

## Why this study?



Several attempts to merge the municipalities of Terre Sainte have been made in recent years. All were rejected. First came the 3-commune merger of "Chavannes-des-Bois, Mies and Tannay" in 2004, and then the 8-municipality merger in 2010.

[Who asked to re-examine this merger, which was rejected in 2010, and why?](#)

This request comes exclusively from the mayors of the 8 municipalities of Terre Sainte, who have neither given nor explained the reasons for such a study. No survey of the population has been undertaken to ascertain the will and desire of the population for such a rapprochement.

Their arguments are firstly that the study is 50% subsidised by the Canton and secondly that we are stronger against the Canton, when the Terre Sainte region represents only 2% of the population of Vaud.

In Coppet, this project was presented as a credit application for CHF 21,000. The cost was clearly underestimated. It does not take into account the mobilisation of municipal employees who will have to work in the 8 planned working groups. This study will take at least 2 years and will undeniably cost much more.

## Why is this referendum being held?



On 13 March 2023, the Coppet town council voted in favour of this study credit by 28 votes to 24. In view of this very close result, we submitted our request for a referendum on 24 March 2023. Three days later, the Tannay town council rejected the study credit. This negative vote was confirmed a second time at a special meeting on 13 June 2023.

## The referendum committee



The committee was able to count on the spontaneous support of numerous members of the town council, of Copetans who had been informed of the study project, and of elected representatives from other municipalities in Terre Sainte ("Stop Terre Sainte City" collective) affected by this planned merger, all of whom had taken the measure of the debate and the social project imposed by our authorities.

The [www.fusionite.ch](http://www.fusionite.ch) website has kept pace with the development of our citizen initiative. We invite you to have a look.

## The excesses of the municipality and some of Coppet's elected representatives



It has to be said that our authorities and certain of Coppet's elected representatives have not behaved in an exemplary manner in the face of our struggle.

## The facts

- In an interview with **La Côte** on 21 April 2023, our mayor said, referring to the referendum committee, that opposing the study project was "*intellectually dishonest*".
- At the town council meeting on 8 May 2023, he accused the referendum committee of having committed "*possible irregularities*" without providing the slightest proof! At the same meeting, the municipality blamed us for the cost of the referendum. Referendums are a constitutional right guaranteed throughout Switzerland.
- On 30 May 2023, our Coppet's socialist member of the VD Grand Council, surprised that the referendum had been validated by the Canton "*against all odds*", tabled a motion to ban referendums on proposed mergers with study credits, and to waive the obligation to submit to the town councils any request for credit for merger studies. Our former mayor of Coppet supported and signed this motion.
- The municipality decided unilaterally and at the last minute to add the number of seats held by the political groups to the "voting brochure", under the heading "recommendations", with the aim of influencing voters. This reference to the number of seats is unprecedented in Switzerland and has never been published in any communal, cantonal or federal ballot before!

## How can you trust the study to be balanced and objective?



**When** "communication" is an essential part of it and represents 30% of the forecast budget? In the view of the referendum committee, these resources are disproportionate and are part of a propaganda strategy aimed at getting the population to accept the idea of a merger. It should be remembered that the poll scheduled for 2024 will have no legal value, as it is not the result of a vote. Rather, it is a manoeuvre designed to engage the population in the merger process.

**When** the external contractors representing 65% of the budgeted costs have already been chosen even before the study begins: fiduciary company (35%) and a communications agency (30%)?

**When** mayors and presidents of town councils (all with strong opinions on the project) are over-represented in the composition of the body responsible for the operational management of the study, the COPIL (steering committee)?

**When** a VD cantonal delegate dedicated 100% to mergers is assigned ex officio and sits on this same body to ensure that the standardised methodology defined in the VD "Guide pour les fusions de communes" is applied and the conclusions of the study are favourable to the merger?

As a reminder, a study carried out more than 10 years ago by IDHEAP (Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration, Lausanne), described as a technocratic masterpiece intended for the sole understanding of a restricted circle of insiders, failed to support or convince the population of the benefits of a merger! So why do it again?

