Région Pays de la Loire
Some key figures…

5th largest region in France with 3.3 million inhabitants
Population density: 90 inhabitants/km²
30% of inhabitants under the age of 25
Surface area: 32,100 km²
5.9% of total French surface area

5 departments: Loire-Atlantique, Maine-et-Loire, Mayenne, Sarthe and Vendée
6 major towns: Nantes, Angers, Le Mans, Laval, La Rochelle-sur-Yon

- Nantes
- Paris
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- NANTES
- ANGERS
- Saint-Nazaire
- Cholet
- LA ROCHE-SUR-YON
- Fontenay-le-Comte
- Les Sables-d’Olonne
- Saumur
- La Flèche
- Château-Gontier
- LAVAL
- Mayenne Mamers
- LE MANS
- Lower Normandy
- Centre Region
- Poitou-Charentes
- Brittany
- Atlantic Ocean
- La Loire

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- Loire-Atlantique (44)
- Vendée (85)
- Sarthe (72)
- Maine-et-Loire (49)
- Mayenne (53)
- Ile de Noirmoutier
- Ile d’Yeu
- Pays de la Loire
With the 24 Hours Le Mans race, Vendée Globe, Folle Journée de Nantes, the naive painter le Douanier Rousseau, Airbus, Queen Mary 2, Le Cadre noir of Saumur, Bâtonneau, as well as La Baule, Nantes, Angers, the royal Fontevraud abbey, Solesmes, everyone has heard of the Pays de la Loire.

An industrial region with thousands of SMEs, the area has wide tourist appeal based on its architectural heritage and waterways, including the Loire, the last undammed river, and its 450 kilometres of coastline that attract millions of tourists every year.

This region combines a sense of initiative in business, community and local government with a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and openness to others and the rest of the world.

Welcome to the Pays de la Loire.

Jacques Auxiette,
President of the Regional Council of the Pays de la Loire
Quality transportation

On the sea, in the air or on land... Transportation in the Pays de la Loire relies on high-performance systems and equipment. Transportation and related infrastructures are one of the life forces of the Pays de la Loire.

The part of Nantes-Saint-Nazaire is the largest European port on the Atlantic coast, serving a vast area extending over a large part of western and central France. Air transport is also growing in the Pays de la Loire. Nantes Atlantique international airport is the leading airport in western France, with two million passengers annually, an increase over the last decade. To accommodate even more visitors, a new airport to the north of Nantes is in the planning stages.

The road and rail systems are also thriving. In addition to motorways leading to Paris and northern and southern Europe via the route des Estuaires—the region has numerous TGV lines, placing Nantes two hours from Paris and one hour from Le Mans. Similarly, there is remarkable dynamism in regional transport within the Pays de la Loire region.

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PAYS DE LA LOIRE

Port of Nantes Saint Nazaire: the gateway to the Atlantic

The autonomous port of Nantes Saint Nazaire is one of the leading European ports on the Atlantic coast. With connections to more than 380 ports on 5 continents, receiving crude oil, gas and coal, wheat, feed, chemicals and cement, this vast logistics platform not only equips the regions along the Loire estuary.

At the heart of numerous business sectors and industries, the port generates some 26,000 jobs, with total traffic more than 32.5 million tons in 2004. Forecast for 2015: 40 million tons per year.

Traffic at the Autonomous Port of Nantes Saint Nazaire in 2004 (in tons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main energy-related traffic</th>
<th>Main non-energy-related traffic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crude oil</td>
<td>13,032,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid natural gas</td>
<td>5,582,209</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>1,196,337</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refined products</td>
<td>1,321,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal feed</td>
<td>2,336,329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diesel</td>
<td>392,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll on / Roll off containers</td>
<td>282,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>1,340,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined products</td>
<td>215,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total traffic</td>
<td>32,544,291 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: IGN BD CARTO 2002 - September 2005
Realisation: Région des Pays de la Loire - Cartography Dept - Sylvie PERRAUD

www.paysdelaloire.fr
The Pays de la Loire region wishes to position itself at the forefront of the growing wave of information and communication technologies (ICT). It is home to top-quality networks, companies and know-how, in constant expansion.

In the Pays de la Loire, there are numerous high-tech companies (NEC Computers, MBO, Euro Connect, Thomson, etc.), specialised higher education establishments, high-level research facilities, etc., as well as some sixty “cybercentres” in sensitive or rural zones.

Internet culture is growing rapidly among residents, while a true economic sector is developing in the four corners of the region, including software and computing services companies, cultural and tourist services (culture.paysdelaloire.fr, enpaysdelaloire.com), and education and training sites (meformer.org, uvpl.org).

Megalis, broadband performance

Operational since 2001, Megalis is a broadband regional network. It serves more than twenty towns in the Pays de la Loire, including some 100 higher educational, research, health, culture and tourism establishments. As well as offering high-speed connection solutions – 40 megabits per second – Megalis is special in that it connects neighbouring Brittany with the Pays de la Loire. The network has the latest and most efficient technology, offering unique and innovative services such as high-speed internet access, unlimited connection times, intranets and access to specialised servers (medical imaging, for example). Megalis offers innovative services such as video conferencing, access to databases and animated images, internet telephone services, remote services and procedures for local government.

ICT in figures

In Pays de la Loire, there are:

- 2,230 ICT service providers
- 22,000 jobs in the ICT sector
- 74% computerised companies
- 82% companies connected to the internet
- 82% companies with a website
- 54% homes with a computer
- 35% homes connected to the internet
- 48% inhabitants use the internet
- 23% companies with a website
- 35% homes connected to the internet
- 48% inhabitants use the internet

At the leading edge of ICT

The Pays de la Loire region wishes to position itself at the forefront of the growing wave of information and communication technologies (ICT). It is home to top-quality networks, companies and know-how, in constant expansion.
An up-and-coming metropolitan area

A metropolis with growing influence, a dense fabric of medium-sized towns, the driving force of the Loire estuary… The geographical area of the Pays de la Loire is buoyed up by a true urban dynamic, against a continued solid rural backdrop.

