

No 9

# The MOT Guides

—  
Observation of  
cross-border  
territories



## Editorial

**André Rossinot**, mayor of Nancy, president of the Communauté urbaine du Grand Nancy, vice-president of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

**In 2014, France and the rest of Europe have an appointment with history.**

As this year opens the cycle of commemoration of the centenary of the Great War and the continuing duty of remembrance of a conflict that left lasting physical and emotional scars on our continent, in May 500 million Europeans will be called upon to elect their new common parliament.

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Europe is a daily reality for many citizens who, with a great sense of freedom, put it into practice in the cross-border territories.  
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At a time when populism in various forms and the temptation to reject Europe are on the rise, it is up to us collectively to mobilise ourselves, to defend our ideal while reinventing it.

200,000 people cross a national border every day in the Greater Region (Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, France) to go to work. These movements generate a shared job market and instil habits that are spreading gradually to training, trading, leisure activities, culture and other areas.

However, European policies are still in many ways out of phase with this experience and contribute to a feeling of distance or even lack of understanding between the European Union and its citizens.

Consequently it is urgent to change approach by encouraging the development of shared cross-border observation in order to obtain better knowledge and understanding of today's territorial realities.

In 2010, on the initiative of the DATAR and implemented by the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) and the Fédération Nationale des Agences d'Urbanisme (FNAU), an experiment was conducted on statistical observation of cross-border territories.

On the occasion of the presentation of the report on this study in Nancy on 10 December 2012, a call was launched to continue this work and to undertake effective coordination of cross-border observation means and ambitions between France and its European neighbours. **Now is the time for action!**



## Table of Contents

Towards multi-level observation of cross-border territories..... p. 3

What is cross-border statistical observation?..... p. 4

Development of observation procedures on French borders..... p. 6

In France, an experimental approach at national level ..... p. 9

The political issues ..... p. 11

Field experiences ..... p. 15

# Towards multi-level observation of cross-border territories

By Jean Peyrony,  
director general of the MOT



## AT LOCAL LEVEL

The purpose of cooperation is to develop services for the benefit of the cross-border populations; observation is a prerequisite, as for any type of territory, in order to provide a common understanding of the issues. This guide reveals the rich variety of approaches developed to this end over more than twenty years in the cross-border territories.

The European territorial cooperation programmes (Interreg) have co-funded these approaches. It is sometimes claimed that enough studies have been carried out. As a new generation of European programmes is being launched, several voices are raised here advocating the continuation of this support for cross-border observation. Conurbations, nature parks, Euroregions, sea bassins are among the types of territory which, on the basis of observation, will be able to implement cross-border development strategies within the framework of the integrated approach promoted by the new regulations.

## AT NATIONAL LEVEL

However, territorial statistics are in many cases the responsibility of the national level. The compilation of cross-border databases requires coordinated work by the statistics institutes across the border, with political coordination by the spatial planning authorities. An emblematic example is that of worker flows<sup>1</sup>. The study conducted by the MOT and the FNAU for the DATAR, and its follow-up conducted with the neighbouring states,



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The cross-border territories, laboratories of European integration, are at the heart of European community policies: the EU 2020 strategy, the single market, territorial cohesion. The European Union must consequently pay greater attention to them!  
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provide evidence of this emergence of awareness.

The national strategic reference frameworks for the 2007-2013 period included cooperation only as an option. For the 2014-2020 period, the regulations stipulate that the national partnership agreements<sup>2</sup> systematically cover cooperation. This necessitates coordination between States, which provides an opportunity to boost cross-border observation on each border, in synergy with regional and local partners.

## AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The European level will not be able to compile cross-border databases in the short or medium term. However, it shall coordinate and record the initiatives of observation, policy impact assessment and forecasting in the cross-border territories.

Our publication reveals what the partners are hoping for: the DG REGIO, as coordinator of regional and urban policy, must better integrate cross-border issues and reinforce the place of shared knowledge in cooperation. The networking of cross-border territories undertaking shared knowledge initiatives must be supported by the interregional programmes, with ESPON in the front line.

1 See page 5.

2 Document providing the framework for the programming of European funds for each Member State.



# What is cross-border statistical observation?

By Olivier Denert,  
secretary general of the MOT

**After having suffered for a long time from a low level of attention from central governments, cross-border territories are increasingly taking a place at the heart of national and European development processes.**



Over the last ten years or so, cross-border territories have attracted growing interest from political decision-makers. For a long time considered as margins, defensive buffer zones or dead ends, cross-border territories were observed on the basis of mapping that only went up to the line of the frontier, as if the “other side” did not exist, like the ends of the earth on medieval maps. Each different according to the characteristics of the border on which they are located, cross-border territories still feed into many national mental projections and preconceptions which make the development of projects complicated. The observation of these areas is therefore particularly meaningful for the implementation of effective sector

and spatial planning policies in the territories.

