

## The METROBORDER Project

Published in January 2011, the final report of the METROBORDER project demonstrates the potential and the development of Cross-border Polycentric Metropolitan Regions (CBPMRs) in Europe. Between 2009 and 2010, the project focused on the study of two border regions: the Greater Région and the Upper Rhine.

METROBORDER, the applied research project, was launched by Switzerland in 2009 within the framework of priority 2 of the ESPON\* programme in collaboration with Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Walloon region. The MOT has participated in its role beside DATAR. The analysis of the CBPMRs focused on their external positioning, their internal organisation and their institutional and functional dimensions. Identified as "emerging and promising spatial configurations in Europe", the CBPMRs were defined according to criteria of polycentricity, metropolitan quality, functional and institutional integration and governance. On 2nd May last, the conclusions of the METROBORDER project were submitted to the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Poor institutionalisation and intergovernmentality characterise existing cross-border cooperation in these regions. They are strongly confronted with the asymmetric organisation of political and administrative areas of competence on both

sides of the border and must surpass multi-level cleavages. The report draws a certain number of recommendations leading to an improvement in the exploitation of the potential of these regions: the need for the involvement of municipal and economic actors, as well as possible delegation of mandates to stable supraregional institutions. According to the study, priority efforts should be made in transports, regional planning, research and innovation. The report also states that a single and exact delimitation of these regions does not exist. They have on the contrary evolved according to domains and political projects. Finally, the European Union is identified as a key agent in the CBPMRs because it can facilitate cooperation by providing the local, regional and national authorities with innovative tools.

\*The European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion

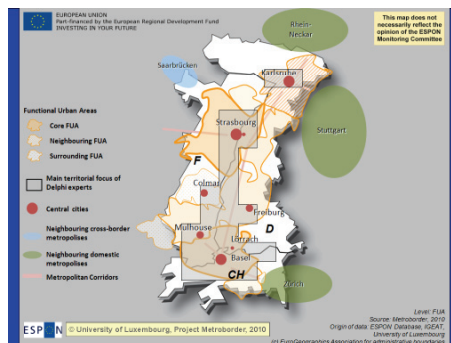
### Jean Peyrony

Director General of MOT since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011

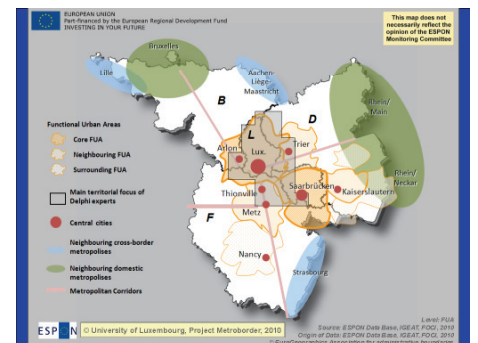


Every day we hear about cross-border issues. Our economies are shaken by globalisation; citizens from Europe's neighbouring countries are striving for more freedom and prosperity; energy and environmental problems are crossing borders. There are so many risks as interests and visions may diverge in the short term; but there are also so many opportunities if one adopts a cooperative approach. This has been the challenge of MOT's partners right from the very start: local and regional communities which meet the everyday needs of citizens and mobilize for cooperation within cross-border territories; States, the guarantors of economic, social and territorial cohesion, engaged in the construction of Europe; the European Union and Council of Europe; enterprises and networks ... The rhythm is paced by the European agenda. The months to come will see how the future cohesion policy is shaped. This policy is an indispensable tool for the development of territories and their cooperation. The MOT team is ready to contribute at every stage to strategies, programmes and projects, as a multi-level governance tool of cross-border cooperation, in compliance with the spirit of the 2010 parliamentary report.

I am happy to place my professional experience, from the local level to community level, at the service of the members and institutionnel partners of MOT.



