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Espaces transfrontaliers

Cross-border areas



The letter of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

Train the protagonists in territorial cooperation



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The implementation of European territorial cooperation co-funded by the European Union will be more successful the better the protagonists of the cooperation are trained. This training is the objective of the Interform project. The development of teaching methods and materials aimed at territorial cooperation protagonists undoubtedly provides added value in the development of cooperation actions on either side of national borders. This project, funded as part of the European Interact programme, should contribute to the European Union's objective of reducing the obstacles that these borders frequently raise to the development of the European territory as a whole.

AGENDA

2007 general assembly of the MOT

Chaired by Pierre Mauroy, the general assembly of the MOT will be held on 21 March 2007 at the Palais du Luxembourg in Paris.

Seminar in Metz

The topic of the seminar organized by the MOT in Metz on 16 November 2006 was the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the new European territorial cooperation instrument for the 2007-2013 programming period.

The EGTC is intended to facilitate concrete cooperation actions (cross-border, transnational and interregional) and the management of community programmes. The objective of the seminar was to discuss the challenges and prospects offered by this new instrument for cross-border cooperation.

The discussions could be followed in French, English or German. They drew more than 200 participants from many European borders. Almost 40% of them were from non-French authorities or organizations. Representatives of states and also of community institutions were present.

The discussions foregrounded the "qualitative" leap forward enabled by this new instrument. It provides a means for each European state to position itself as a genuine protagonist in cooperation, rather than as a simple arbiter as previously. The EGTC also unifies and simplifies the procedures of cooperation on the European scale, while allowing substantial flexibility.

Various territories have expressed their interest and their wish to establish new EGTCs. Some ten programme managing authorities are considering them, including the Grande Région*. Project sponsors have declared their willingness to make use of an

instrument "with a European dimension" to "formalize their cooperation", "bring together all the competent partners", "define a common strategy" and thus have "greater visibility to the inhabitants" of their territory.



The participants in the seminar on the EGTC.

Examples of projects presented included the Dunkirk/Western Flanders Platform, the French-Italian Riviera territory, the French-Luxembourg Alzette/Belval project and the German-Polish "Oderland-Nadodrze" Eurodistrict. The EGTC could also be used as the basis for implementation of "cross-border public services", in areas such as health (Cerdagne cross-border hospital project on the French-Spanish border) or the protection of cross-border natural spaces (French-Italian Alpi maritime - Mercantour cross-border nature park project). ■

*Grande Région: Saarland - Lorraine - Luxembourg - Rhineland - Palatinale - Wallonia - French and German-speaking community of Belgium.

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The Interform project

Training and research on cross-border practices



The Interform project, funded by the European Interact programme, concerns the formation of a European training and research network focusing on cross-border practices.

With a total budget of 937,500 euros, the project runs for three and a half years, from October 2004 to March 2008, and involves eight partners*. The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière is its lead partner.

The project originated in the determination of the partners to develop the capacity of territories to set up cross-border cooperation projects. The objective is to organize a scientific and technical corpus dealing with field practices by networking trainers and researchers specializing in this field.

It aims more particularly to increase the professionalism of those involved in cross-border cooperation projects and programmes, to collectively and progressively develop a shared culture and to help the structuring and networking of training locations on the borders.

Three strands of action

- The aim of the **resources** strand is to compile a document base and directories of training locations and experts on cross-border cooperation (see box "www.interform-eu.org").

- The **production** strand concerns the design of training materials for cross-border protagonists. To this end it organizes methodological or topic-based "test" seminars bringing together researchers, training professionals and field practitioners. The objective is to produce "teaching kits", training tools intended for transfer to all European borders.

- The **professionalization** strand is focused on the organization of an annual conference, the "Cross-border Discussions", for the purpose of developing content that can be used

as the basis for the training of cooperation protagonists, through comparison of the points of view of field practitioners and teachers/researchers (see box "The Cross-border Discussions conference 2006").

Discussion and production seminars

Two training seminars were organized in 2006. The first, a "methodological" seminar, was held in March and concerned the training of cross-border project leaders. The second, a "topic-based" seminar, took place in October and covered the setting-up of cooperation projects in public health. These two seminars, which were attended by operators from different cross-border territories, enabled discussion on the methods employed in concrete cases of cooperation and determination of model

The Cross-border Discussions conference 2006*

The second Cross-border Discussions conference took place on 30 November and 1 December 2006 in Kehl, Germany, under the title "From INTERREG III to the European territorial cooperation objective: new context, new challenges, evolving professions". Organized by the MOT and the Kehl/Strasbourg Euro-Institut, it was an opportunity to discuss the latest developments in territorial cooperation in the context of the new European programming period and more particularly the integration of cross-border approaches into an overall principle of balanced, harmonious and sustainable development of the European territory. The participants, researchers and practitioners, also discussed new principles of cross-border cooperation, its challenges and the specific competencies that authorities and professionals will have to develop in the context of the new 2007-2013 programming period.