Born of the alliance between two key towns in the region, Nantes and Saint-Nazaire, anchored in an industrial and port-based tradition with a bright future, this metropolitan area on the Atlantic coast continues its expansion. With almost 700,000 inhabitants and population growth of 10% in ten years, it is now ranked among the leading French and European metropolitan areas. Nantes Saint-Nazaire outsizes Liverpool, Dublin, Bremen, Genoa, Bologna and Bilbao. Its population figures rival with the urban areas of Antwerp, Seville, Amsterdam, Helsinki and Stockholm.

While the coastal region is densely populated and the demographic trend is toward urban living in the Pays de la Loire, rural desertification is not an issue: activity continues in the countryside, with one third of the population living in towns of less than 2,000 inhabitants.

550,000 inhabitants

Hit parade
The Nantes Saint-Nazaire Metropolitan Area is:
• 1st in France for shipbuilding
• 3rd for aviation
• the 2nd biggest French financial marketplace
• 2nd wholesale market in France
• the primary services cluster in the West
Cooperation beyond borders

The Pays de la Loire draws energy from ties established with other regions, in France, in Europe and in the four corners of the world.

The Pays de la Loire region has an ambitious policy of international cooperation in Europe and the other continents, both through its own decentralised cooperation, and in close collaboration with other local governments and associations in the Pays de la Loire, in fields such as economics, research, vocational training, education, culture, etc.

The Region is mobilised for development education and emergency humanitarian aid, illustrated by the Asia platform set up at the beginning of 2005 following the tsunami in December 2004.

An interregional space in Brussels

The Regional Councils of the Pays de la Loire, Brittany and Poitou-Charentes have even decided to create a shared interregional space in Brussels, promote and defend their interests in the European Union, and to work together in fields as varied as agriculture, the environment and maritime businesses, all close to their heart.

Gateways to the heart of Europe...

The Pays de la Loire Region has a policy of decentralised cooperation with several European regions, in many fields including education, training, health, transportation and culture.

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The Spanish Basque country (Spain) has been a beneficiary of the decentralised cooperation between the Pays de la Loire and the Basque region, which has led to many shared projects in fields such as culture and education.

Cooperation was launched in 2005 with the Spanish Basque country, a very dynamic region in Europe dealing mainly with subjects of common interest such as maritime transportation and economic development.
ASIA

The new partners

A major cradle of human development and a region with considerable cultural influence, Asia today in the primary economic growth zone in the world, and as such it merits attention. The Pays de la Loire region has understood, and is multiplying institutional visits, town twinning, enterprise missions and all sorts of exchanges with the two giants on this continent: China and Japan. Economic cooperation is of course a priority, but university and cultural cooperation projects are also in the works, creating bright prospects for work especially in the Shangdong province.

The town of La Roche-sur-Yon is already twinned with Zibo, and Angers is also planning to establish a similar pact with Yentai. Nantes has signed a twinning protocol with Deyang, the third largest Chinese port, with 7 million inhabitants and the Olympic village for the 2008 games. This commitment has led to a technical cooperation agreement in the field of tourism, signed by both towns. For this twinning project, the town of Nantes is aiming for concrete economic cooperation, especially involving port activity, human engineering, shipbuilding, food processing and universities.

AFRICA

Solidarity and development

The Regional Council has set up a Regional fund for aid and international solidarity for cooperation and development, which supports aid for populations in difficulty. Africa, with its significant health and economic issues, is a priority area.

Like the example of the Loire – Niger cooperation, where two major rivers combine the strength of their currents and territories, the Pays de la Loire is promoting international mobilisation to save populations, and also the cultural and natural heritage of these regions.

The Region's goal is to make these two rivers the driving force behind sustainable development. The idea is to create decentralised cooperation between the local governments of the two territories, similar to the 28-year old partnership between Deyang and Strasbourg and between La Flèche and Segou (Mali).
Made in the Pays de la Loire Region

Imagination and daring give wings to companies in the Pays de la Loire. Many of them have enviable positions on the international stage.

B
ôtes, Airbus, Manitou, Chantiers de l’Atlantique in industry, Eurofins in biotechnologies: Loire-based companies are renowned throughout the world. Be they major corporations or family-owned success stories, they have succeeded in developing and exporting their know-how. The influence of the Pays de la Loire is visible on a global scale. Cruise liners from the Saint-Nazaire shipyards and yachts made in Vendée cross the oceans, and Airbus, Mayenne cheese and Cholet fashion and shoes are known worldwide.

A380, the giant of the skies

With a wingspan of 80 m, measuring over 24 m high and 73 m long, the Airbus A380, partly manufactured in the Pays de la Loire, is the biggest commercial airplane ever built. It will come into service in 2006 for Singapore Airlines, with 555 passengers embarking for a non-stop 15,000-kilometre flight.

Airbus, with its two plants in the Loire estuary, provides sub-contracting work for approximately 15,000 employees in Western France.

Two sites participate in the European aviation project: Nantes manufactures the wing box sections, Saint-Nazaire pre-assembles the first sections of the fuselages, which are then sent on to Toulouse or Germany.

Queen Mary 2 and the giants of the seas

For more than a century and a half, the Chantiers de l’Atlantique have been producing dream ships. The end of the 1980s saw a growth in the construction of luxury cruise liners, now renowned throughout the world. As well as the Queen Mary II in 2003, the largest cruise liner ever built, many other giants of the seas – Millennium, Monarch of the Seas, among others – have left the port of Saint-Nazaire to proudly cross the world’s oceans.

The Chantiers de l’Atlantique (4,000 employees), a subsidiary of Alstom Marine, are the world leaders in cruise ship building and are renowned for the extremely sophisticated technology used in the design and manufacture of the ships.

The top exporting companies*

1. Lactalis (food)
2. Groupe Bénéteau (ship building)
3. Terrena (food)
4. Manitou BF (mechanics)
5. Arjo Wiggins Papiers Couchés (coated paper)
6. LDC (food)
7. Eurofins Scientific (food analysis)
8. Children Worldwide Fashion (clothing)
9. SIM (transport)
10. Gastronome (food)
11. Transports Graveleau (transport)
12. Armor (paper)
13. Sabim (food)
14. Groupe Bénéteau (ship building)

*companies with their head office in the Pays de la Loire

*companies with their head office in the Pays de la Loire
World-renowned events
The region is not only exporting its economic know-how. Musical events, sporting trophies, cultural happenings, etc. are taking on a global aura.