Cross-border territorial strategies cannot be devised based on intuitions. They require tangible information which should be built up across the observation processes.

From this operational perspective, the observation of cross-border territories has its background in the need to know and understand the workings of these atypical spaces, located on the edges of national systems and within which the presence of a border generates

all sorts of differentials: regulations and laws, economic and employment processes, cultures, etc.

## WHAT IS OBSERVED?

The definition of the scope of observation is related to that of the object under observation. Cross-border territories are functional territories. Their institutionalisation, in the form of cross-border governance, is increasingly perceived as a necessity by the political and socioeconomic forces.

## QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE OBSERVATION

The observation of cross-border territories is first of all quantitative: it is based on statistical systems, collection procedures and national indicators, the differences in which with regard to definition, survey period and geographical resolution render cross-border comparisons very complicated. Fixed within their national territories, these systems too often neglect cross-border flows, even though such flows outline new functional spaces.

Two major categories of object can be observed:

- material and countable cross-border flows which irrigate the cross-border territories<sup>1</sup>,

## TERRITORIES AT THE HEART OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES:

- At local level, they are directly concerned by the territorial projects, issues and obstacles.
- At regional level, many development processes are at work, with funding that is often provided by the regions.
- At national level, with the gradual emergence of a cross-border policy.
- At the European level, with cross-border cooperation now ring-fenced at the heart of territorial cooperation.

– ‘stocks’, leading to comparison of a given object on either side of the border<sup>2</sup>.

The observation must also be qualitative: analysis of cooperation procedures, multi-criterion analysis of cross-border projects and issues, analysis of political, administrative and cultural systems which meet at the border and which have to be matched.

### Many obstacles

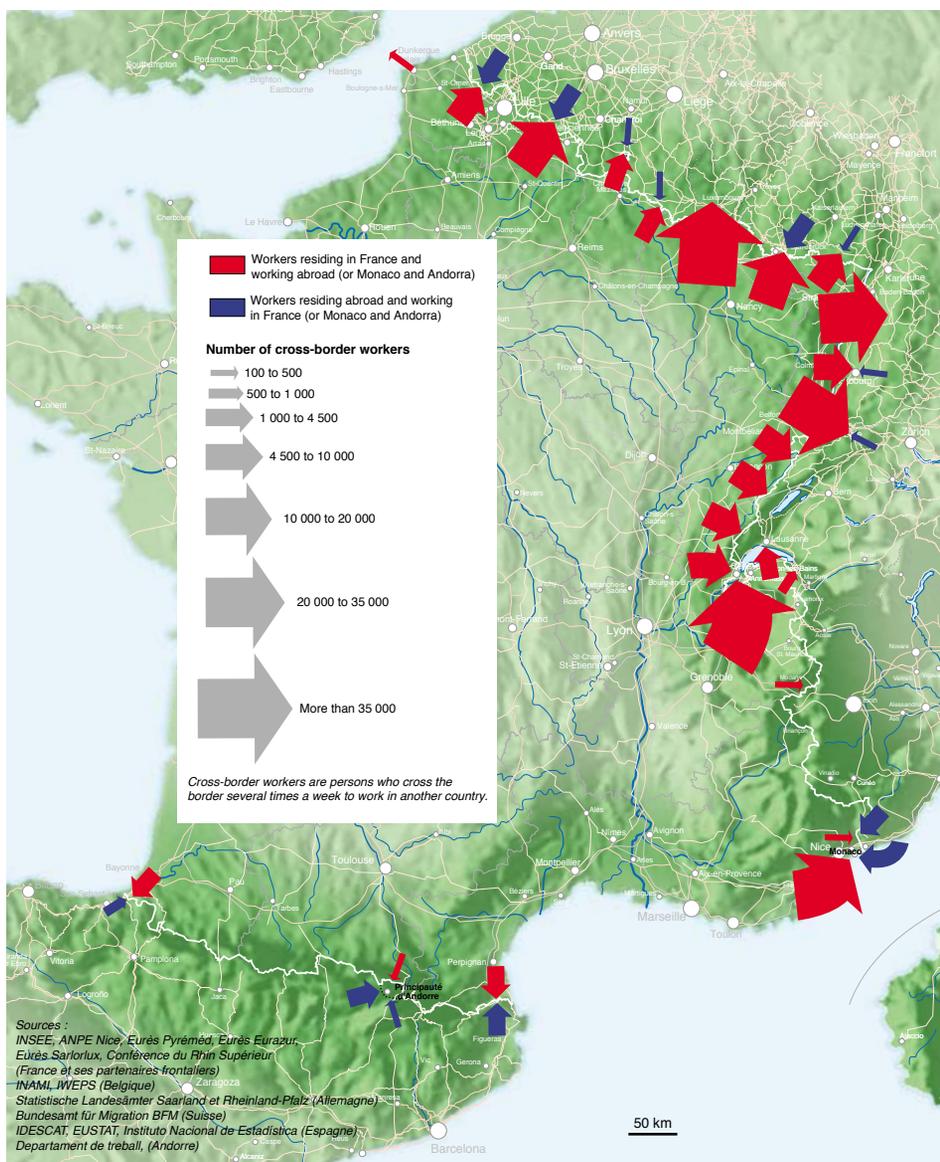
Many obstacles remain to the implementation of an observation process. First of all, in political and financial terms, the existence of

