

UNDER THE HIGH PATRONAGE OF  
MR EMMANUEL MACRON PRESIDENT  
OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

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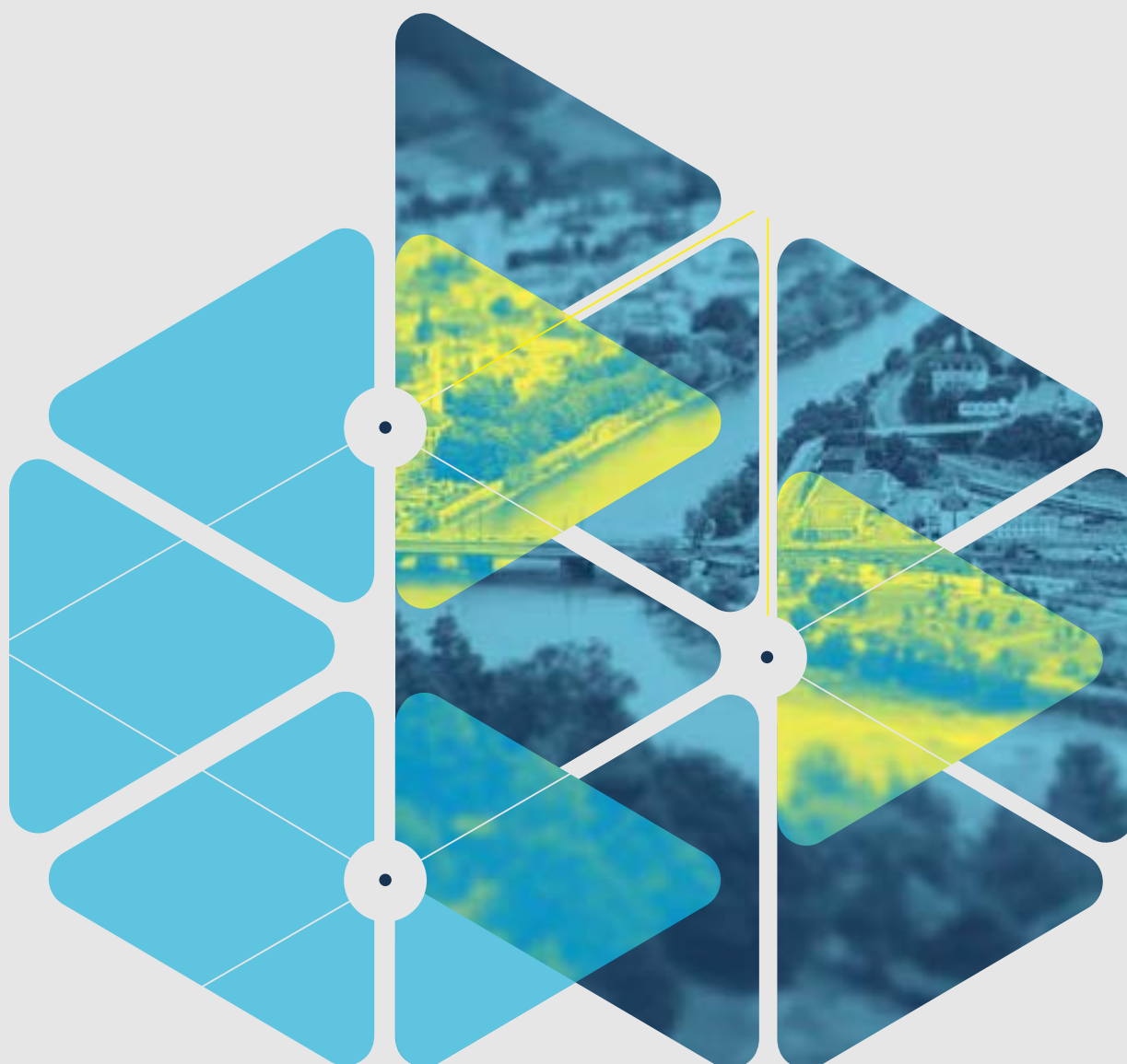


# borders forum

Cross-border territories  
on the front line?

09/10  
NOV. 2020

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ONLINE



PRESS KIT

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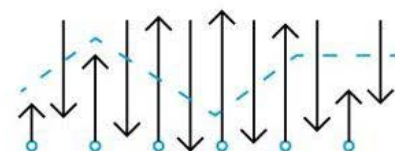
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### CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES REPRESENT



**40%**  
of the territory of the  
European Union.

More than 1 European in 3  
lives in a border region.



**2 MILLION**

cross-border workers in the EU –  
of which over 20% live in France.<sup>1</sup>

**20,000 KM**

OF INTERNAL LAND BORDERS IN THE EU.

**37**

cross-border  
conurbations in  
Europe.

**11**  
of which are  
on France's  
borders.

## Editorial



**Christian Dupessey**  
President of the MOT, Mayor  
of Annemasse, President of  
the Metropolitan Pole of the  
French Genevois

« The global health crisis we are going through has highlighted the specific issues faced by our cross-border regions. We never could have imagined seeing such drastic closures of the borders. And yet it happened. This caused real disruption for our populations – because the borders in most of our territories have little meaning given how fully integrated the cross-border areas are in daily life. The economic impacts were obviously great for cross-border workers and economic players, but not only for them. Families and lives were quite simply cut in two for several months, and that should give us pause for thought. How can we ensure that the specificities of cross-border territories are taken into account concretely, legally and in terms of regulation?

This is a major challenge that we need to address together in the coming months, and it is the purpose of the MOT's proposal to European and national institutions: to set up a European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance in order to put cross-border territories back at the heart of Europe's concerns!

It is together, by sharing our experiences and speaking with one voice, that we will succeed in having our specificities recognised.

I am committed to actively ensuring that this voice is heard loud and clear, and I look forward to seeing you on 9-10 November at the MOT's first Borders Forum! »



**Elisa Ferreira**  
European  
Commissioner for  
Cohesion and Reforms

« Building Europe together means leaving no-one behind. This is particularly important in cross-border regions which are often peripheral with fewer public services. I am determined to ensure we give border citizens and businesses an adequate level of access not only to basic infrastructure and public services, but also to employment, education and healthcare. »



**Apostolos Tzitzikostas**,  
President of the European  
Committee of the Regions

« The cooperation among border regions has been strategic during the pandemic and must be strengthened to boost Europe's recovery and resilience. From health service to smart and sustainable transport, from environmental protection to shared innovation, the joint work of border regions can help pioneer ways to a stronger European integration, focusing on the real needs of citizens and local communities. »

### TWO COMPLEMENTARY JOURNEYS:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> day will be dedicated to **cross-border territories in Europe and to the 10th Meeting of the EGCT Platform.**
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> day will be dedicated to **territories on French Borders.**

### Some key figures

**8** ROUND  
TABLES

**40** SPEAKERS

**9** REPRESENTED  
COUNTRIES

PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST DAY 09 NOVEMBER 2020

# Cross-border territories in Europe and the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EGTC<sup>1</sup> Platform 2020



The first day of the Borders Forum, co-organised with the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, will be introduced by Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, President of the European Committee of the Regions, and Christian Dupessey, President of the MOT, Mayor of Annemasse, 1st Vice-President of Annemasse Agglo. Europe's internal borders and European management of the Covid crisis, as well as its external borders on the eve of the Brexit and aftermath of the American elections, will be discussed.