LA FOLLE JOURNÉE
Classical music around the world!
Every year, the Pays de la Loire Region experiences an abundant cultural and musical event: la Folle Journée. This is an unmissable classical music event in Nantes, and now has extended to several other towns in the region. In total, 150,000 spectators attended 235 concerts given by 1,800 musicians in 2005, to celebrate Beethoven. Since 1999, la Folle Journée has been held around the world, the idea is spreading from town to town, already held in Lisbon and Bilbao, it’s now held in Tokyo.

VENDÉE GLOBE
Around the world in 87 days
A symbol of the dynamism of a region, the Vendée Globe embarks to conquer the seas every four years. The round-the-world solo yacht race, without stopover or assistance, covers 43,000 kilometres. The Atlantic Ocean, Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Cape Leeuwin in southern Australia, Cape Horn in South America… These milestones set the pace of this human adventure on a planetary scale. In 2005, after Christophe Auguin and Michel Desjoyeaux, Vincent Riou broke a new record, circling the globe in 87 days 10 hours 47 minutes and 55 seconds. His arrival at the port of Les Sables-d’Olonne was hailed by some 100,000 people.

ROYAL DE LUXE
Dreams on a large scale…
The Giant that Fell from the Sky, Return from Africa, Chineses Fairy Tales… the shows of the Royal de Luxe street theatre company have amazed, delighted and enchanted outdoor audiences worldwide since 1979. The Jean-Luc Courcoult theatre company has found a way of “telling tales to entire towns”, or even to the whole world. Ingenious machines and fabulous giants have gone forth from Nantes and left their mark on other continents, including South America, Asia and Africa.

THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS
A mythical race
The legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans race has been known worldwide since 1923. Over the years, its circuit has played host to the biggest automobile makers and the most prestigious drivers. Still today, the 24-Hours remains an unmissable sporting event, for amateurs and professionals from around the world. Now there is even a 24 Hours motorcycle race, a 24 Hours truck race, etc. Every year, roughly 200,000 spectators and more than 2,000 journalists come from all parts of the world to attend the event.
The benefits of tourism

The Pays de la Loire is one of the regions in France that attract the most newcomers. It is not surprising that it also appeals to many tourists.

The Pays de la Loire Region has a particularly dynamic tourist sector. Its considerable accommodation capacity, its natural riches and internationally renowned sites generate a strong flow of French and foreign tourists every year. In 2005, the Region welcomed 9 million visitors to 500 sites.

As regards accommodation and tourist spending, this region is one of the top-ranking in France. A real economic goldmine, weighing in on the order of 6 billion euros.

The Côte d’Amour

La Baule, Le Pouliguen, La Turballe, Piriac and Le Croisic, the ports and towns bear the imprints of a thriving fishing activity.
The Pays de la Loire and Centre Regions are developing cycling routes along the Loire river. By 2006, “La Loire à Vélo” will offer 800 kilometres of riding along the river, providing a prime way to discover the Loire Valley and its UNESCO classified heritage.

This route echoes other similar initiatives in Europe. In particular, it is part of the “Euromobilroute des Fleuves” project. Eventually, a European cycle route of 3,750 kilometres will run along the Loire, the Danube and the Rhine, linking the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea.

A few figures
- 450 km of coastline, 2 islands and 210 km of beaches
- 29 marinas
- 6 spas
- 5 congress centres
- 36 golf courses, 17 of which are open to tourists
- 4 natural parks
- 240 km of Loire, with 75 km on the UNESCO world heritage list
- 400 km of navigable rivers
- 125 km of cycling route “La Loire à Vélo”
- 1,000 historical monuments
- 10,000 remarkable sites

A region loved by Europeans
In the Pays de la Loire, 49% of international tourists come from Great Britain, 27% from the Netherlands, 7% from Germany and 5% from Belgium and Luxembourg.

The Loire by bike

A region open to the world

PAYS DE LA LOIRE
SPECIALISED PLANT CLUSTER
A worldwide dimension

The competitive Specialised Plant Cluster of the Pays de la Loire is recognised by the French government as a "project with worldwide visibility". Professionals in the plant sector in the Maine-et-Loire are uniting their skills with a common goal: to improve human health and the landscape environment. The cluster covers all plant productions, including seeds, arboriculture, horticulture, grapevines, medicinal plants and mushrooms. Its strength: this project has succeeded in bringing together 5,000 students, 1,000 researchers and hundreds of horticultural companies in the region. In 2009 in Angers, a leisure park based on the plant theme will be opened to the public.

In Angers and its region, there are major educational centres and research laboratories in the plant sector: the INH (National Horticultural Institute), the SNES (National Seed Testing Station), the ESN (National Interprofessional Group for Seed and Plants), the INRA (National Institute for Agronomic Research) or the ESA (Higher School of Agriculture).

Competition times six

Economic leaders in the Pays de la Loire have combined their skills and knowledge to increase performance. Six "competitive clusters" have been set up throughout the Pays de la Loire, and sector-based reasoning is on the rise.

The competitive clusters, recognised by the French government, promote links between business, education, and public or private research. The goal is to increase economic performance and create more jobs. Six such projects have been approved for the Pays de la Loire. One of them, the Specialised Plant Cluster, has a worldwide dimension. The five other are national projects.