an observation process, preferably permanent, depends on the decision-makers becoming aware of its usefulness. Furthermore, although many observation procedures have been funded by European programmes, there is a real risk that their funding will be more difficult in the next programming period<sup>3</sup>.

The obstacles are also technical: access to data on either side of the border is one of the stumbling blocks in the procedures. Lack of symmetry of the administrative observation mesh, low availability of data at municipality level<sup>4</sup>, lack of equivalence of census periods and differences in definitions of certain indicators are all

difficulties that have to be overcome in the observation process.

- 1 Workers, students, residents, patients, tourists, financial flows, etc.
- 2 Demographic structure, economy, employment, quality of life and housing, amenities, etc.
- 3 This is related to greater targeting within the programmes and the need for a long-term approach to cross-border observation.
- 4 The municipality is the basic cell that can be used to reconstitute a mesh of equivalent size either side of the border.



## WHY OBSERVE CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES?

- To support the pertinence of the cross-border institutional scope.
- To highlight their specific features and their needs so as to act more effectively in them.
- To compare them with other territories in order to assess the equity of the public policies applied to them (handicaps of cross-border territories compared with others).

Border worker flows at the French borders

# Development of observation procedures on French borders



## THE 1980s AND 1990s FIRST STEPS

The first cross-border observation programmes date from the late 1980s and early 1990s. They were individual initiatives associated with projects funded by the Interreg programmes, but without any particular prospect of long-term continuity.

This work was reported in print publications, with abundant cartographic representation of the results in published atlas form.



With the first stirrings of Internet, it was still too soon to imagine setting up an interactive geographic information system (GIS) or online map browsing. Observation processes took place at various levels, for example the France-Vaud-Geneva

conurbation, or at inter-departmental or regional level<sup>1</sup>.

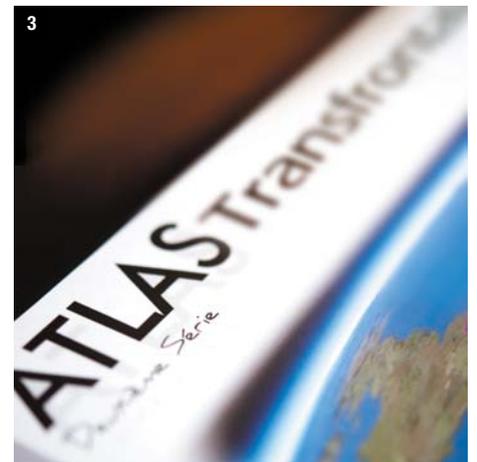


A novel and pioneering observation programme can nevertheless be noted during this period, in the Pôle Européen de Longwy (PED), the first to be linked with a cross-border territory project. Launched in 1993 by the Observatoire de l'urbanisme (subsequently the Agence d'urbanisme Lorraine Nord, AGAPE), to provide support for the planning policy of the PED's cross-border association, it was positioned from the outset in an upward, pre-operational mode: the intention was for the technicians to anticipate the observation needs in order to trigger political queries that might lead to projects supported by the elected representatives.

