefine the economic strategies of the city;
- 2 bring retail shops back into the city centre;
- 3 create a public space that is safe and attractive and promote the architectural heritage of the city;
- 4 develop a cultural programme to attract visitors, promote local identity and social cohesion;
- 5 improve the conditions of the buildings for the residents and to attract newcomers;
- 6 create a link between job and training opportunities for the local population and new investment.

### Principal activities

1. The principal activities followed for the first point of the strategy have been:
  - *Eurotéléport*, a communications centre, opened in 1993, which supplies optic fibre and other data networks to businesses involved in broadcasting.
  - *Zone Franche Urbaine*<sup>6</sup> in the city centre, established in 1997, enables companies in the area, in particular small companies, to make use of partial or total tax exemptions for five years if one third of their employees come from a specific local area.
  - Specialist textile district: space has been given to innovative or technical solutions in the textile industry and a strong support to research, education, design, production and marketing activities to support these niche areas. Roubaix is considered to be the “centre of excellence” for the textile industry. The LMCU and the local authority have supported various initiatives to encourage specialist businesses by creating an organisation to manage the district and which assists various selected small businesses during the start-up phase, stimulating collaboration, training, marketing and resource sharing. Businesses are encouraged to assume local staff, particularly from the more marginal groups.
2. The activities triggered off by the wish to bring retail shops into the city centre are the following:
  - The centre is being transformed into a shopping centre, not just through the creation of a foreign trade zone and loans to local businesses, but also through funding given to public-private partnerships with the support of the State bank, the *Caisse de Dépôts et Consignations*.
  - Ordering by post has been encouraged, in line with the local tradition in Roubaix, so that the large companies are able to sell from the city by mail order. Two factory outlets (l'Usine and McArthur Glen) have been built in the area. The creation of the second has been supported by the local authority which owned the land and gave it free of charge to the company, ensuring that it was served by public transport and car parking areas. The two outlets bring two million visitors a year and the shops in the centre have five million visitors a year.
3. To make the area safe and attractive, the civic buildings and the main square have been restored. The industrial buildings of architectural value have been included in the French cultural heritage list and licences have been given for their restoration through funding from the LMCU. New green spaces have been created and safety has been improved on the roads with supplementary policing.
4. The cultural life is seen as a key element in the regeneration strategy for the city in order to improve its image and identity and to encourage social cohesion and participation. The cultural projects include: *La Piscine*, formerly Art Deco public baths, converted into a Museum of Art and Industry, and *La Condition Publique*, a building originally used as a textile warehouse which has been transformed into a “cultural workshop”. These projects have played a key role in attracting visitors to Roubaix and in changing the way in which the city is

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<sup>5</sup> Created with the idea of providing opportunities for industry, NGOs, academics, and politicians to think strategically towards the future of the region. The committee supported Lille's candidature as European Cultural Capital.

<sup>6</sup> The Free Urban Area of Roubaix was established by the *decret* of 26 December 1996 and entirely covers the following districts: Alma, Cul de Four, Fosse aux Chênes, Roubaix Centre, Epeule and Sainte Elisabeth.

described by the national media. There has also been an increase in demand for housing in the area surrounding *La Condition Publique* and the *Piscine*, and the number of shops in these areas is growing. The area around *Piscine* is becoming a fashionable district for young artists, linked with the local college.

5. Housing improvement has been encouraged through various actions, aimed at improving the quality of life and attracting new people into the city:
  - local authority housing has been restored through central government funds.
  - Private home improvement grants have been made available through regional and LMCU funds.
  - Private construction of new housing has been encouraged.
6. Specific clauses have been included in contracts promoted by public authorities for the employment of local workers. For example, contracts in *La Condition Publique* encourage the employment of local small businesses; the creation of a roof garden has also been carried out through a sub-contract with a no-profit organisation that specialises in providing work and training for unemployed people. The municipal authority also negotiates contracts with private investors in order to encourage employment of the local population.

## 2.5 La Condition Publique

One of the key factors in the development strategy for the city of Roubaix has been the redevelopment of the Pile district and the jointly owned Canal area, in cooperation with Tourcoing. There are various industrial buildings and textile factories in this area which have been brought back into use. Among these, *La Condition Publique* is particularly important. This initiative forms part of a city policy of promoting access to the arts for everyone.

The group of buildings known by the name of *Nouveau Conditionnement* was built in 1901 for the Roubaix Chamber of Commerce. It is one of the first buildings in cement, with terraced roofing covered by a lawn. Used as a warehouse for cotton, silk and wool and for analysing their humidity in order to determine the “legal” market weight, it was of strategic importance for the regional wool industry since that time. Together with a textile laboratory (rebuilt in 1956), it consists of two vast warehouses separated by a “U” shaped internal road, covered by a glass roof.