"CBPMR Upper Rhine": schematic synthesis map of METROBORDER results



"CBPMR Greater Region": schematic synthesis map of METROBORDER results

# EVENTS

## JUNE 2011

On 7th June this year the African Union Border Programme is organising the first edition of the Day of Borders at Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), which will bring together representatives of states, institutional actors of civil society and researchers to discuss the topic of cross-border cooperation.

The culture group of the EGTC West-Vlaanderen / Flandre – Dunkerque – Côte d'Opale is organising a seminar on "Cross-border cooperation: seize the last opportunities" on 22nd June at the Dunkerque Musée Portuaire.

On 26th June the Kehl Euro-Institute will organise a thematic week on "Tourism in the Upper Rhine: actors, financing instruments and projects" at the Villa Rehfus.

## JULY 2011

The Third Assises on French-Hungarian decentralised cooperation will take place in Budapest on 6th and 7th July. These Assises, in which MOT will participate, are organised by the French embassy and France Hungary Initiatives.

Further information on events:  
[www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu)

## The first meeting of the France-Luxembourg intergovernmental commission meeting



The site of Eco-Cité d'Esch-Belval in the south of Luxembourg

The France-Luxembourg intergovernmental commission met for the first time on 21st April 2011 in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The French delegation was headed by Laurent Wauquiez, Minister responsible for European Affairs at the French Foreign Ministry, and Luxembourg's delegation was headed by Jean-Marie Halsdorf, Minister for the Interior and Grand Region of Luxembourg. Created on 26th January 2010 in Paris with the signing of a convention between France and Luxembourg, the goal of the commission is to enhance cross-border cooperation between the two countries. At the meeting discussions were held on the

continuation of the cross-border conurbation project in the territory of Alzette-Belval, officially an "Operation of National Interest" since 7th April last. Within this framework, three structuring projects have been addressed: a health care centre with the possible construction of a cross-border hospital, a sustainable development ecology centre at the service of enterprises and an information and communication technology centre with the possible creation of a Data-centre. The commission has decided to commence EGTC Alzette-Belval activities on 1st January 2012. The dossiers concerning the mobility of cross-border workers have also

been of current interest. The demolition of the Zoufftgen border post and the enlargement of the A31 have been announced, as well as the confirmation for 2013 of the Micheville connection. The next meeting of the France-Luxembourg intergovernmental commission has been planned for the end of the year.



"A joint, coherent, structured and integrated project" in a "spirit of complementarity and in accordance with the win-win principle"

## IN BRIEF

### Opening of cross-border cooperation to Andorra

On 13th April last, the French Council of Ministers ratified the draft law authorising the approval of the protocol of amendment and accession of the Principality of Andorra to the treaty between the French Republic and the Kingdom of Spain concerning cross-border cooperation between territorial communities.

### The French-Belgian health cooperation framework agreement

The French-Belgian health cooperation framework agreement has just completed its complex path to ratification by Belgium. This instrument had been commenced at a meeting in Brussels in November 2002 between those responsible for French and Belgian health insurances. They pointed out that health cooperation should have a specific legal base and that it is essential to identify the competent authorities to be involved in negotiations and the

management of cooperation conventions and ensure they are implemented on a permanent basis. The main goal of the instrument is to structure and regulate cross-border health cooperation. This initiative has inspired other regions, among which the French-German and French-Spanish border zones. Today, the framework agreement is the instrument on which the French-Belgian health cooperation has been built since its ratification by the

French National Assembly on 3rd October 2007. This treaty officially entered into force on 1st March 2011. Both states shall now set up a joint Commission to monitor its implementation. Currently, those responsible for this initiative are reflecting on a second instrument which could operate in the medical social sector.

# EUROPE NEWS

## A new Euroregion between Italy and Austria

A new Euroregion between the North of Italy and Austria was created on 3rd May. It covers the regions of Trentino-Alto Adige in Italy and the Tyrol in Austria. The European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) shall be called "Euroregion-Tyrol-Alto Adige-Trentino".