## The objectives


- reaffirm, along the representatives of the European institutions and States, that at a time when the world is going through an unprecedented health and economic crisis, European and cross-border cooperation is the right response;
- highlight the EGTCs<sup>2</sup>, their role after 2020, and the draft European ECBM<sup>3</sup> regulation (resolution of cross-border obstacles);
- highlight the Franco-German Treaty of Aachen and debate the possibility of similar approaches in Europe, in order to strengthen bilateral cross-border cooperation and European integration.

**Moderator: Caroline de Camaret, Chief editor of Europe, France 24**  
The 1<sup>st</sup> day will be organised on the basis of 4 round tables:

<b>ROUND-TABLE #1</b> 10H- 11H30 Overcoming borders, a major challenge for the future of Europe	<b>ROUND-TABLE #3</b> 14H30- 16H00 10 years of the EGTC platform and 30 years of INTERREG – outcome and visions for the future
<b>ROUND-TABLE #2</b> 11H30- 13H00 What European tools to implement an effective cross-border policy?	<b>ROUND-TABLE #4</b> 16H00- 17H30 The Treaty of Aachen, a driving force in Europe?

And two key points:

**KEY POINT** during round-table #1

 **Presentation of the « European Cross-border Citizen's Alliance »**

**KEY POINT** during round-table #3

 **2020 EGTC award, by the European Committee of the Regions**

## Key point



## Presentation of the « European Cross-border Citizen's Alliance »

### «BORDERS AT THE HEART OF TOMORROW'S EUROPE»

By the European Committee of the Regions, the MOT, the AEBC<sup>4</sup> and the CESC<sup>5</sup>,  
Presented the 9 November, during the round table #1.

While the crisis initially provoked uncoordinated border measures, it also revealed interdependencies and gave rise to multiple forms of cooperation and cross-border solidarity, which now need to be organised and strengthened by European and national public policies that take full account of the specific nature of cross-border territories.

This is why, at a time when Europe is preparing to decide on its budget and trajectories for the period 2021-27, the European Committee of the Regions, the MOT, the AEBC and the CESC, will propose on 9 November a « European Cross-border Citizen's Alliance » and are calling on elected representatives, local

authorities, organisations and (trans) border citizens to join them.

This Alliance advocates, on behalf of cross-border territories throughout Europe, that European and national decisions should in the future provide border authorities with more resources and powers to deepen cooperation across borders. It is addressed to European and national authorities.

**TO CONSULT THE TEXT OF THE ALLIANCE<sup>6</sup>**  
<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/news/news/show/alliance-europeenne-pour-les-citoyens-transfrontaliers/>

**TO SIGN THE ALLIANCE**  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/European-Cross-Border-Citizens-Alliance>

## THE SIGNATORIES OF THE ALLIANCE ADVOCATE THAT:

- ① border regions are reflected more fully in EU policy and legislation,
- ① border regions and their cross-border groupings be involved in the conference on the future of Europe,
- ① border public authorities have appropriate powers and specific resources, as well as fast-track procedures,
- ① negotiations on the draft regulation on a European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM)<sup>7</sup> come to a successful conclusion,
- ① the legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border cooperation are removed,
- ① the States and the European Commission carry out cross-border territorial impact assessments of public policies,
- ① cross-border observatories be set up to measure cross-border integration and identify obstacles,
- ① an effective framework allows the implementation of cross-border public services,
- ① border regions be involved in the implementation of the European Green Deal, and fully benefit from the Next Generation EU recovery plan,
- ① a minimum level of cross-border cooperation is guaranteed in the event of a global, European or regional crisis.

<sup>(1)</sup> EGTC platform of the European Committee of the Regions, hosted by the MOT on behalf of the EGTCs at the French borders, which are, directly or via their constituent members, members of the MOT.

<sup>(2)</sup> European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation: see page 8..

<sup>(3)</sup> European Cross-Border Mechanism.

<sup>(4)</sup> Association of European Border Regions.

<sup>(5)</sup> Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (equivalent structure to the MOT on the borders with Hungary)

<sup>(6)</sup> The text is translated in the 24 official languages of the EU.

<sup>(7)</sup> COM(2018) 0373.



# THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SUPPORT FOR BORDER REGIONS



The European Union has 40 internal land border regions, which represent 40% of the Union's territory and close to 30% of the EU population. However, border regions generally perform less well economically than other regions within a Member State. Access to public services such as hospitals and universities is generally lower in border regions. Individuals, businesses and public authorities in border regions face specific difficulties when navigating between different administrative and legal systems.

Different types of obstacles hamper interactions across borders, thus preventing border regions from reaching their full potential. This unmet potential – the border effect – is significant. Research shows that, along internal EU borders, a potential gain of 2% GDP in border regions could be obtained if one fifth of existing obstacles would be overcome. Along external borders too, similar challenges persist.

## THE INTERREG SUPPORT

The European Commission has been providing financial support to cross-border cooperation with European Territorial Cooperation – Interreg – for the past 30 years. With its limited resources when compared to the whole of Cohesion Policy (Interreg represents less than 3% of ERDF), Interreg intervenes mainly on establishing the cooperation element. Building trust is key!

## FURTHER SUPPORT

This is all highlighted in the Communication "Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions". With it, the European Commission has triggered the process of providing support to cross-border regions to overcome

INTERREG HAS ACHIEVED MUCH IN SUPPORT FOR THESE REGIONS. HOWEVER, CONSULTATIONS AND CONTINUED EXCHANGES WITH STAKEHOLDERS HAVE SHOWN THAT MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO SUPPORT BORDER REGIONS TO ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL. TWO MAJOR LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNT WITH THIS PROCESS:

- ① **Support beyond funding** should be given to border regions to facilitate cross-border interactions.
- ② **Focus on legal and administrative obstacles:** frequently incompatible legal frameworks are present on the two sides of a border, hampering interactions. Work needs to be done to identify, analyse and lift those obstacles.

legal and administrative obstacles. In particular, two elements illustrate the recent support (beyond funding) to border regions:

- **The « b-solutions » initiative** in favour of very small projects addressing very specific cross-border obstacles in a given cross-border region. For each project, a legal assessment of the root causes of the obstacles is made and a potential solution is identified. (<https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/>).
- **The European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM)** - To overcome obstacles we must ensure that an adequate legal framework is in place. This is why the Commission has proposed a new "Mechanism to overcome legal and administrative in a cross-border context". This would allow for specific solutions to be found when incompatible legal or administrative frameworks hamper the development of cross-border projects. (<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/activites-ue/obstacles-intergovernmental-group/>).



This work has a clear impact on the global challenges the European Union is committed to addressing and which the European Commission has set as its priorities.

**Supporting border regions is a way to ensure that no individual or territory is left behind. De facto, as public services tend to be planned mainly from a national perspective and within national boundaries, citizens living in often peripheral border regions have on average lower access to public services, like healthcare or education.**

## CROSS-THEMATIC ISSUES

Ensuring that EU internal borders remain as permeable in terms of networks, like public transports, would have a significant impact in terms of green mobility; managing common natural spaces across borders is vital to preserving biodiversity; also cross border risk prevention plans for floods or forest fires contribute to preservation of biodiversity; water and air quality and developing cross-border value chains can make a real difference in promoting a more effective circular economy. Enhancing SMEs accessibility to markets just across the border, by ensuring their digital innovation would take in consideration their full catchment areas with a 360° degrees perspective (namely with cross-border digital innovation hubs), would ensure that border regions would also be fit for the Digital Age. Ensuring the correct tools are put in place (e.g. EGTC and ECBM) to ensure that cross-border administrations and citizens in border regions can fully cooperate with their natural peers and partners in the neighbouring region – e.g. establishing common access to cross-border healthcare services – is a way to promote our European way of life. Finally, working with border regions located along external borders of the EU allows us to play a constructive role in promoting good neighbourly relations and socio-economic prosperity. With this work, we also promote Europe as a global player.