But the economy of the Pays de la Loire does not end with these clusters. The Regional Council has launched an ambitious policy to energize all economic sectors, anchored in the realities of the territory and a fabric of dynamic companies: textile, fashion, tourism, wood, food, IT and computer-integrated manufacturing, etc.
EMC2 CLUSTER
Complex composites and metal assemblies

Cross-disciplinary synergies for innovation

An international multi-skills cluster

- 4 founding manufacturers with global influence:
  - Airbus, the world leader in aviation
  - Alstom Marine, world leader in high technology ships
  - Bénéteau, world leader in yachts and sailboats
  - DCN, leader in military shipbuilding

- Nearly 300 companies are already partners
- 35 research laboratories (including 12 joint research units)
- 14 higher educational facilities and universities

A reality

- 72 innovative projects, 15 of which are underway
- 50 established scientific and industrial partners
- 217 million euros in the coming 4 years

Three examples of cross-disciplinary collaboration:

- High-speed machining on hard metals (Ugo)
- Skills centre extended to include aviation
- Development of large structural composite parts

Two uniting themes and support actions:

- Materials and processes
- Process and complex systems
- Support action (economic watch and intelligence)

Les Chantiers de l’Atlantique in Saint-Nazaire

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AN ENTREPRENEURIAL REGION

PAYS DE LA LOIRE

Childhood cluster: based in Cholet, in the Maine-et-Loire, this cluster unites local actors in the children’s product market, which represents 1,800 jobs and sales of one billion euros.

Biotherapies cluster: this cluster brings together around forty companies in the biotechnology and health sector. The institutions of the hospital of Nantes and Angers, cancer centres, universities and the Nantes veterinary school are also contributing. Its areas of expertise include immunology, gene and cell therapy.

Civil Engineering West Cluster: public works and construction companies, laboratories and the grandes écoles of Nantes. Saint-Nazaire are combining their skills. Their goal is to offer their expertise to European specialists in civil engineering works.

High-end automobile cluster: manufacturers, researchers and students promote the automobile sector in the West. The cluster brings together the regions of Brittany, Pays de la Loire and Poitou-Charentes.

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The economic power of the Pays de la Loire is based on an industrial foundation that has managed to diversify and renew itself thanks to the creativity, the entrepreneurial nature and the know-how of its inhabitants.

In the 19th century, metallurgy and shipbuilding came to the Loire estuary to renew the agricultural economy... which itself has not disappeared. Fishing and agriculture are still strong in this region. At the time, the inhabitants of the Pays de la Loire proved that they could adapt to any economic "revolution". So, when the tertiary sector took on growing proportions, here as elsewhere – representing more than 650,000 jobs – it strengthened rather than replaced this strong industrial base that provides 250,000 jobs. The strength and stability of the regional economy are due to the diversity of these industrial sectors and the recent boom in service activities. Manitou and Gruau in mechanics, Fleury-Michon, Brioche Pasquier and LDC in the food industry, Gatien in children’s wear, are high-quality illustrations of this strength.

The region still ranks first nationally for business start-ups. This explains the predominance of SMEs/SMEs, offering industrial sub-contracting which appeals to many clients in France and abroad.

The economic figures for the Pays de la Loire at a glance...

- 5th economic region in France
- 3rd region in terms of GDP in 2002 (4.7% of national GDP)
- 1.392,900 jobs at 12/31/2001
- 3,000 companies in 2000 (4.6% of the national number)
- 1st French region for shipbuilding
- 2nd French region for agriculture, fishing, aviation
- 4th French tourist destination
- 5th French region for the number of small businesses
- 8th exporting region
- 60% salaried employees in the tertiary sector
Food processing

A high-achieving industry

The food industry is the primary industrial employer in the region with 50,000 jobs. Meat and dairy sectors are predominant in this industry. International corporations such as Danone and Bahlsen are present alongside regional companies with impressive track records, including Lactalis, Fleury-Michon, Brioche Pasquier, LDC, and Celia.

Food processing in the Pays de la Loire is in constant evolution. Building bridges between agronomics, chemistry, biogenetics, industrial processes and health care, research efforts continue unabated and are finding concrete applications in business. Examples include Eurofins, a world leader in food analyses that uses nuclear magnetic resonance, and Vivalis, an innovative company that produces recombinant proteins for therapeutic use in chicken eggs.

Star products...

LU biscuits, rillettes du Mans, Vendée sardines, Président camembert, Cointreau liqueurs, lily-of-the-valley, lamb’s lettuce from Nantes, Guérande salt, Loire wines...

Agriculture and fishing

Quality at the fore

Ranking 2nd nationally (10% of French production), agriculture in the Pays de la Loire is alive and well, primarily with animal-based products (beef, dairy, pork and poultry). However, it takes first place for its quality sectors, with 106 Label Rouge quality certifications, 31 controlled appellation (AOC) products and 60,000 hectares devoted to organic farming. Moreover, the Anjou area is the European leader in viticulture.

Nantes lamb’s lettuce at the forefront

The Pays de la Loire produces 85% of the lamb’s lettuce (mache) in France and is the primary European producer ahead of Germany and Italy. A portion of the 30,000 tons produced every year is exported to Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

Fishing and aquaculture

The Pays de la Loire region is ranked 2nd among the French regions for fishing. The energy in this sector can be seen in the continuous development of fish farming, both along the coast and in the salt marshes, with mussels and oysters being major products.

The ocean, the sea and… Guérande salt!

From a thousand-year old tradition, Guérande salt is now the world leader in the traditional salt market with exports all over the world.

The Loire Valley: a major wine-growing region

1st producer of white wine
1st region for AOC sparkling wine
2nd most productive French wine-growing region
4th largest French wine-growing region
63 controlled origin appellation wines (AOC)

Star products...

25 wineries, cellars du Loire, Vins d’anhémie, Pommard, Pouilly-Fumé, Sancerre, Pouilly-Fuissé, Savennières, Poirier, Mâcon, Pouilly-Vinzelles, Anjou, Anjou-Certan...
W O O D
A passion for wood
The Pays de la Loire has developed a strong wood and furniture industry. In total, the wood sector represents more than 25,000 jobs, or 25% of national jobs in roofing-carpentry and 15% in furniture. The Ecole Supérieure du Bois trains experts specializing in wood professions and techniques. In addition, the International Carrefour International du Bois brings together wood professionals every two years in Nantes.

E L E C T R O N I C S
The second industrial employer
More than 13,000 employees ... Electronics, in the wide sense, is the second industrial employer, with manufacturers of electronic and computer components and equipment. Yes, Thales Electronics, Motorola, Alcatel, and Philips are among the major names.