Abandoned since 1972, *La Condition Publique* was listed in 1998 as an historic monument. It has recently been re-opened as a “cultural workshop”, managed by the Regional Authority, by the Department, by the Lille Urban Community Authority, by the City of Roubaix and by the State. The group, under the guidance of the architect Bouchain, in creating a large concert hall, a library, a restaurant, workshops, artists studios, recording studios and a Roubaix heritage centre, has sought to respect the history and characteristics of the existing building, even to the extent that the re-building work itself became a cultural activity of rediscovery.

There are various spaces inside the building: a cultural bazaar which offers products according to the programme, books selected for the *Les Liziere* bookshop in Roubet, CDs, music DVDs, t-shirts, etc.; under the glass roof there is a bar as well as entertainment spaces and places for meetings and exhibitions; the observatory used for an exhibition about *La Condition Publique*, its history, from its construction to its re-opening as a cultural and arts centre; a restaurant; a 1000 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space inside one of the former warehouses; to terraces with various functions: a place for scientific observation and a garden exhibition open to the public; a 140 metre internal road, covered by a glass roof, where there is entertainment, markets and other activities; the gallery, mainly dedicated to the graphic arts, which houses temporary exhibitions; a place for sound production and broadcasting; 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of spaces for artists, associations and arts organisations; the “factory”, a 1500 m<sup>2</sup> multi-functional space, situated in the second warehouse. *La Condition Publique* is also a place for training and production: seminars are organised for artists and spaces are offered for exhibitions, shows, installations, etc.

The centre contributes towards the improvement of the urban image, as well as the redevelopment of the Pile popular district to which it is situated. There are various leisure and entertainments activities in the area around this centre, as well as an expanding residential district. The number of people working at *La Condition Publique* and the influx of people generated by these structures has had a considerable influence on the improvement of the district. This effect has also been helped by the establishment in the area of related economic activities, such as craft workshops, catering services, accommodation for artists. It was the intention of the municipal authority to create *La Condition Publique* as a multi-cultural centre for artistic creation, education and distribution. It is a project that combines the organisation of exhibitions, shows and concerts with the provision of spaces for artists and projects which, on the one hand, supports professionalism and, on the other, strongly encourages the involvement of the population in the life of the district in which the building is situated. The project was launched in connection with the objectives of Lille Cultural Capital 2004 and was one of the *Maisons Folies* of Lille 2004.

## 2.6 The Results of the Regeneration

The process of re-generation in Roubaix has been an example of success and several goals have been achieved. In particular:

- The level of unemployment has dropped from 33% at the end of the 1980s to 22% in 2005, thanks to an improved local economic situation and to local employment initiatives.
- The cultural strategy has brought national and international recognition to the city and 15% of new jobs created are in the cultural industries.

- The image of Roubaix is a positive one and in particular the media have highlighted the improvements achieved.
- The city is gradually attracting once again the middle class which had left the city centre. New businesses are to be found as well as a demand for housing.
- The city centre has been regenerated with high profile retail activities and with an increased number of visitors.

### 3. Examples of re-use of industrial buildings

#### Motte-Bossut Cotton Mill.

Situated in the very centre of Roubaix, it is one of the most interesting and best known “industrial castles” in France. After the destruction of a “monster” mill in 1866 on the banks of the canal (now filled in), the new mill was built on the other bank of the canal between then and 1920. Its design was “fire-proof”, inspired by British technology that avoided the use of flammable materials. The decision by the Ministry to protect the mill as an historic building was greeted unenthusiastically by the city, which had planned to build a bus station on the site. Nevertheless, this measure saved the building when, in 1981, Motte-Bossut fell into crisis and had to close its business. Purchased by the city, sold to the State and promoted by President Mitterand as one of the great re-building projects, the building was converted into an archive and re-opened in 1993. Although the *Centre des Archives du Monde du Travail* conserves important records about companies and trade unions, its reading room is rarely crowded.

#### L'Usine.

The company Motte-Bossut Figli, established in 1892 for cutting, dying, preparation and sale of velvet, was based in this building in Avenue Alfred-Motte at the beginning of the 1900s. It is a large building, on a single level, with shed roofing (looking like the teeth of a saw) which housed dying, preparation and washing workshops. Another building at right-angles to the road, which is 160 metres long, housed the cutting and finishing workshops and warehouses on the second floor. Facing onto the road, whose embankment served as a link to the factory railway, the tower contained a water tank for fire safety purposes and also the velvet drying department. The factory closed in 1982 and was taken over by Dalle and transformed into a factory outlet called *L'Usine* (the Factory): eighty shops specialising in selling end-of-the-line and imperfect clothing have brought Roubaix a new form of commercial tourism and a reputation of being a “Bargain Paradise”. Except for the demolition of part of the ground floor workshop for car parking, the re-conversion of the velvet factory was able to take place with minimal building works.