## NEXT STEPS

A formal Report of the European Commission is being prepared to best shape the financial and non-financial support that can be granted to all border regions.

National and regional authorities are currently programming their ERDF programmes – including Interreg – for 2021-2027. The knowledge built, and the experience gained, with the work on cross-border legal and administrative obstacles should now contribute to ensuring that ERDF will address those challenges.

Cross-border regions are made of contiguous border regions – they might be peripheral at times, but they are not isolated from each other. Therefore one important lesson is that to work effectively on the development of an individual border region, its neighbours should be taken into consideration. This is why national and regional ERDF operational programmes (counting for circa 97% of ERDF) will also have to contribute to cross-border cooperation in 2021-2027.

## KEY ACTORS

Besides border regions and their national or international associations, the European Commission has also established a dedicated "Border Focal Point" whose task it is to ensure the border dimension is duly considered in all its legislative or financial proposals and to support networking and exchanges of experience among border regions. The Border Focal Point works in close cooperation with the Committee of the Regions' EGTC platform.

## SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**Elisa Ferreira**  
European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms  
Opening at 9h30, TR#1, 09/11 at 10h00

**Normunds Popen**  
Deputy Director General, DG REGIO, European Commission  
TR#1, 09/11 at 11h30

**Anne Sander**  
Member of the European Parliament, Vice-President of the MOT  
TR#2, 09/11 at 11h30

# 10 YEARS OF THE EGTC PLATFORM



## What is an EGTC?

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was introduced in 2006 through a European Union Regulation in order to overcome cross-border obstacles and assist public authorities in different Member States looking to implement actions across national borders.

The EGTC instrument enables public actors to establish an international entity under European law, and in that way simplify cross-border cooperation and cut red tape considerably. This legal instrument complements funding instruments for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), also known

as Interreg, to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion. The EGTC provides a stable structure for public actors at different levels to cooperate, which helps multi-level governance within the EU and with Third countries.

As of November 2020, there were 78 EGTCs in the EU, with several more being set-up. These EGTCs are established in 20 EU Member States, four non-EU countries, and they involve over 1 000 local and regional authorities, universities and other public bodies.

## SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

- Apostolos Tzitzikostas**  
President of the European Committee of the Regions  
Opening at 9h30, TR#1, 09/11 at 10h00
- Isabelle Boudineau**  
President of the COTER commission (European Committee of the Regions), Coordinator of the EGTC Platform  
TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30
- François Calvet**  
Senator for Pyrénées-Orientales, President of the Cerdanya Hospital EGTC support committee  
TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30

- Béla Keszegh**  
Mayor of Komárno (SK), Member of Pons Danubii EGTC  
TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30
- Sandra Sodini**  
Director of International Relations, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, member of the Senza Confini EGTC (IT/AT)  
TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30
- Jorg Saalbach**  
Director of EGTC Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor  
TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30
- Rudy Demotte**  
President of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis - TR#2, 09/11 at 11h30

The EGTCs fulfil many different purposes, all of which aim to add value through long-term territorial cooperation, going beyond the projects' horizon. EGTCs contribute to implementing ETC programmes and Cohesion Policy projects as well as other European, national and regional projects, enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion.

EGTCs are often multi-level governance instruments, bringing together authorities from different countries, administrative levels and policy sectors. This happens both within the EGTC membership and through involvement in the project or other activities.

EGTCs are suitable as cross-border micro-laboratories to develop public services, new public transport and new approaches for cross-border education. EGTCs also play an important planning role in functional areas such as environmental protection, transport planning, integrated tourism and economic cooperation. They less frequently manage ETC programmes, in whole or part, or cross-border infrastructure.



The EGTC Platform integrates the political and technical representatives of all the existing EGTCs, EGTCs under construction and experts. The Platform aims to facilitate the exchange of experiences on the ground, to promote the EGTC as a tool for territorial cohesion and give visibility to the EGTC projects, while supporting the consultative works of the CoR in cross-border issues.

## THE EGTC PLATFORM

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has been one of the main political promoters of the EGTC instrument. The Committee has a specific consultative role in the Territorial Cooperation (Article 306 of the Treaty) and can support effectively EGTCs on the basis of interinstitutional cooperation and a constructive and forward-looking approach.

The CoR has been very active in promoting and supporting the EGTC: it adopts political opinions, monitors the implementation of the EGTC legislation in Member States, informs about the EGTC Regulation and its evolution, organises events, gives advice and support to existing EGTC in constitution, produces studies, and acts as a meeting point for politicians, officials, experts and civil society. The CoR is at the same time also the official European register of EGTCs.

Key point

ROUND-TABLE #3

**2020 EGTC Award by the European Committee of the Regions**

The European Committee of the Regions will be awarding the European biennial award named "Building Europe across borders" - Award for European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation to recognise and give visibility to the best practice of EGTCs in Europe. The award is intended to contribute towards ensuring better knowledge of EGTCs by the national, regional and local authorities in the EU, by the EU institutions and the public.



# THE EXAMPLE OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN BORDER

## SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**Clément Beaune**  
Minister of State for European Affairs,  
France  
Closing remarks, 09/11 at 17h30

**Heike Raab**  
Secrétaire d'Etat pour l'Europe,  
les Médias et le Numérique, Land  
de Rhénanie-Palatinat, Allemagne  
TR#4, 09/11 à 16h

**Jean Rottner**  
Président de la Région Grand Est  
TR#4, 09/11 à 16h

**Michael Frehse**  
Chef de la direction générale du  
Territoire, Ministère fédéral de l'Intérieur,  
de la Construction et du Territoire,  
Allemagne  
TR#2, 09/11 à 11h30

## The Treaty of Aachen, a driving force in Europe?

On 22 January 2019, Chancellor Angela Merkel and President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron signed a new Treaty of Cooperation and Integration between Germany and France in Aachen, complementing the 1963 Elysée Treaty.

The Treaty of Aachen (TALC) marks a clear recognition of the cross-border phenomenon as a central feature of European construction.

### A CHAPTER ENTIRELY DEDICATED TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

This treaty, drafted with an active contribution from the MOT, aims to eliminate cross-border obstacles to ease the implementation of projects and simplify the daily life of border residents. To this end, « the two states shall provide the territorial authorities of border territories and cross-border entities such as Eurodistricts with appropriate competences, dedicated resources and accelerated procedures »; and « if no other means enable them to overcome these obstacles, appropriate legal and administrative provisions, including derogations, may also be granted ». A declaration on 15 priority cross-border projects was also adopted<sup>8</sup>.

### A FRANCO-GERMAN COMMITTEE FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION (CCC)

This is one of the key measures of the Treaty. The CCC examines «as a matter of priority those issues relating to cross-border cooperation which it was not possible to resolve within the existing bodies, and whose resolution requires increased cooperation», adopts an annual roadmap and brings together at least once a year representatives of the French and German Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, as well as local executive members<sup>9</sup>. It met for the first time on 22 January in Hambach.



Cross-border territories at the Franco-German border.