## "A European policy for the mountain"

In an information report dated 27 April, Jacques Blanc, senator and member of the Commission for European Affairs of the French Senate, put forward 10 proposals aimed at a more profound acknowledgement of mountain areas in the Common Agricultural Policy and the European territorial cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period.

Further information:  
[www.senat.fr/rap/r10-458/r10-4581.pdf](http://www.senat.fr/rap/r10-458/r10-4581.pdf)

# MOT NEWS

## MOT working group: the staff of cross-border cooperation bodies

On 12th April 2011, the MOT working group on the staff of cross-border cooperation bodies met to discuss the results of the questionnaire launched on this subject in the autumn of 2010.

These works have helped draw up a standard profile of operational teams: small, bi- or tri-national teams whose staff have the linguistic and professional skills to help address complex cross-border cooperation issues.

When recruiting their staff, the cross-border organisations must resolve a complex equation: offer sufficiently attractive salaries and working conditions, give equal treatment to staff members, respect the legal regulations applicable to the organisation and the budget allocated by the members. The discussions have helped show the

precarious nature of what has been proposed to the candidates. The difficulties do not stem from any legal regulation in particular but from the conflict between existing legal regimes on both sides of the border.

The intention of the working group is to pursue its work in the identification of the concrete difficulties found in the recruitment of its staff and in the assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of possible alterations to the legal framework.



### Further information

MOT members can consult the results of the questionnaire and the minutes in the "members" section (item "Seminar") of the MOT Internet site: [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu).

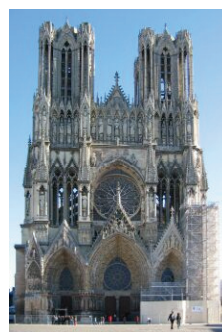
## Recent MOT contributions at the European level

On 15th April this year the MOT replied to the European Commission's green paper on "The modernisation of EU public procurement policy – towards a more efficient European procurement market" by illustrating the cross-border context by way of two examples. On the one hand, a case where the contract awarders, located on both sides of the border, wish to jointly launch a public tender and on the other hand, cross-border participation in public tenders.

The MOT has also contributed to the initiative opinion on "European and international mobility for local and regional authority staff" of the Committee of Regions and took part in the meeting which was held on 29th April last. The consultation was focused on four issues raised by the rapporteur Ms Mireille LACOMBE, member of the EDUC Commission of the CoR, on mobility and training, obstacles to be surpassed and exchange programmes.

Both contributions are available on the MOT site: [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu)

## The MOT General Assembly at Reims



The General Assembly of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière will take place this year at the invitation of the Champagne-Ardenne Regional Council on Thursday, 16th June 2011 at 11.30 a.m. at the Reims Hôtel de Ville. The MOT Board of Directors shall meet on Thursday, 16th June at 10 a.m. and on the same day there will be a technicians' platform meeting at 2.30 p.m.

On the day before the MOT shall organise a panel discussion on the subject: "Cross-border cooperation: from national strategies to territorial projects" on Wednesday 15th June 2011 at 2.30 p.m.

Further information on MOT site: [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu)

# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ Signing of an agreement with Namibia to combat Malaria

*All Africa, 25th April*

"On Monday the Angolan and Namibian health ministers, [...], signed a cross-border protocol for the fight against malaria at Nacamunde in the Angolan province of Cunene [...]"

## ▲ Aragnouet says "Yes"

*La Semaine des Pyrénées, 28th April*

"The municipal council of Aragnouet met on Tuesday evening to work on a dossier: the project to extend Piau station. There was one objective at the start of this project: to link the exit of the Aragnouet-Bielsa Tunnel to Piau[...]. This project includes the construction of three ski lifts, two snow escalators and the creation of new ski runs. It is connected around two areas: the Vallée de Saux on the side of the Tunnel, and the Fromagerie on the Gela side".