*Following the first Cross-border Discussions conference on "Economic performance of border territories", Nice, 2 and 3 December 2005.

project management procedures. The objective, following these seminars, is to formalize their methodological and instructional elements in the form of "kits", now being produced. ■

*Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (lead partner), Kehl/Strasbourg Euro-Institut (G), University of Pau and the Pays de l'Adour (F), University of Nice Sophia Antipolis (F), University of Genoa (I), International Institute for Communications, Genoa (I), University of Geneva (CH), University of Deusto (SP).



Working group - Interform seminar on setting up projects in public health.

Viewpoints



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"Coordination -
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Managing Authority Interact

Interact is now well established as the special programme for the identification and transfer of know-how and best practices for the effective management of cross border, transnational and interregional Interreg programmes.

In order to complement the activities of Interact but also to qualify a wider group of regional actors for cross border cooperation, the programme has launched 21 projects involving partners from 30 countries and covering various themes. The big majority of the projects were contracted during 2005 will only finalise their activities in 2007. Projects such as the Interform "network" focusing on training and research in the field cross border practice have contributed to localise the Interact know how; the transfer of the experience will also in future be a major challenge to be met. In the new programming period, the Interact Points will be directly attributed to a Regional Network encompassing the cross border programmes and other stakeholders in a delimited geographical area.

The Interact Secretariat will ensure a strong coordination among the Interact Points, the National Contact Persons (NCPs) as well as to other stakeholders involved in the programme. As regards the NCPs, they shall play an important role as information broker between the states and the programme level by providing feedback to Interact products and by helping to identify and localise needs.

The creation of synergies between Interact and public networks such as MOT is deemed to support a geographically balanced service delivery of a European wide programme as Interact.



Michel Casteigts
Associate
professor at the
University of
Pau and the
Pays de l'Adour

Cross-border cooperation has been developing throughout Europe for some twenty years. That is about a generation. The time has come for the first pioneers to be relieved. They learned on the job, improvising solutions as and when problems arose. Making a virtue out of necessity, they sometimes tend to give this unavoidable empiricism the status of a model.

Times have changed. The challenges of cooperation, its context, its methods have become more demanding and more complex. The need for systematic professionalization of cross-border protagonists is no longer in doubt. This implies a more precise definition of professional activities and stringent development of training tools. That is the objective of Interform.

Cross-border cooperation is still an emerging and evolving practice. There is therefore no corpus of soundly-based knowledge nor stabilized technical content on which to base professional training. In this context, transmission of knowledge cannot be separated from its production, in other words research activities. This is the underlying meaning of the partnership that Interform has established between practitioners, teachers and researchers. There is nothing arbitrary about this commitment. It is an essential condition if tomorrow's project leadership is to be based on competent and recognized professionals.



Hynek Böhm
Project
manager,
Economic
Development
Agency of
Trinec Region,
www.hrat.org

Trinec region lies on the Czech side of the Czech, Polish and Slovak border. Our region was among the first who managed to create Euroregion Tesin Silesia, composed by the Czech and Polish side, which happened in 1998. This helped us in the work with the EU funds afterwards. We are the most remote Euroregion measured both from Prague and Warsaw – that is why we need each other probably more than in the other parts of Czech Republic or Poland. That is why we were very pleased to be invited among the participants of the Interform project.

Participation in the project discussion helped us in defining our new projects, notably we successfully launched Cross-border Education Academy project, which was inspired by one of the Interform partners – Euro-Institut in Kehl. We also adopted some other best practices examples, which we learnt thanks to the participation in the Interform project. We will develop these projects for our own needs under the framework of the Objective 3 target in the 2007-13 programming period.

www.interform-eu.org

A website devoted to research and training on cross-border practices was posted on line as part of the project in November 2006. It is available in French and English at www.interform-eu.org.

This new site is intended:

- to present the Interform project, activities and products,
- to post a selection of the latest news on training of cross-border practitioners,

- to provide a resource centre on cross-border training and research, with the compilation of a document database, a directory of training locations and a directory of experts specialized in the field,
- to network all the partners through a restricted access section.



Interform website.

Cross-border conurbations in Europe

The specific characteristics of cross-border conurbations have received relatively little consideration, not only in European policies but also in national legislation, contractualization and funding. But compared with "national" conurbations, their cross-border situation, straddling two or even three countries, renders the problems they are faced with more pro-

nounced and more complex.