The last CCC met on 6 October 2020 at the invitation of Clément Beaune, Secretary of State for European Affairs and Michael Roth, Minister of State for Europe, to assess the health situation on both sides of the Rhine and the strategies needed to halt the spread of the pandemic.

### A MODEL FOR OTHER BORDERS

The specific example of French-German cooperation with the establishment of the Cross-border Cooperation Committee (CCC) could serve as a reference on some other French or perhaps European borders.

### MORE INFO

#### On the Treaty:

<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2019/01/08/signature-nouveau-traite-franco-allemand-aix-la-chapelle>

Brochure published by the MOT in the wake of the Aachen Treaty: «France-Germany: cross-border observation at the heart of Europe»: <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/the-mot/public/france-germany-cross-border-observation-at-the-heart-of-europe/>

## The Grand Est Region: a border area affected by the COVID-19 crisis



The border village of Scheiblenhardt, cut in half by border closures during the health crisis  
©Badener

On 16 March 2020, the Franco-German border is closed, except for the transport of goods and cross-border workers. The Strasbourg Transport Company has no longer been authorised to serve Germany, and the tramway going from Strasbourg to Kehl stops at the border.

The next day, France implements population containment; Luxembourg announces a «state of crisis» while Switzerland closes its borders to those who do not reside or work in Switzerland. Finally, Belgium adopts strict containment measures on the 18th of March.

The neighbouring countries took urgent common measures. They agreed to maintain employment contracts of cross-border workers, to extend teleworking possibilities beyond 25% of the employee's working hours, and to guarantee all social protection rights and full remuneration<sup>10</sup>.

The Grand Est region is the prime cross-border region, with nearly 760 km of borders, including a 450 km French-German border. It is home to 166,800 people working abroad<sup>11</sup>.

The emergency and exceptional measures required by the situation of cross-border workers also reflect the interdependence of local economic systems on regional borders. They are today proof of the continuity and integration of these territories. In times of crisis, this continuity can represent a basis for operational cooperation between European states.

### «NEVER AGAIN!»

At the MOT general assembly in Colmar on 9 September, Claudine Ganter, regional councilor of the Grand Est Region, and Vice-President of the MOT, emphasised «the tensions, the withdrawal into oneself, and the great difficulties of border workers during the health crisis, as their daily commutes could pass from 20 minutes to more than 2 hours!.»

### TOWARDS A CROSS-BORDER MODEL FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT?

Already on 16 March, the date on which the border between France and Germany was closed, a contact group was set up between the Grand Est Region, the regional Prefecture and the three German Länder along France's border. The aim of the group was to be in daily contact about the restrictions on free movement and their impact on cross-border workers. The group was later expanded to include the regional health agency, the French border departments, the German health and police authorities, the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the French Interior Ministry.

These daily exchanges facilitated the transfer of patients from the Grand Est Region to the neighbouring Länder. The setting-up of this binational group in the context of the crisis made it possible to forge a joint response to the health emergencies, while also enabling information to be passed on about the difficulties linked to crossing the border faced by economic players who found themselves on the frontline. **The use of this crisis contact group reveals the possibility of urgent action on the scale of a catchment area rather than through predefined perimeters.**

This cooperation is occurring within the framework put in place by the Aachen Treaty and its Cross-Border Cooperation Committee.

(8) Concerning: the extension of mobility programmes for young people, the improvement of cross-border rail links, the reconversion of the area near the Fessenheim nuclear power plant, and the establishment of a joint citizens' fund to support citizens' initiatives.

(9) Länder, Region, Departments, Eurodistricts, national parliamentarians.

(10) The full details of these measures are listed and indexed by the association «Frontaliers Grand Est», a resource centre for frontier workers.

(11) Source: Insee Analyses, N°97, June 2019.

PRESENTATION OF THE DAY OF 10 NOVEMBER 2020

# Territories on the French borders



The second day will be inaugurated by Jean Jouzel, Climatologist and glaciologist, Member of the Academy of Sciences. It will highlight cross-border territories on French borders, to reveal their diversity and specificities, from Dunkirk to Bayonne, via Nice, Geneva and Strasbourg, and will discuss decentralisation, deconcentration and «differentiation».

## The objectives

- discuss the position of the « local » and the role of cross-border spaces in the face of international challenges, in particular health, economic, digital and climatic challenges;
- discuss the capacity of cross-border territories to respond to these transitions, the cross-border engineering at their disposal - the ANCT (Agence Nationale de Cohésion des Territoires) - having been set up at the beginning of 2020, and the opportunity to constitute pioneering territories in terms of « territorial differentiation »;
- highlighting the need for inter-territoriality, solidarity and cohesion on a cross-border scale by crossing perspectives between different types of territories (metropolitan, peri-urban, sparsely populated, rural, mountain, coastal, etc.).

## Moderators:

Morning: Marianne Malez, Mission Director, FNAU (The French Network of Urban Planning Agencies)

Afternoon: Giuseppe Bettoni, Professor at the University of Rome, expert in geopolitics

## The second day will be organised on the basis of 4 round tables:

ROUND-TABLE #5 10H- 11H30

Health, digital evolution, climate... time for cross-border transitions?

ROUND-TABLE #6 11H30- 13H00

Cross-border mobility and attractiveness, back to the borders?

ROUND-TABLE #7 14H00- 15H30

Cross-border areas, differentiated areas?

ROUND-TABLE #8 15H30- 17H00

Metropolises, mountains, rural areas: what kind of cross-border cohesion?

# BORDER METROPOLISES: the example of « Cross-Border Cooperation Strategies »

Known to have given birth to the « French métropoles » in the legal sense of the term, the MAPTAM law<sup>12</sup> has paved the way for new cross-border cooperation projects in French border areas.

**The MAPTAM law invited « metropolises bordering a foreign state » to draw up a « Schéma de Coopération Transfrontalière (SCT) » (Cross-Border Cooperation Strategies) in conjunction with the Département, the Region and the concerned municipalities. Lille, Strasbourg and Nice have begun working on this project with the MOT. The Basque Country agglomeration community has voluntarily associated itself with it.**

Six years later, these four metropolises completed the development of their SCT with adoption in plenary council. In order to meet the requirements of the law, they have committed themselves extensively to a multi-stakeholder, multi-level consultation process, in conjunction with institutional partners such as the Region, the Département, the state services and the municipalities, as well as with economic partners, civil society and neighbors on the other side of the river.

## COMMONALITIES AMONG THE FOUR INITIATIVES

The projection of each intercommunality on several scales of cooperation: whether local, metropolitan, Euro-regional or macro-regional cooperation, the content of the SCT reflects the driving role of metropolitan actors in the dynamics of cooperation, and their role in structuring the development of cross-border living areas.

## FOLLOWING STEP

The next step is to link SCTs to strategies being pursued by authorities on the other side of the border. This evolution towards fully integrated cross-border strategies is in fact a second step towards approaching the examples of the metropolises of Basel and Geneva, models of functional continuity and cross-border strategy. Other territories, such as the European Community of Alsace, are preparing to engage in such an approach.

## AN SCT NETWORK

Today, the four pilot territories are engaged with the MOT in a favourable environment for the exchange of experiences and the implementation of projects. An initial publication has just been published, and a joint observatory of cross-border functional dynamics may ultimately emerge.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCT DID NOT FOLLOW THE SAME COURSE FOR EACH TERRITORY:



**In Nice**, on a territory with few cross-border structures, the SCT marks a major step, creating a cross-border response with partners from Monaco and Italy.