P L A S T I C S
A solid future
The Pays de la Loire is the second French region in plastics, with 12,000 employees and more than 250 establishments. At the service of the automobile and local industries, for example, all techniques put to work, in particular new composite materials. Some major names include Hutchinson, Michelin, and Delphi ...

M E C H A N I C S
From the traditional to the high tech
Mechanics, metallurgy, automobile: these three sectors represent one quarter of the regional industrial workforce, with 65,000 jobs. Metallurgy is driven by the needs of the local industry ( bruker Packaging, Crown Cork, Pechiney ... ) and by aviation, shipbuilding and the automobile sector. Automotive business include Euratechnologies in Angers or Air Breuil in Le Mans, and around are hundreds of local subcontractors, from Michelin to Bisc ...

A V I A T I O N
Airbus planes are born in Nantes
The Region is the second French aviation cluster, with two Airbus factories in Nantes and Saint-Nazaire, where the first parts making up the Airbus planes are manufactured.

S H I P B U I L D I N G
A tradition of giants
The Pays de la Loire ranks first among the French regions in this sector, thanks to the Chantiers de l’Atlantique for shipbuilding, Décines for marine propulsion, and Bénéteau, the world’s leading sailboat maker.

F A S H I O N
Creative resistance
The Pays de la Loire is the leading French region in shoe manufacturing, with 13,000 employees and more than 250 establishments. At the service of the automobile and local industries, for example, all techniques put to work, in particular new composite materials. Some major names include Natifonte, Montchat, Michelin, and Delphi ...

E L E C T R O N I C S
The leading industrial employer
More than 13,000 employees ... Electronics, in the wide sense, is the second industrial employer, with manufacturers of electronic and computer components and equipment. Yes, Thales Electronics, Motorola, Alcatel, and Philips are among the major names.
The land of knowledge

First-rate universities, vocational training, renowned grandes écoles, a growing number of researchers, decentralised cooperation…

The Pays de la Loire has an immense educational infrastructure. More than 100,000 students, including numerous foreign students, flock to the various campuses every autumn. The principal regional towns facilitate access to three universities (Nantes, Le Mans and Angers), and the Université catholique de l’Ouest as well as 16 grandes écoles for engineering and business, in direct contact with research and business in the region. This makes higher education one of the life forces of the Pays de la Loire.

Moreover, vocational training and apprenticeship are also flourishing in the Pays de la Loire. While the levels IV and V (CAP, BEP, Bac pros, B) are the majority, all levels are accessible through apprenticeship, up to the level of engineer.

Dynamic diversity

For a long time, the Region lagged behind in university education, but is now characterised by a new dynamic. The university towns of Nantes, Angers and Le Mans radiate throughout the Region with establishments delocalised in most medium-sized towns. This enables higher education to remain in direct contact with research and business.

Beyond its historical specialisation based on the food industry, regional research has developed around centres of excellence, led by the universities and grandes écoles, and often recognised internationally: plant studies in Angers, acoustics and materials in Le Mans, immunology, nuclear physics, automation-IT-telecoms and materials in Nantes, naval engineering in Nantes Saint-Nazaire, electronics in Laval, etc.

Nantes gaining in influence

The regional capital is on its way to becoming one of the national capitals of knowledge. It has some 50,000 students, the first multidisciplinary university in France and numerous grandes écoles and institutes, including Audencia (management school), École Centrale de Nantes, École des Mines de Nantes, École de design Nantes-Atlantique, École nationale vétérinaire, École nationale de la marine marchande, École Polytechnique de l’Université de Nantes, École de design Nantes Atlantique, École nationale vitivinicole, École nationale de la mer et commerce, École Polytechnique de l’Université de Nantes, École supérieure du lycée, Institut Régional d’Administration, Institut de l’homme et de la technologie, and the École nationale des ingénieurs des techniques des industries agricoles et agroalimentaires.

Global visibility

Establishments in the Loire region are multiplying international cooperation and projects, including student exchanges, diplomas designed in common and which students obtain after studying on different campuses, and research programmes.

These concrete programs are in place both in universities and grandes écoles, in Angers, Le Mans and Nantes.

The example of Nantes illustrates the importance of international activities. The near future will see the construction of a Foreign Researchers Centre, a Centre for Foreign Exchanges and the French Language, and a distance law training programme is being developed linking the universities of Nantes and Yaoundé in Cameroon, under the auspices of Unesco.
Research and development

The Region is eighth nationally for the number of researchers, and research now ranks eighth as well.

Not quite up to the level of its economic performance, but much better than in the past, research has developed rapidly and diversified from the food industry sector. New activities led by the universities and grandes écoles have emerged. Centres of excellence have become internationally renowned: health care, mechanics-materials, plants, bioenvironment, information and communication sciences and technologies.

Health in the lead

A major health cluster has emerged in Nantes and Angers. Famous teams are working in highly specialised fields, including immunology, tissue and organ transplants, oncology, cardiology, cell and gene therapies, genetic diagnosis, biomaterials, and nutrition. Research has facilitated the emergence of numerous start-ups in the biotech field, and is also a major contributor to the Ouest Génopole (800 genomics and post-genomics researchers in the Pays de la Loire and Brittany). Similarly, Nantes is the coordination point for the Canceropole Grand Ouest where some one hundred teams work together.

Cyclotron: Western France against cancer

In 2008, researchers in Nantes will have a high-energy cyclotron available for cancer research. The Region will possess one of the largest scientific machines in France – a highly sophisticated and innovative tool for nuclear medicine. This specialty consists of administering radioactive drugs for diagnosis or treatment. The start-up of the cyclotron will mobilise teams in Nantes, Angers, Rennes, Brest, Tours and Poitiers within the Canceropole Grand Ouest. It will be monitored by an international scientific council.

In Pays de la Loire, Brittany, Poitou-Charentes and Centre...
Wide-ranging talents

With live shows, sports, museums, literature and contemporary art, regional culture is rich and varied.

There are no limits to the cultural horizons of the Pays de la Loire. The region puts on a vast array of shows, festivals, concerts, and exhibitions in all five departments. Art and culture are expressed in all their forms.