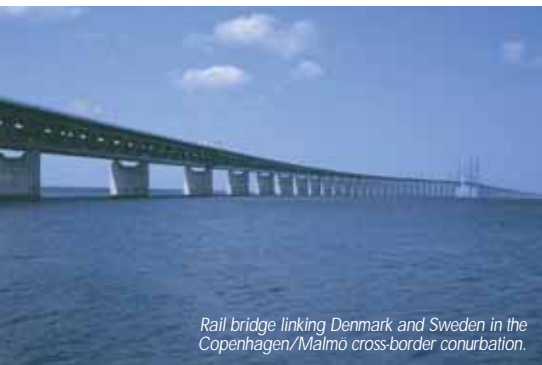
The MOT has conducted a study on these issues and more particularly on the "governance of cross-border conurbations in Europe". Commissioned by the Regional Affairs Secretariat of the Prefecture of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and conducted between April and November 2006, the study was intended to provide input data for the discussions of the Franco-Belgian parliamentary group* on the process of institutional and technical structuring of the Franco-Belgian Lille Eurometropole. In this context, the study consisted in identifying the European cross-border conurbations (work done in partnership with the IGEAT institute of the Free University of Brussels) and determining the good governance practices of their cross-border territory projects. It focused more specifically on the investigation and comparison of seven urban

sites**, and performed a cross-functional analysis of the crucial parameters for the operation of cross-border governance. Recommendations based on the best practices observed were then defined. ■

The study is available on the MOT website: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu.

**The role of this working group, in which French and Belgian members of parliament have been meeting since November 2005, is to finalize "a proposed institutional organization for the Franco-Belgian Lille metropolis".*

***Basle trilateral conurbation (France/Switzerland/Germany), France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation (France/Switzerland), Bayonne-San Sebastian Basque Eurocity (France/Spain), MAHHL cities: Maastricht, Aachen, Heerlen, Hasselt, Liège (Belgium/Netherlands/Germany), Öresund region: Copenhagen, Malmö (Denmark/Sweden), Görlitz-Zgorzelec Eurocity (Germany/Poland) and Centre region: Vienna, Bratislava, Győr, Brno (Austria/Slovakia/Hungary/Czech Republic).*



Rail bridge linking Denmark and Sweden in the Copenhagen/Malmö cross-border conurbation.

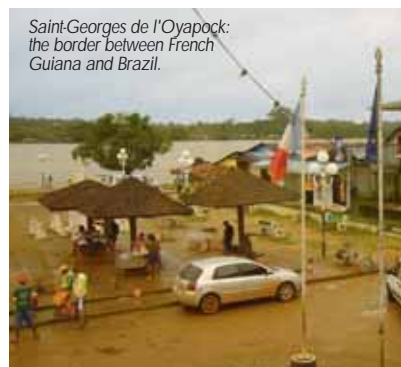
The MOT develops its assistance overseas

The MOT has been asked by the French Guiana regional council to assist it in drafting the French Guiana-Brazil-Surinam cross-border operational programme. The French Guiana regional council, which became a member of the MOT in September 2006, will be the managing authority for this programme for the 2007-2013 period ("European territorial cooperation" objective).

In addition to the production of the draft operational programme, the role of the MOT is to guide the emergence of an overall cooperation strategy for the whole of the cross-border territory. The first stage of this mission will consist in producing a territorial diagnosis including an inventory of resources,

identification of the protagonists and a survey of current projects and experiments. For example, the construction of a road bridge over the Oyapock river between French Guiana and Brazil is already the subject of an international agreement between France and Brazil.

The second stage of the work commissioned by the MOT will have the objective of listing the needs and expectations of the protagonists, identifying emerging projects and proposing concrete cooperation actions. It will take concrete form in the production of the strategic priorities of the programme and will be supplemented by the programme's administrative and financial procedures.



Saint-Georges de l'Oyapock: the border between French Guiana and Brazil.

Finally, the third stage will guide the regional council in the process of negotiation with the European Commission and in the implementation of programme startup and the first projects. ■

2007 - The MOT is ten years old

A major European conference, "**Cross-border territories: day-to-day Europe**", will take place in Lille on 8 and 9 November 2007 on the occasion of the tenth birthday of the MOT. This event, of European significance, is planned to bring together some 800 participants, elected representatives and protagonists of cross-border cooperation from all over Europe.

Further information will soon be available at www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu.



Cross-border transport

The 6th issue of the *Cahiers* of the MOT, covering cross-border passenger transport, is available at www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu. The proceedings of the seminar on the same topic, which took place in January 2006, will soon be available on the site.