**In Lille**, where governance is focused on the functional space of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, the SCT has initiated discussions on other forms of inter-territoriality (by associating territories neighbouring the French side) and multi-level cooperation (in connection with the regional actor).



**In Strasbourg**, a territory «multi- endowed» with cross-border governance bodies, the SCT has clarified the ambitions of the metropolis in terms of metropolitan cooperation with the urban centers located on the German side.



**In the Basque Country**, where cross-border cooperation is being revised in the light of the new XXL conurbation created in 2017, the SCT has laid the foundations for better coordination of cross-border development and for investment in territorial observation.

<sup>(12)</sup> Act of 27 January 2014 on the modernisation of territorial public action and the affirmation of metropolises. The CCP is a strategic document intended for the territory of border region metropolises; it has no legal effect on the other side of the border.



Nice-Côte d'Azur Metropolis:  
four levels of cooperation



The Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis is a unique cross-border territory, located between the sea and the mountains and adjacent to two borders: an internal EU border over 100 km long with the Piedmont Region in Italy and an international border with the Principality of Monaco. Its 2020-2030 Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy, adopted on 16 December 2019, is organised into four complementary levels of work:

- **The coastal and hinterland level**, where the issues of mobility, jobs and natural risks require a close partnership with its neighbours;
- **The mountain level**, to maintain and develop eco-responsible public and economic services in the context of climate change;
- **The inter-metropolitan level** where Genoa and Turin metropolises are the main players, also involving Monaco to develop cross-border innovation, in particular to create across-border research and innovation zone;
- **The Alpine and Mediterranean influence level**, in partnership with the Sud Region, to ensure that this cross-border area takes action in macro-regional strategies.

The Cross-Border Cooperation Department of the Europe and External Financing Department work with the different territories to identify common synergies and give priority to the actions to be carried out in the coming years, by defining each project leader.

**MORE INFO**  
<http://www.nicecotedazur.org/europe/sch%C3%A9ma-de-coop%C3%A9ration-transfrontalier>

Strasbourg Eurometropolis

Although the strategy only covers the territory of the Eurometropolis, from start to finish it has involved all of the border territory partners, who were invited to contribute to it in the same way as French bodies like the Bas-Rhin Department and the Grand Est Region.

Lille European Metropolis

The Lille European Metropolis now has a governance manual and an operational framework to be incorporated into future European Territorial Cooperation programmes, which are designed to guide it together with the French partners in the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis in its response to new cross-border challenges, such as anticipating and managing ecological and environmental, health, economic or social crises.

Basque Country Conurbation

The cross-border strategy comprises four major objectives: facilitating the lives of inhabitants and businesses in the cross-border living area; developing shared values and representations – forging a cross-border sense of belonging; addressing the challenges of the ecological transition, and the management of shared resources and natural spaces; and promoting excellence and the cross-border territory's standing.

**MORE INFO**  
**Brochure « Bilan des SCT »**<sup>13</sup> - in French:  
[http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/Documents\\_MOT/2020\\_Publication\\_MOT\\_SCT.pdf](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Documents_MOT/2020_Publication_MOT_SCT.pdf)  
**MOT Newsletter:**  
[http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/Newsletter/EN\\_NL158\\_04\\_20.pdf](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Newsletter/EN_NL158_04_20.pdf)

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

- Rudy Demotte**  
President of the Lille-KortrijkTournai Eurometropolis,  
President of the Parliament of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels  
**TR#2, 09/11 at 11h30**
- Pia Imbs**  
President of the Eurometropole of Strasbourg  
**TR#5, 10/11 at 10h00**
- Jean-René Etchegaray**  
President of the Communauté d'agglomération Pays Basque  
**TR#7, 10/11 at 14h00**
- Christian Estrosi**  
President of Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis  
**TR#8, 10/11 at 15h30**

TERRITORIES ON FRENCH  
BORDERS,  
on the frontline of the  
pandemic

Health  
**Franco-Spanish border:  
a cross-border hospital facing  
the crisis**

The Cerdanya Hospital - Europe's first cross-border hospital - is located in Catalonia, a few kilometers from the French-Spanish border. It stands out in its management of the crisis thanks to a major asset: its dual nationality. It showed that cross-border movements in the area of healthcare are necessary. It showed that cross-border movements in the area of healthcare are necessary. Located in the Spanish municipality of Puigcerdá, a few kilometres from the border, since its opening in 2014 it has considerably improved the provision of healthcare in a remote cross-border area. The facility, co-managed by the Generalitat of Catalonia and the French Ministry of Health (ARS), set up in the form of a European Grouping for Cross-Border Cooperation (EGTC) falls entirely within the competence of cross-border cooperation: a first in Europe. The health crisis has had dramatic consequences for hospitals and Cerdanya Hospital in particular, which had to deal a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff and of beds in intensive care units (ICUs) in patients' referral hospitals.



- Concrete actions to deal with the crisis:**
- Faced with the closure of the Franco-Spanish border, the hospital and the police, both Spanish and French, reached an agreement to set up a transit route to enable the free movement of medical staff and patients.
  - During the whole of the crisis period, ICU beds in the Ariège Valleys Hospital in Foix, on the French side, were made available for Spanish patients in a critical condition. In normal times, patients that need to be transferred are sent to hospitals in the patient's home country.
  - Access to protective equipment and to Covid tests was also facilitated throughout the pandemic thanks to the provision of PPE by the two health authorities (ARS Occitanie and Servei Català de la Salut), thereby ensuring uninterrupted supply and complete control of the situation.

**More than ever, the hospital's dual nationality has been an asset in managing this unprecedented crisis.**



SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**François Calvet**, Senator for Pyrénées-Orientales, President of the Cerdanya Hospital EGTC support committee  
**TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30**

<sup>(13)</sup> « Gouvernance et planification stratégique transfrontalière : Premier bilan de la mise en place des SCT ».



Mobility

Greater Geneva: the example of the Léman Express



Greater Geneva forms a highly integrated cross-border agglomeration of nearly one million inhabitants. 100,000 border workers cross the border daily to reach the heart of the city of Geneva. 600,000 border crossings are recorded every day.

RESPONDING TO CROSS-BORDER FLOWS

In 2018, a very large majority of cross-border workers in Greater Geneva travelled by car: 62.8% travelled by motorway; the others used smaller customs crossing points. It is in this territory on the brink of road congestion that Europe's first and largest cross-border rail express network was created: the Léman Express was inaugurated on the 15th of December 2019. It consists of a 230-kilometre network linking Annecy, Saint-Gervais, and Bellegarde to Geneva, and provides daily service covering two Swiss cantons and two French departments.

A COMPLEX PROJECT

Resulting of an investment of 2 billion and 10 years of cooperation, the network is supported by a Swiss-French structure in charge of its operation (the Lemanis operator, 60% financed by the CFF and 40% by the SNCF). It comprises 5 lines and 45 stations. Some have been completely renovated to accommodate the new infrastructure, such as Annemasse station. The success of this implementation does not detract from the technical, legal and political complexity of the project. With two distinct railway cultures, the development of the Léman Express has had to overcome the difficulties linked to the differences in equipment, to power cuts linked to border crossings and the constraints linked to differences in labour law. It is also complex in terms of governance, with the presence in the Greater Geneva area of 6 mobility organising authorities, coordinated by the Greater Geneva Local Cooperation Group (GLCT).