#### Le courées Dubar et Dekien.

The *courée* became the characteristic form of worker housing in Roubaix during the city's industrial boom towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Around 1912, approximately 1,500 *courées* housed almost half of the population. These were generally privately built by small landowners, who constructed modest houses with two rooms of around ten square metres each, with a door and window opening onto the front. These houses were built side by side, on a narrow piece of land, often formerly a garden, around a courtyard in which there was a water pump and toilets. The inhabitants reached the *courée* along a passageway through a building facing onto the road, which was often a grocery shop or small café. The Dubar et Dekien *courées* (named after their owners), situated behind the Café Le Soho in Rue Jean-Moulin, are linked with some single-storey 1840s houses and others with an upper floor built between the 1860s and 1880s. . These twenty houses, with their small gardens and five small central sheds, were listed as historic monuments in 1998. In fact, although certain *courées* could be renovated and are still used as houses, these housing models, which had long been regarded as irreparably unhealthy, have become very rare. The city has a project for renovating sixteen of these houses to provide accommodation for the theatre company *Oiseau Mouche*. The other four will be preserved to provide a record of the workers houses of Roubaix and the living conditions inside the *courées*.

#### The Roussel site.

This factory was built in 1894 and belonged to François Roussel Padre e Figli (who at that time owned most of the Epeule district of Roubaix). The first group of buildings dating back to this period includes a boiler room whose architecture is reminiscent of a chapel. This contrasts with the simpler building on the road, dating from 1928 and constructed in reinforced concrete. The complex was redeveloped in 1999 by the architect Huet, who sought to leave the external appearance of the buildings unaltered and to preserve even the tiniest traces of the previous textile activity, such as the notches painted on the floor to indicate the positioning of the looms. Today, the factory provides accommodation for a textile garment company on the lower floors and, on the top floor, large rehearsal rooms for the *Ballet du Nord* and for the *Dans la Rue, la Danse* association, thereby symbolising the concept of urban renewal and a co-existence that is typical of Roubaix.

#### The Crouy Block.

Four floors high and closed by a square water tower, the old Toulemonde factory is a very good example of the mills that formed part of the urban fabric of Roubaix in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Its re-conversion at the end of the 1970s was one of the first operations carried out in France in an attempt to safeguard industrial buildings by reconverting them to new uses. Carried out by the architects Colboc, Philippon and Bardon on behalf of Sahnord, a company that rented out houses at moderate rates, the project includes two levels of car parks in the main building, over which is a pedestrian route through the floor of the building, which rises up a series of steps to the offices on the first floor and to the forty flats on the upper floors. The operation covers all of the old factory, covering around two hectares. Baptised the “Crouy Block” – from the name of one of the roads around it – this area has also seen the construction of other blocks of low-cost apartments

arranged around a new street, a square and a public garden. Various houses along the roads around the block were gradually renovated. Planned as a new area of open and shared city space, the block had to be protected by gates from gatherings by undesirable groups generated by the crisis. From 1988 the rooms in the old mill were taken over by the University of Lille, which set up its foreign languages course there.

#### **4. Key elements in the case study**

##### Approach to urban regeneration

- Sustainable urban regeneration requires a co-ordinated action both at regional and local level.
- The region is seen as polycentric and with interdependent centres.
- The promotion of culture is an integral part of the strategy.

##### Strategy, organisation and investment

- A significant aspect is the desire to make Lille an important European city, starting off from its geographic position.
- A formal agreement has been made between the cities in the region by which they undertake to support a co-ordinated regeneration of all principal centres.
- LMCU acts as strategic figure in planning and co-ordinating the urban regeneration; it is monitored by an assembly of members in each municipal authority.
- The regeneration strategy aims at building upon residual forces (e.g. textile industry).
- LMCU is active in channelling public and private funds.

##### Mechanisms for overcoming obstacles

- Lille, like many large cities in France, has a local political class that has been in power for some time and provides a strong leadership.
- The *Comité Grand Lille* provides a space for leaders from all sectors to meet together.
- The Roubaix Municipal Authority has shown strong determination in its projects to revitalise the city.
- Tax instruments and measures have been used to support the Roubaix strategy, such as EU Programmes, the European Cultural Capital and *Grands Projets Urbane*.
- There has been a strong determination by politicians to use every investment possibility to create local jobs.

##### Spreading of benefits

- From the beginning of the regeneration process the region has invested in the transport system that links the principal centres, thus providing greater opportunities for the inhabitants of Roubaix
- Contractual conditions have been created for marginalised groups and the inhabitants of the more problematic suburbs to be employment in new jobs.
- There has been investment in vocational training for new jobs.
- The cultural strategy aims at providing access to the local population and a series of cultural facilities.