From creation to distribution

The creative work of theatrical companies and contemporary musical groups is supported through the four “national stages” (Le Lieu Unique in Nantes, Le Fanal in Saint-Nazaire, Le Carré in Château-Gontier, Le Manège in la Roche-sur-Yon), and also through numerous venues throughout the region.

A festival of events!

- Scopitone: electronic music from the world over in Nantes
- Festival of the 3 Continents: cinema from Asia, Africa and Latin America in Nantes
- Festival Premiers Plans: discovery of young European cinema in Angers
- La Folle Journée: prestigious classical music festival in the region and abroad
- Jazz festivals: Europa Jazz in Le Mans, Les Rendez-vous de l’Erdre in Nantes
- Festival de Sablé: baroque music honoured in the Sarthe
- Les Rencontres internationales du dessin de presse (press cartoons) near Nantes
- Les Escales de Saint-Nazaire: world music festival
- The FCNA: a team with a European reputation

For more than 40 years, the Football Club Nantes Atlantique has been one of the elite names in football. The coach, José Arribas, creator of the “Nantes” game, oriented the club’s practice towards respect for collective values and youth training. Since then, the club has remained in France’s league 1, a record which remains to be broken. The club has collected eight French championship titles, three French cups and twenty participations in various European cups.

The first in France, the Regional fund for contemporary art (FRAC) of the Pays de la Loire has been open for more than 30 years. Its missions are to build up a regional contemporary art collection (currently 850 works) and bring greater awareness of modern art to the public. The FRAC also organises exhibitions on current international artistic trends. Every year on average, the site welcomes over 50,000 art lovers.

The ONPL

A Must-See

The ONPL, National Orchestra of the Pays de la Loire, comprising some one hundred musicians and a choir, is one of the main orchestras in France. With more than 200 events per year, it also conducts educational programmes and participates in the Angers Nantes Opéra season. Interpreting Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven… under the baton of Isaac Karabtchevsky, the ONPL is regularly invited to the most prestigious international festivals, playing in Germany, Hungary, China, Japan, etc.

As part of the year of Brazil, the orchestra welcomed Gilberto Gil to Nantes in 2005.

The FCNA

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To wander through the Pays de la Loire is to discover a multitude of varied panoramas. Landscapes sculpted by the Ocean and the Loire, channels meandering through the salt marshes, ancient towns and fields and forests… A diverse and contrasting geography.

The centuries-old rhythm of the Loire and the incredible beauty of the Loire Valley, part of the UNESCO world heritage. In and of itself, the Loire River describes the quality of the living environment in the Pays de la Loire. But on top of that, the area also benefits from charming canals and rivers, the invigorating air of the Atlantic coast and the distinguished elegance of the Loire-side towns. It is this highly favourable environment, and obviously a healthy economy, that attracted more than 165,000 newcomers to the region between 1990 and 1999. From the famous sweetness of life in the Anjou, to the tonic Atlantic air, the quality of life is sculpted by the landscapes.

The call of the sea

It’s high tide every year in the famous seaside resorts of the Pays de la Loire (La Baule, Saint-Jean-de-Monts, Les Sables-d’Olonne, etc.)! French people and foreigners flock to enjoy the sights and breathe in the powerful ocean breezes. With 450 kilometres of varied coastline in the Loire-Atlantique and the Vendée departments, Noirmoutier Island and Ile d’Yeu, the sometimes wild, rocky or sandy shores, the Atlantic coast has something for everyone.

Labyrinth of marshes

Where the land meets the sea, marshes are an integral part of the Pays de la Loire. La Brière in Brittany and the Poitevin marsh are the highlights. Born at the hands of Cistercian and Benedictine monks from the 11th century, these marshes have become veritable nature reserves. The 60,000-hectare Poitevin marsh is home to exceptional plants and wildlife.
THE LOIRE
A river of discoveries

Behind the brilliant maritime façade, the attractive beauties of the Loire river. The majestic river contains innumerable hidden treasures that are now widely recognised. In 2000, the Loire Valley became the largest site in France listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. Vast prairies and hillsides, sand bars, wooded islands, wild animals and plants all live harmoniously to the ancient rhythm of the royal river and its tributaries.

La Sarthe carries “fresh water sailors” from the Alpes Mancelles to the Anjou. A route passing through steep hills, peaceful villages and picturesque towns.

The Loir is an invitation to discover fields of grain, dense forests and vineyards along the banks. Also a glimpse at the troglodyte dwellings erched among the limestone cliffs.

The Erdre: “The most beautiful river in France” according to François I. Its bends and banks danced with elegant chateaux and authentic villages inspire a relaxed pace of life.

The Nantes Sèvre reveals heaths and deep dales along its valley. A charming border between the Vendée, the Anjou and the Poitou.

The Mayenne: one of the prettiest navigable rivers in Western France, with the towns of Mayenne, Laval and Château-Gontier for stopovers. Its towpath, fully restored over 85 km, is a delight for walkers.

The Niort Sèvre: its canal system irrigates the Poitevin marsh. A world where the fauna and flora are waiting to be discovered.

A picturesque network of rivers

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The Pays de la Loire offers a multitude of sites for contemplation, buildings for exploration, and the residents watch over them lovingly.

To conserve the identity of a region, preservation and restoration of the heritage are essential as a way for cities of art and history to promote their sites. Some 2,000 historical monuments are listed in the Region as monuments for which conservation is historically and artistically of public interest.

Twenty-three associations in the Loire-Atlantique, Mayenne, Sarthe, Vendée and Maine-et-Loire work to preserve and restore their heritage, supported by the local governments, including the Regional Council.

The Château of Angers: a medieval model
Built by Saint-Louis around 1230, the Château of Angers is a model of Middle-Age architecture with 17 towers and a kilometre-long wall. Visitors are invited to wander through the superb French gardens. They can also contemplate the Tapestry of the Apocalypse, the largest medieval tapestry in the world, housed here.

Here, eyes and hearts are drawn to the monuments.

The Château of Angers, a medieval model

Fontevraud Abbey: monastic prestige
Founded in the early 12th century, the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud is the largest grouping of monastic buildings in Europe. With several architectural styles within its walls, it remains a bastion of splendid religious heritage that can be found in the Pays de la Loire region. Also, for those who wish to hear them, it resounds with the voices of History: those of Eleanor of Aquitaine, of Richard the Lion Heart or Henry Plantagenet...