SUBJECTED TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF PRESENT TIMES

The year 2020 has been a difficult one for the implementation of such a network: there were strikes when it launched, then numerous restrictive measures due to

the health crisis and the lockdown. Nevertheless, one year after its opening, the network appears to be delivering on its commitments: an average of 45,000 passengers a day are expected to use the network in 2020, compared with a target of 50,000 after two to three years of service.

AN INTEGRATED ECOLOGICAL PROJECT

In response to the needs of ecological transition and low carbon mobility, the network is part of a wider agglomeration project including other mobility investments: the recent establishment of a cross-border tramway line, the project to extend the Geneva Vélîb to France, or the prospects for future investments in the widening and strengthening of the Léman Express links (the Auvergne-Rhône Alpes Region promised the delivery of 10 additional trains for €100 million in 2022.)

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**Christian Dupessey**, President of the MOT, Mayor of Annemasse, President of the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois, [Opening, TR#1, 09/11 at 10h00](#)  
**Serge Dal Busco**, State Councillor of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, [TR#6, 10/11 at 11h30](#)

Attractiveness

Lorraine Corridor European Metropolitan Pole: cross-border workers on the frontline

With over 105,000 cross-border workers working in Luxembourg (up by 5,000 every year) and crossing the border twice a day, a major reflection with our neighbour about issues of accessibility and mobility requires joint and balanced responses. The Covid crisis has exacerbated the effects of globalisation, particularly with respect to the movement of goods and services: the logistics platform in Bettembourg, the terminus of the Silk Road, and the 23 weekly round trips of Cargolux, have meant that, in a certain sense, China has become the first country with which the Grand Est Region has a border.

**For the Lorraine Corridor, we need to develop the basis of a co-development project with Luxembourg that makes it possible for both sides to contribute fairly to a collective effort.**

CROSS-BORDER WORKERS ON THE FRONTLINE

At the height of the health crisis, the immediate closure of borders was brutal. Luxembourg provided 50 face-masks to each cross-border worker while France was coping with a shortage of them. Luxembourg's wish to maintain income tax for cross-border workers working from home, for an unlimited period (with the approval of the French authorities) provoked some strong reactions. **The current stake : Establish new rules that cover these kinds of remote working a rationale of co-development that benefits both the country of residence and the country of work.**

The Lorraine area was one of the original territories for the construction of economic Europe: it has discovered to its expense that, without the development of European social and healthcare policies, the old nationalist reflexes risk weakening cross-border cooperation. Even though there was available capacity, only seven Covid patients were received by Luxembourg and were mainly treated by French cross-border medical staff. During this time, high-speed trains were requisitioned to take patients to the west or south-west of France in order to ease pressure on hospitals in the Grand Est Region...

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**Pierre Cuny**  
Vice-President of Pôle métropolitain européen du Sillon Lorrain, Mayor of Thionville, France  
[TR#6, 10/11 at 11h30](#)  
**Claude Turmes**  
Minister for Energy and Spatial Planning, Luxembourg  
[TR#2, 09/11 at 11h30](#)

Mountains

Interview with Annie Genevard, Vice-President of the Assemblée Nationale and MP for the Doubs Department

**MOUNTAIN AREAS BENEFIT FROM DEDICATED PUBLIC POLICIES ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR SPECIFICITY. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE CROSS-BORDER DIMENSION PRESENT ADDITIONAL COMPLEXITY?**

Border territories give rise to a particular kind of economy and territorial organisation, with big variations between mountain ranges. Border areas must be considered in their multiplicity. Among the issues specific to mountain areas, we should first mention the issue of mobility and daily traffic jams, as the infrastructures there are inadequate. Mountains are natural borders, which also limits movement as some passes are difficult to cross. It is important to develop rail transport and to expand the provision of public transport. The border is also a line of cooperation. There have always been movements of cross-border workers, to varying degrees from period to period, depending on the interplay of often contradictory factors: wage levels, social security insurance systems and availability of transport.



Vallée de Joux, French-Swiss border, Source: Vallée de Joux, Tourisme

**The cross-border setting points up a series of recurrent problems: emigration of cross-border workers, disparities in rates of growth and difficulties regarding compatibility with national spatial planning policy objectives. It is also a positive force and an engine of development for the area, and sometimes the whole region.**

WHAT HAS BEEN THE EXPERIENCE OF THESE TERRITORIES SINCE THE ONSET OF THE HEALTH CRISIS?

The health crisis has put pressure on everyday issues such as cooperation and the restrictions that affect the organisation of local life. In the Pyrenees, queues were reserved for healthcare professionals. Switzerland received patients requiring resuscitation and contact is being maintained in case of a second wave. There have also been difficulties. For example, the lack of consistency in health protection policies both at country and regional level.

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**Annie Genevard**  
Vice-president of the National Assembly, Deputy of Doubs  
[TR#8, 10/11 à 15h30](#)  
**François Calvet**  
Senator for Pyrénées-Orientales, President of the Cerdanya Hospital EGTC support committee  
[TR#3, 09/11 at 14h30](#)  
**Christian Estrosi**  
President of Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis  
[TR#8, 10/11 at 15h30](#)



Citizenship

Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis: « Exchanging views and experiences to shape the future »



The role of an actor like the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis is to work towards connecting citizens to Europe through more intense dialogue and strengthened territorial cooperation. How can this be achieved by being active on a local and cross-border level?

We have already tried this out with the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis's three-part event "Europe, je t'aime, moi non plus ?" spread over more than a year. Nearly 300 citizens from the cross-border region took part in the three gatherings. The objective? To collate people's concerns in order to identify areas for reflection and joint action over the long term.

This citizen-focused mobilisation drawing on our collective intelligence was a success, as it brought together the Eurometropolis's inhabitants around the future of Europe. They highlighted the need for a Europe that is more ecological, social, citizen-focused and closer to Europeans' current needs. The findings from the discussions will give us the substance and the energy to jointly set up the European Citizens' Space, which will provide the missing link between European institutions and citizens.

**Loïc Delhuyenne**, Director of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis:

«The daily information put out by the EGTC during the health crisis has shown that the local level is an important component to help with daily life, and to champion and develop our European values.»

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

**Rudy Demotte**, President of the Lille-KortrijkTournai Eurometropolis, President of the Parliament of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels  
TR#2, 09/11 at 11h30

Differentiated territories

Cross-border territories at the time of the « Decentralisation, Differentiation and Deconcentration Act »

While each territory has its own particular geographical, socioeconomic and cultural features, the institutional and legal environments in which cross-border areas operate resemble no other.

At the junction of two national regulatory jurisdictions, these territories are administered by territorial authorities and institutions that have different competences, modes of organisation and capacities for action on either side of the border, making the process of coordination all the more complex.

Perhaps more than elsewhere, the ability of territorial authorities to adapt to local specificities is crucial to enable the genuinely 360° development of these areas. The pandemic has moreover laid these issues bare, by showing up the "double lockdown" brought about by the unilateral closing of borders (with local services inaccessible, families divided, the range of movement restricted, jobs threatened and stigmatisation of cross-border workers, etc.).

**The prospects for evolution offered by the forthcoming draft legislation on "decentralisation, differentiation and deconcentration" (3D) is coming just at the right time to give these territories greater room for manoeuvre.**

The devolution of regulatory powers to local players (decentralised departments of central government and local authorities), the generalisation of comprehensive territorial agreements, the modularity of local authorities' competences depending on the issues involved, following the example of the future European Territorial Authority of Alsace, form part of the progress towards an approach to territorial development that is entirely focused on functional areas. The success of these guidelines will then depend solely on the ability to embed them in multi-level governance and proactive cooperation initiatives along France's borders.

EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL AUTHORITY OF ALSACE (CEA\*)

The French Act of 2 August 2019 concerning the competences of the European Territorial Authority of Alsace (CEA) ratified the creation of this new territorial authority arising from the merger of the French Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin Departments on 1 January 2021.The CEA has been designated lead partner for cross-border cooperation to organise in its territory the joint actions of territorial authorities, in their respective fields of competence.

\* In French: «Collectivité Européenne d'Alsace».

**Brigitte Klinkert**, French Minister Delegate for Economic Inclusion, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the Haut-Rhin Department, Vice-President of the MOT:

« Being above all a local elected representative, convinced that each territory can do a lot at its own level, I believe that it is important not to always apply the same policies everywhere. »

Source: La Semaine, 14 September 2020

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

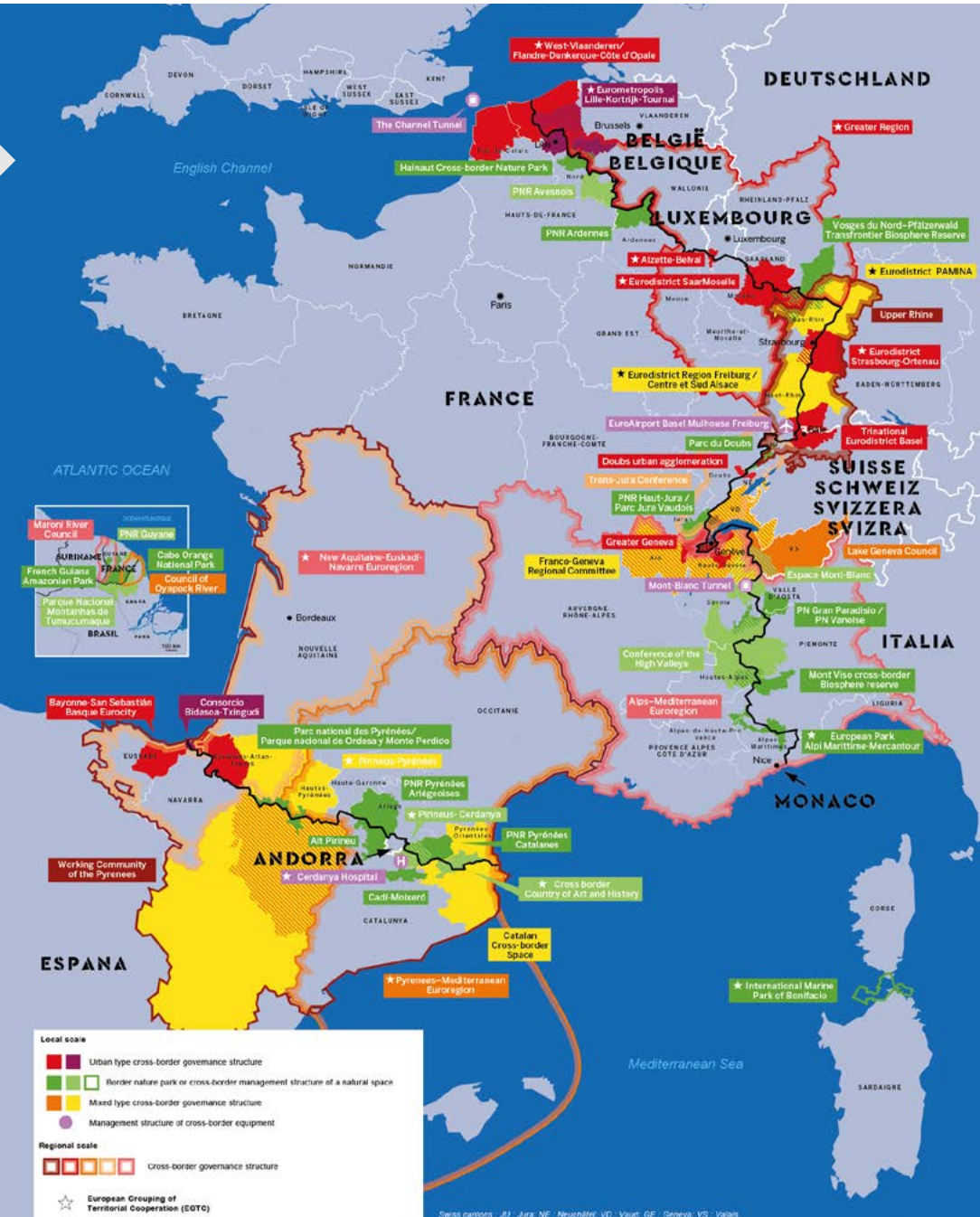
**Frédéric Bierry**  
President of the Bas-Rhin Department  
TR#7, 10/11 at 14h00

**Jean-René Etchegaray**  
President of the Communauté d'agglomération Pays Basque  
TR#7, 10/11 at 14h00

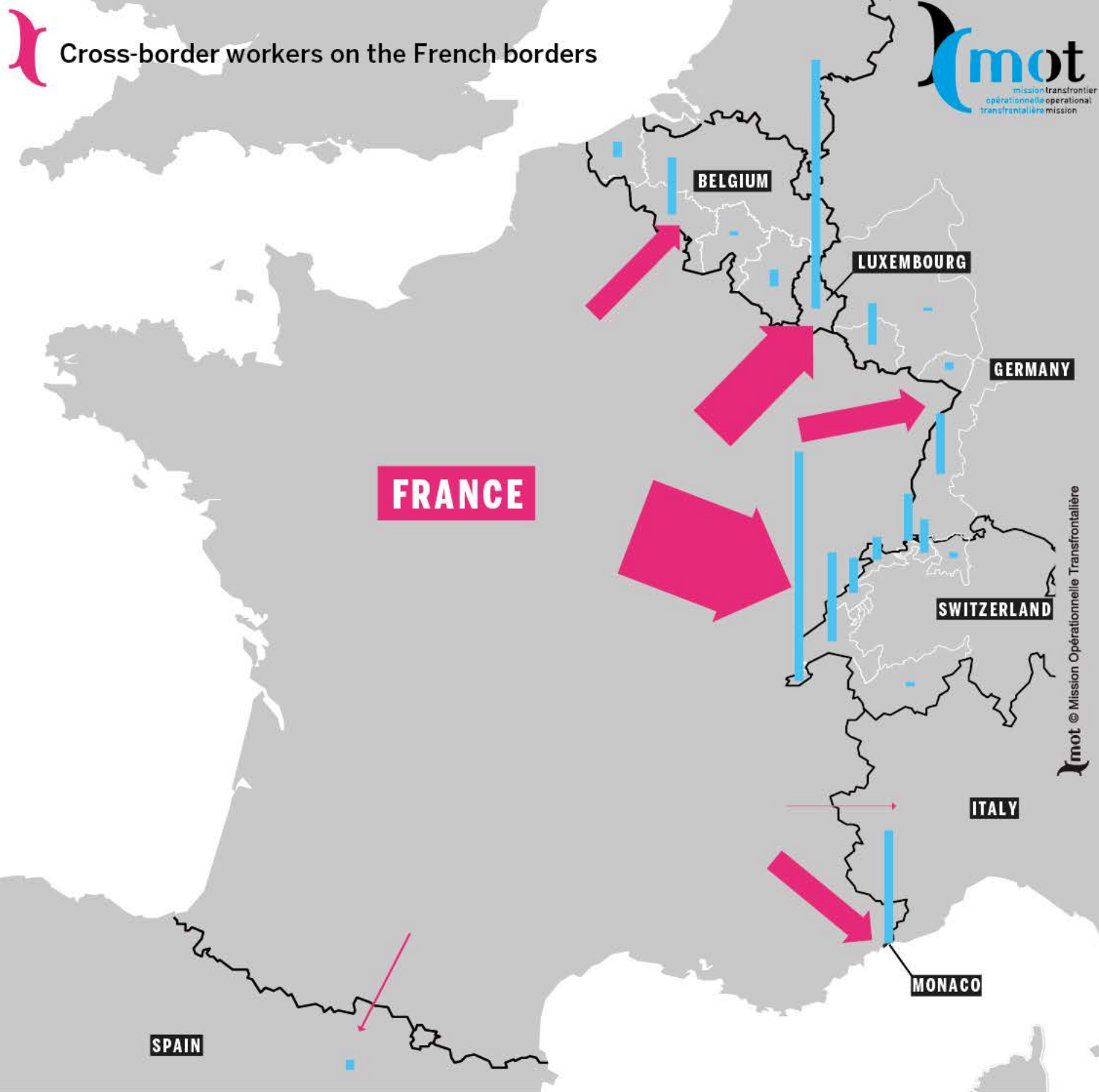
**Daniel Gibbs**  
President of Saint Martin Regional Authority  
TR#7, 10/11 at 14h00