## ▲ Preserving nature on the two sides of Bidassoa

*Sud Ouest, 28th April*

"The management and enhancement of the Txingudi natural environment will benefit from European funds [...]. The Basque government has edged closer to the General Council of the Pyrenees-Atlantic in order to be included in a territorial cooperation programme under Interreg IV funds, the areas of Plaiundi in Irun and Corniche Basque with Domaine d'Abbadia".

## ▲ The tax rate of the 2nd pillar shall be put to the National Parliament in June

*Le Pays Gessien, 29th April*

"After a meeting held on 20th April at the Finance Ministry in Paris, the European cross-border grouping obtained the promise of a revision of the law which may result in a reduction of the tax rate for the 2nd pillar".

## ▲ Infobest : 18 775 requests answered in 2010

*L'Alsace, 5th May*

"[...] Most requests come from citizens (91%). The topics addressed mainly concern the daily life of cross-border workers: taxes, retirement, labour law, unemployment, health insurance, family benefits, car registration, etc".

## ▲ Good speed to the third route between Propriano and Porto-Torres

*Corse Matin, 9th May*

"Since Saturday the third weekly route between Propriano and Porto-Torres has become a reality. [It is] the accomplishment of an initiative [...] which intends to strengthen sea routes between Corsica and Sardinia".

## ▲ Energies: joint project with England

*Ouest France, 9th May*

"In order to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, [The Lannion-Trégor Conurbation (LTC)] is engaged in a joint programme with its British neighbours, baptised "The Seacs project", for Sustainable Energy Across the Common Space, within the framework of Interreg cross-border calls for tender".

## ▲ Towards the implementation of two cross-border projects of cooperation between Spain and Morocco

*Maghreb Arab Press, 11th May*

"[...] The implementation of these projects has just been adopted by the Deputation of Malaga, within the framework of a programme of seven development projects which will be carried out in the course of the next three years thanks to European funds".

## ▲ Health without borders

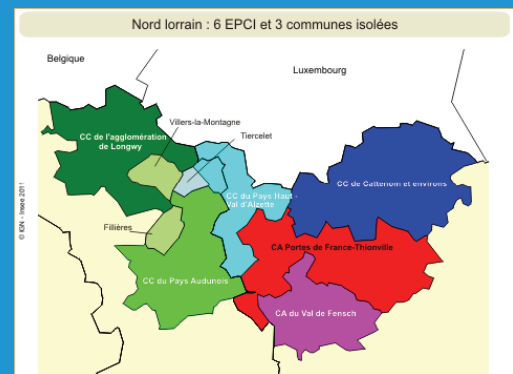
*Le Républicain lorrain, 14 mai*

"The French-Belgian cooperation framework agreement, signed yesterday at Mont-Saint-Martin, helps strengthen partnerships in medical, health and social medical areas. The Health Minister of the Walloon Government recalled the close ties which unite Lorraine to Belgium in terms of hospital care and rescue interventions".

## New publication

A study of Insee Lorraine on the demographic evolution of North Lorraine conducted at the request of the Lorraine Nord Urban Planning and Sustainable Development Agency (AGAPE) illustrates a demographic rebound in this border territory of Belgium and Luxembourg. This appeal is explained first of all by the geographic proximity of the Grand Duchy and the strong development of border work. For a dozen years now small peri-urban communes close to Luxembourg have taken advantage of this growth.

Information : [www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?reg\\_id=17&ref\\_id=17329](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?reg_id=17&ref_id=17329)



In the North of Lorraine and Sillon mosellan, border between Belgium and Luxembourg, Nord Lorraine extends along 795 km<sup>2</sup> and covers 86 communes. It consists of six Public Establishments of Inter-commune Cooperation (PEIC) and three communes.

## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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Director of publication: Jean Peyrony  
Production: Sophie Valette

Photos: METROBORDER / ESPSON – University of Luxembourg, "Esch-belval vu de Micheville" - Daniel Brachetti (<http://www.flickr.com/people/bracdan/>)

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