The Château of the Dukes of Brittany
In the heart of Nantes rise the imposing granite towers and tall walls of the Château of the Dukes of Brittany. This edifice so loved by natives of Nantes has always been a source of envy. The Breton court chose it in the 15th century as its place of residence; the kings of France later laid claim to it. The Château des Ducs was thus a privileged witness to major historic events: Duchess Anne of Brittany, twice queen of France, was born within its walls; Henry of Navarre later signed the Edict of Nantes there. Now a municipal museum, the Château of the Dukes of Brittany is today engaged in the greatest restoration project in its history and will reopen its doors in 2007.

Fontevraud Abbey: monastic prestige

From the Château des Ducs to the museum of Nantes

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The Château of Angers, a medieval model

Cultural heritage...
The Pays de la Loire region preserves its natural environment as carefully as it does its cultural and historical heritage. Thus the Region plays very close attention to plant and wildlife issues.

The Pays de la Loire region is home to four natural parks: the Brière Regional Nature Park, the Loire-Anjou-Touraine Regional Nature Park, the Normandy-Maine Regional Nature Park, and the Marais Poitevin Interregional Park. These parks protect the region’s natural diversity and increase local awareness of environmental issues.

Maulévrier Park, a hint of the Far East
Nature also has a refuge in numerous public gardens. At Maulévrier in the Maine-et-Loire region, visitors discover a 29-hectare area where exotic Asian plants are laid out and arranged "philosophically". The thinking that went into the park was influenced by Buddhism, aimed at restoring Man to his rightful place in Nature. From Azaleas Knoll (Butte aux Azalées) to the Golden Horn (Corne d'Or) and the Hill of the Meditations (Colline des Méditations), 75,000 people a year discover the rarest species here.

HORSES
A lasting balance
The region’s equestrian business gives a good idea of the quality of life the Region’s inhabitants enjoy: preserved but not static. With over 6,500 jobs all told, this activity both structures the economy and represents an indisputable draw for tourism. This is the case in Mayenne and especially in Saumur, the “horse country” where the prestigious Cadre Noir is based. Over 50,000 admiring visitors come yearly to the National School of Equitation, where elite French riders and Olympic medallists train.

Among the events not to be missed:
• International show jumping in La Baule
• Le Mondial du Lion in Angers
• Equestrian competitions in Saumur
• The races in Craon

Visiting the museums
• Nantes Museum of Fine Arts (Musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes) In addition to jewels of classical painting, contemporary art also has pride of place.
• Dobrée Archaeological and Historical Museum (Musée archéologique et historique Dobrée) Located in the heart of Nantes, the museum houses the collections bequeathed in the late 19th century by Thomas Dobrée, a ship owner from Nantes in addition to decorative and graphic arts collections, it also has a permanent exhibit featuring objects from the protohistoric period to the Middle Ages.
• Museums of the Château of the Dukes of Brittany (Musée du Château des Ducs de Bretagne) Once restoration is complete in late 2006, the castle will be home to a museum devoted to the history of Nantes and its region (Nantes).
• Angers Museum of Fine Arts (Musée des Beaux Arts d'Angers) In a sumptuous setting, including a 19th-century apartment, as well as a Minorcan, Fragolí, Spanish, Picard, and Franco-Italian room, visitors can admire a diverse collection.
• Mayenne Archaeological Museum (Musée archéologique de la Mayenne) Renovated recently, it is henceforth devoted entirely to the Gallic and Gallo-Roman periods.
• Saint-Nazaire Museum (Musée Saint-Nazaire) This set museum has opened an Egyptian gallery in its extension which visitors may visit for 2,300 years (Louvre).
• Vendée Historical Museum (Muséum de la Vendée) Located in Les Lucs-sur-Boulogne, near the Vendée war memorial, this museum will open in 2006 to tell the history of the Vendée region.

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A real “art de vivre”

Rich, somewhat “Rabelaisian”, Pays de la Loire gastronomy is guided by its geography. Naturally, the region boasts a great many seafood and freshwater fish recipes. Early vegetables are outstanding here, growing lushly as they do at the Loire’s edge, as well as the salt and shellfish from the seaside, the butter and cream sauces, the hams from Vendée, poultry from Châlons and Loise, rillettes de Maine, cheeses such as Corrê Nantais from Pornic and Saint-Paulin from Maine, fruits from the hillsides of Angers, and shortbread pastry known as sablé, from Sablé-sur-Sarthe.

The land of Rabelais’ “sacred bottle”...

The art of winegrowing flourishes on the Loire hillsides. One of the greatest riches of the Pays de la Loire region, it produces a wide selection of wines appreciated well beyond its boundaries. Sweet, dry, sparkling, white, red and rosé... All types of Loire wines can be found under the prestigious AOC designation for French quality wines, waiting to be tasted in the heart of the wine-growing region. Stretching over 40,000 hectares, the Loire Valley Wine Route invites tourists to discover this mosaic of vineyards and vintages. To be enjoyed in moderation.
Quality, a requirement

The Pays de la Loire, with its remarkable environmental riches and a more-than-pleasant life style, is not content to rest on its laurels. The region is ambitious and has new requirements in terms of quality.

The goal: environmental conservation, quality labels for agricultural products, infrastructures designed with comfort, convenience and public health in mind.

Towards a "sustainable region"

In the Pays de la Loire, the balance between humans, human activities and the environment is voluntarily maintained. This is a truly sustainable development approach that fulfills the needs of current generations without compromising the well-being of those of the future. It involves environmental conservation – landscape and ecological classification, in particular as regards regional nature parks, water, air, waste and energy management – the common themes – but the social and cultural dimensions are also included. This means promoting public transportation, environmental awareness, energy savings, support for quality agriculture, determined application of the cross-compliance rules for all development work, promoting access for all and especially the most underprivileged to transportation and essential services, and working to better meet inhabitants’ needs.

In fact, it amounts to a regional Agenda 21, aimed at making the Pays de la Loire a sustainable region.

