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Europe/International Projects

The town of Bocholt is hosting the 8th German-Dutch Border Region Conference

The application period for the 2026 Grenzland Prize runs until 14 September

On 2 December 2026, the town of Bocholt will become the central hub for cross-border cooperation. As a 'Europastadt' and an important hub in the German-Dutch border region, Bocholt is hosting the 8th German-Dutch Border Region Conference this year.

Every year, this prestigious specialist event brings together key figures from politics, public administration and civil society who are committed to breaking down border barriers in key areas such as security, the labour market and mobility. In recent years, this has given rise to a resilient network that extends across borders and all levels of administration. District President Andreas Bothe emphasises the importance of the event: "The Border Region Conference has established itself as a driving force for German-Dutch cooperation. In an increasingly globalised world, it is only through cross-border cooperation across all administrative levels that we can successfully find solutions to key issues for the future - from internal security and the labour market to mobility."

Having previously been held in Venlo, Duisburg, Enschede, Aachen, Nijmegen, Krefeld and Sittard, the conference is taking place in the western Münsterland region for the first time. The focus will be on a high-level political summit attended by leading figures. Among those expected to attend are Nathanael Liminski, Minister for European Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and Head of the State Chancellery; the Dutch Minister for the Interior and Kingdom Relations; and the King's Commissioners for the provinces of Overijssel, Gelderland and Limburg. Also in attendance will be the district presidents of the Münster, Cologne and Düsseldorf district administrations, as well as the chairpersons of EUREGIO, Euregio Rhein-Waal, Euregio Rhein-Maas-Nord and Euregio Maas-Rhein. The meeting will be accompanied by several specialist workshops and a subsequent stage programme.

Of particular significance for the town of Bocholt

Bocholt's mayor, Christian Mangel, emphasises the special significance of the conference for the town: "Hosting the Border Region Conference in Bocholt is both an honour and a responsibility for us. Here in our border region, Europe is not an abstract concept, but a living reality in our everyday lives. We experience the opportunities offered by cross-border exchange on a daily basis, but we also recognise where we need to further break down bureaucratic and practical barriers. I look forward to working with our Dutch neighbours in December to provide concrete impetus for the future of our region."

Border Region Prize 2026: 5,000 euros for outstanding initiatives

A traditional highlight is the ceremonial presentation of the Border Region Prize, which comes with a prize of 5,000 euros. The award is jointly presented by the Ministry for Federal and European Affairs, International Affairs and Media of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Dutch Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties. It recognises initiatives that are committed to bringing the two societies closer together and tangibly bridging barriers in everyday life. At the 2025 conference in Sittard, the Border Region Prize was awarded to the Bocholt Pride e.V. initiative for its cross-border commitment to diversity, tolerance and German-Dutch exchange.

Interested initiatives can submit their applications for the 2026 Border Region Prize until 14 September. To be eligible, the project must have a clear connection to North Rhine-Westphalia and the Netherlands. The award is generally given to project teams and initiatives; individuals are only considered in justified exceptional cases. The three finalists will be notified four weeks before the Border Region Conference and will have the opportunity to present themselves at the conference with a video of their own.

Applications and enquiries should be sent to the relevant co-ordination office by email at [preis\(at\)grenzland\(dot\)eu](mailto:preis(at)grenzland(dot)eu).



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Thorsten Jansen, chair of Bocholt Pride e.V., in front of the Textilwerk in Bocholt, the venue for the 2026 Border Region Conference.