## This study is the first element of a process



What would Coppet gain from becoming a small part of "Terre Sainte City" and its 15,500 inhabitants, Tannay having already withdrawn and Crans having refused to participate? Let's not be fooled! This merger study is the first element in a process designed to get us to agree to a merger: 100% of "merger studies" have produced a result favourable to a merger, with no alternative to the merger perimeter and no innovative ideas to improve or extend existing inter-communal activities.

The municipalities are systematically supervised by the Canton, whose aim is to increase the number of mergers. All the "reports" extol mergers as a solution for the future.

A "merger agreement" is clearly the objective of this study. This is part of the strategy of the President of the Vaud government, who is responsible for the communes.

All the studies have been parodies designed to make fusion seem obvious and natural.

## Our local autonomy is at stake



The exercise of our democratic power over the territory we occupy, whether in terms of local autonomy, the preservation of our local relationships, our quality of life, our cultural identity and our civic participation. Coppet has been a town since 1280.

The consequences will not be long in coming, with the arrival of traditional political parties and the distancing of our elected representatives and our administration.

A global management will be put in place to serve the needs of a large conurbation, with the constant creation of new, increasingly complex rules and obligations.

## Merger as a cover-up



The financial situation of Coppet and most of the municipalities of Terre Sainte is worrying, with negative levels of self-financing deemed "critical" in April 2022 by the DGAIC (the Canton's Department of Institutional Affairs and Municipalities), the worst rating.

### In view of this, isn't it preferable:

- to put our finances on a sounder footing and identify potential savings, in particular through broader and more transparent governance at intermunicipal activities level, with publicly accessible balance sheets and profit and loss accounts?

### To avoid plunging us into a costly merger involving:

- Consolidation of intermunicipal administrative and operational services on a single site.
- Construction of new administrative and operational buildings (CHF 80 to 100 million of expenditure expected).
- Doubling of our consolidated debt, estimated at more than CHF 120 million for the Terre Sainte intercommunal bodies alone, spread across a myriad of companies, foundations and associations, not all of which are transparent.

We are here to listen to you: 078 254 63 53 ▪ Email: [info@lescopetans.ch](mailto:info@lescopetans.ch)  
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## The financial risks of a merger



- The inevitable increase in Coppet's tax rate to bring it into line with the higher rates in other municipalities, followed by successive increases over the years to reach the level of towns with more than 14,000 inhabitants, i.e. rates of between 61 and 77 points (Gland, Nyon, Morges, Renens, Vevey, Montreux, Yverdon).
- The merger agreement for the future municipality of Terre Sainte of 17.6.2010, drawn up following the previous study, set its tax rate at 63 points for 2012 (article 20 of the agreement). At the time, Coppet's rate was 53 points.
- Higher administrative and operating costs, which will be multiplied by 2 or even 2.5 in the medium and the long term, as substantial investments in infrastructures will be required to support and operate a centralised administration.
- There are no economies of scale: a study by the University of St. Gallen on 142 mergers in Switzerland demonstrated this, and all the examples of mergers illustrate it.

## New municipal master plan



What about our reserves of green spaces, which will disappear in favour of increased densification on intercommunal areas and low-density land? This major redevelopment will be followed by offers from developers on the lookout. A real estate Monopoly is in the offing...

## Closing comments



In short, we are being asked to accept a merger study project that is poorly put together and incomplete. The reasons, needs, objectives and assessment criteria are not defined, and no hypothesis is put forward that could lead to a clear and objective conclusion.

The study project as presented is inadequate for carrying out a feasibility study, especially on an issue that would redefine the way our 8 municipalities and villages operate, and our future.

An "old idea" has resurfaced from the past that takes no account of current developments (teleworking, mobility and quality of life). Society has evolved, but our authorities, interest groups and certain elected representatives have clearly not understood this.

## Information session and public debate Thursday 24 August 2023 at 8.00 pm

Caves du Château de Coppet  
(access under the Château),  
Rue du Greny, Coppet

All welcome! Free admission