**Fabienne Leloup**  
Professor at the Catholic University of Louvain  
TR#7, 10/11 at 14h00

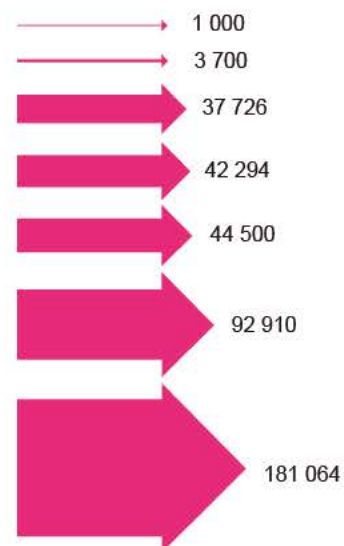
CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES ON THE FRENCH BORDERS



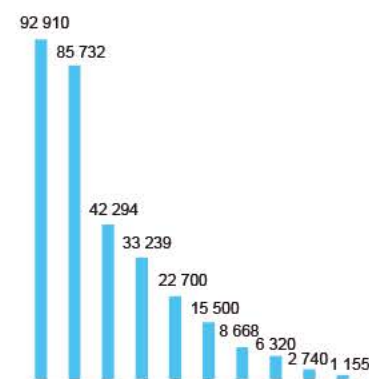




**Total number of cross-border workers residing in France by country of destination**



**Number of cross-border workers residing in France by destination territory in the neighboring country**



Sources :  
 INSEE (France), 2015  
 INAMI (Belgium), 2019  
 IGSS (Luxembourg), 2018  
 BA (Germany), 2018  
 OFS (Switzerland), 2020 (1er T.)  
 IMSEE (Monaco), 2018

To find all the speakers  
of the Borders Forum

Please consult the online program:  
[https://bordersforum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/20200923\\_Borders-forum-programme-page-EN-3.pdf](https://bordersforum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/20200923_Borders-forum-programme-page-EN-3.pdf)

## Focus – Publications



### « The Covid-19 crisis on French borders »

**ANALYSIS OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES OF THE HEALTH CRISIS – THE RESULT OF A CALL FOR EXPERIENCES ISSUED TO ALL OF MOT MEMBERS**  
 By the MOT. JUNE 2020

The publication aims to set out the impacts, difficulties and initiatives linked to the management of the Covid-19 health crisis in cross-border territories.

in which the closing of borders resulted in increased constraints and discriminatory situations that were specific to these populations.

In the first part, it recalls the border control measures employed.

In the second part, it provides an assessment of the impacts on workers, patients, residents, families, retailers and local authorities that move around within these areas.

The last section then sets out an analysis of inhabitants' perceptions with respect to the crisis and the lockdown, in a context

#### MORE INFO

<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/news/news/news/show/publication-de-la-mot-la-crise-du-covid-19-aux-frontieres-francaises/>

### « Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration »

By Birte Wassenberg, Professor of Contemporary History, University of Strasbourg, and Bernard Reitel, Professor of Political and Urban Geography, University of Artois; in collaboration with Jean Peyrony, Director-general of the MOT, and Jean Rubio, policy officer, MOT.  
 Publisher: Peter Lang, Collection: Border Studies. OCTOBER 2020

What is the role of borders in European integration? How does cross-border cooperation work in practice? Who are the main actors, their motives, objectives and tools?

This major publication contains 209 articles by 124 authors from different countries and academic fields, along with 66 original maps produced by the MOT.

#### MORE INFO

<https://www.peterlang.com/view/title/65124>

# WHAT IS THE MOT?

The MOT is an association specialised in supporting cross-border cooperation. It was established in 1997 on the initiative of the French government. Its network brings together more than 70 cross-border cooperation actors: cross-border structures, regions, departments, municipalities, groupings of municipalities and communities, states, businesses, federations and networks, urban planning agencies, etc. Its mission is to defend the interests of cross-border territories, to establish networks between them and to provide them with operational and legal assistance. Its multi-level positioning promotes dialogue between national and European authorities and local and regional actors, to ensure that cross-border issues are better taken into account in legislation.

## MORE INFO

<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en>

## Two main funders

### FRENCH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR TERRITORIAL COHESION (AGENCE NATIONALE DE LA COHÉSION DES TERRITOIRES, ANCT)

Created on January 1st 2020, the ANCT<sup>14</sup> is responsible for implementing the government's main policies in terms of urban policy and territorial cohesion. Based on joint governance between the State, associations of elected representatives and members of parliament, it designs and leads programs to revitalize territories («Action Cœur de ville», «Territoires d'industrie», «Petites villes de demain...»), monitors the implementation of development policies and deploys an engineering offer for the establishment of territorial contracts.

The ANCT mobilises the MOT to ensure that the obstacles and challenges of cross-border spaces are addressed, and relies on it to develop a cross-border engineering offer at serving territories. The MOT is one of the «partners in action» for the deployment of the current «Small towns of tomorrow» programme<sup>15</sup>, and intervenes both at the local level (cross-border diagnosis, support for the establishment

of project partnerships and the search for European funding), at the national level (collection and enhancement of cross-border good practices) and at the regional level (workshops for networking and training of stakeholders).

### THE BANQUE DES TERRITOIRES

As a public institution with a special status, the Banque des Territoires (Caisse des Dépôts Group) is involved in the financing of public policies and has a stake in the financial capital of several major public and private groups. Its mission includes co-financing the national programmes deployed by the ANCT such as «Action cœur de ville» or «Petites villes de demain». Relaying and disseminating information on European funds, cross-border calls for projects, and promoting structuring investments in border regions are among the MOT's main missions alongside it.

## MORE INFO

**The National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT):**  
<https://agence-cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/>

**The Banque des Territoires:**  
<https://www.banquedesterritoires.fr>

<sup>(14)</sup> Succeeding the Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires (CGET).

<sup>(15)</sup> Concerning its deployment in border towns.



## The MOT network





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