Fresh air

The Region benefits from particularly good air quality. The association Air Pays de la Loire regularly publishes the “Atmo” index, which tells Pays de la Loire residents the average daily air pollution in the 7 main towns in the Region (four pollutants are measured: sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone and dust). And the Atmo index often posts good news!

Renewable energy

The inhabitants of the region are experimenting with new ways of producing heat (solar water heaters, wood-burning heating systems) and electricity (wind farms, co-generation).

Quality of life

An impressive model

The towns in the Pays de la Loire, in particular Nantes, but also Angers and Le Mans, are regularly at the top of the list of most liveable cities. In 2004, Time magazine placed Nantes among the “secret capitals” of the Old World, describing it as the best city in Europe for quality of life.
The Regional Council of the Pays de la Loire is a territorial government in charge of urban planning, and economic, health, social, cultural and scientific development. Multiple missions for a wide scope of action.

In France, the Central Government confers specific responsibilities on the Region, the most important of which involve urban development, economic development, education (construction, maintenance and equipment of high schools, food service, accommodations, student services), vocational training and apprenticeship, and finally regional public transportation. However, the Regional Council is free to engage in proactive policies according to its priorities.

An elected assembly, an executive branch, and committees

Regional councillors are elected for 6 years, in a proportional two-round ballot. In the March 2004 elections, the list headed by Jacques Auxiette won. Jacques Auxiette was elected president of the Regional Council of the Pays de la Loire by the 93 regional councillors: 46 women and 47 men; 35 elected representatives for Loire-Atlantique, 19 for Maine-et-Loire; 7 for Mayenne; 15 for Sarthe; 17 for Vendée.

The president of the Regional Council holds the executive power and is responsible for regional administration. He is supported by the consultative work of 9 committees, specialized per sector, composed of the regional councillors.

The budget of the Regional Council of the Pays de la Loire was 904 million euros in 2005.
Transportation system
The development of transportation is essential for the region. The Region is involved at several levels:
• Since 2002, the Region has been responsible for organising rail transport. It fixes the timetables and stations served by the regional express trains (TER), fixes fares (including special fares for specific passenger groups).
• It organises and participates in financing the regional road system.
• It participates in studies on the future of the autonomous port of Nantes Saint-Nazaire.
• It chairs the study group for the planned airport in Notre-Dame-des-Landes.

Education foremost
The Regional Council ensures that young inhabitants are offered quality education and infrastructures.
• The Region builds, equips and operates the high schools (lycées).
• It implements measures to promote equality, including free school books.

Champion of the environment
Preserving quality of life is an important objective of the Region. Its actions are part of a policy of sustainable development.
• The Regional Council supports specific actions in terms of water management, promotion of renewable energy, preservation of natural resources and high quality construction.
• It is continuing to certify regional nature parks and promotes regional natural spaces.
• It is working on a regional Agenda 21, fixing priorities in terms of sustainable development.

A driving force for the economy
Developing the economy is one of the priorities of the regional Council, which has chosen to favour a sector-based strategy.
• The Regional Council supports business start-up and growth, as well as new business activities in the Pays de la Loire.
• It promotes the access of regional companies to international markets.
• It works to develop competitive and environmentally-friendly agriculture.
• It conducts actions to modernise the fishing sector.
• It contributes to developing tourism in the Pays de la Loire.

Focus on employment
In charge of vocational training and apprenticeship, the Region is working towards enabling everyone to acquire professional skills.
• The Region coordinates the vocational training actions.
• It supports the apprenticeship system.
• It promotes social and professional integration of youth in difficulty.
• It promotes qualifying training to the unemployed.
• It supports employment policies.

Worldskills Forum
The Worldskills Forum is the only world event bringing together young people and industrial trades. With 145,000 young people in vocational and technological training programs, the Pays de la Loire Region was ideally placed to host the 2005 national final of the Worldskills Competition. During the international finals which took place in Helsinki in May 2005, it announced its candidacy for the international finals in 2011 in Nantes.
Accelerating higher education and research

Higher education and research are building the Pays de la Loire of tomorrow. The Region therefore actively supports these sectors.
• In the field of research, it supports new projects and promotes technology transfers.
• It supports the development of universities and grandes écoles.

Open to the world

The Regional Council favours opening up to other territories, in France and abroad.
• The Region supports regulations on globalisation.
• It carries out international solidarity and cooperation actions with developing countries.
• It is involved in interregional partnerships with the regions of Brittany and Poitou-Charentes as well as the regions that are part of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions of the Arc Atlantique commission.

Solidarity at the heart of the territory

Ensuring a balance between the various territories is one of the Region’s objectives. With human and territorial solidarity in mind.
• The Regional Council implements territorial contracts, in which social housing, public transportation and the environment are the priorities.
• As part of territorial solidarity, it helps to maintain public services in rural zones.
• It defines a regional health and personal services policy.

Dynamism for culture and sport

The Pays de la Loire possesses cultural riches and a real athletic potential that the Regional Council aims to develop and promote.
• The Region aims to develop live shows, from structures and events of national importance to more modest equipment and creations.
• It facilitates youth access to culture and sports.
• It preserves and enhances man-made, cultural and audiovisual heritage.
• It supports high-level sports and major sporting events.

The Regional Economic and Social Council

A think tank at the service of the region

An independent body comprised of experts in the field of economics and social issues, the CCR analyses issues and makes proposals. By representing the main economic and social hosts, it promotes participation in regional development.

A consultative assembly working with the Regional Council and its president, it is a “think tank” that makes diagnoses, prospective analyses and recommendations in the interest of regional development. It is also a privileged place for dialogues and public expression, bringing together all social and economic partners in the region.

The CCR provides its opinion on all the Region’s projects, prior to the Regional Council’s decision (budgets, plans, master plans, etc.) On its own initiative or at the request of the president of the Regional Council or the Government, it studies all economic, social, culture and urban planning issues at the regional level.

Civil society organised at regional level

The CCR of the Pays de la Loire includes 113 members appointed for 6 years by their organisations according to a breakdown fixed by the Regional Prefect: 38 representatives of business owners, 38 representatives of employees’ unions, 32 representatives from community associations and 5 people nominated by the Prefect.