## EARLY 2000s MULTIPLICATION OF APPROACHES AND SCALES

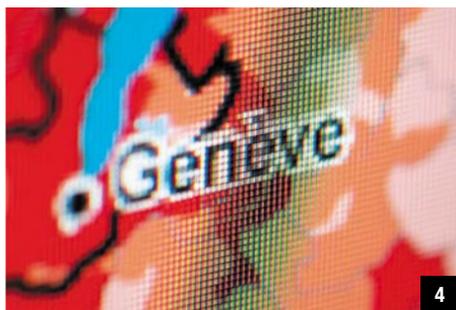
The late 1990s and early 2000s were a period of renewal of approaches initiated several years previously (new and updated editions of atlases).

But new work was also done in territories until then not concerned by such approaches; on the French-Belgian border, for example, a first version of the Atlas Dunkerque-Flandre Occidentale was published in 2000, followed in 2004 by the first of the nine parts of the Atlas franco-belge.



The 2000s also saw the multiplication of cross-border territory projects at various scales which attempted to define an observation approach corresponding to their political scope.

In this context, a new series of atlases was published. These included the second edition of the Atlas transfrontalier Côte d'Opale-West Vlaanderen (in 2006), the scope of which was extended to correspond to the territory of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. In this territory-policy-observation interaction, a notable example was the yet-further-extended scope of the Atlas of the Lille metropolitan area (2012)<sup>2</sup>. For the older territorial projects, the aim was also to prolong the work and move beyond a simple partnership agreement between border statistics institutes.



For example, the Office cantonal de la statistique du Canton de Genève and the INSEE Rhône-Alpes, mandated in 2001 by the Comité Régional Franco Genevois (CRFG), have been working within the framework of a political commission based on the needs of the territory project to measure the effects of the first European Union-Switzerland bilateral agreements. >>>

- 1 **Les Pyrénées, présentation d'une montagne frontalière**, DATAR, MOPU, 1989.
- 2 **Atlas du bassin genevois**, INSEE, OCSTAT, 1994.
- 3 **Atlas franco-belge**, 2004 and 2012. Map from the Upper Rhine geographic information system.
- 4 Map from the **cross-border statistical observatory of the France-Vaud-Genève space**.

1 Examples: Atlas transfrontalier, preliminary study for the production of a cross-border planning scheme in Alpes Maritimes and in Imperia and Cuneo provinces (1995), Atlas de l'Eurorégion Catalogne, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées (1995), Atlas jurassien (Cemagref, EPFL, DATAR, 1996).

2 Scale of the metropolitan area cooperation; refer to the request for proposals issued by the DATAR in 2005.

## THE MOT ATLAS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: A UNIQUE PIONEERING PRODUCTION

The MOT map collection was inaugurated in 1999. It was the first to enable the production of cross-border maps at national scale. The first map produced at that time, showing border worker flows, made visible for the first time the amplitude and the evolving characteristics of a little-known phenomenon.

Since then the MOT has produced around a hundred maps, showing results from its statistical and topical investigations and from its various studies. All of these maps have been published in two editions of an atlas of cross-border cooperation, one in 2002, the other in 2007 in hard copy format and distributed to all entities involved in cooperation as well as to higher education and research institutions.

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

The online map collection pursues a double objective of documentation for cross-border specialists and researchers, and of awareness-raising and alerting of politicians on cross-border matters. It continuously adds new maps at local, regional, national and in some cases European scales.

**Nearly all of the maps are accompanied by commentaries and detailed analysis.** While the atlas was divided into four parts (cross-border geography; topical maps; the territorial dimension of cooperation; the political and legal framework and the planning and funding instruments), the way the map collection on the MOT website is now presented enables multi-criterion searching (topic, country, border, territory, etc.).



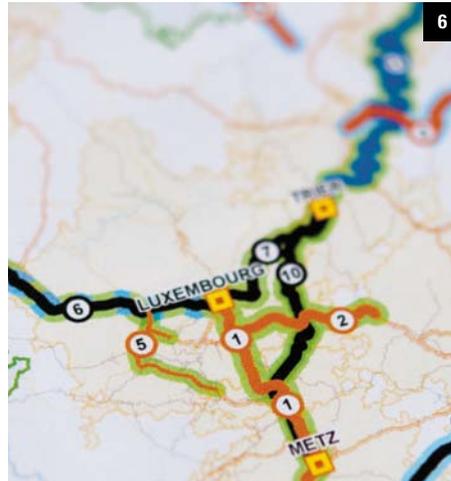


This work resulted in permanent status for the cross-border statistical observatory of the France-Vaud-Geneva space<sup>3</sup> in 2007. This was also the context in which the cross-border statistical observatory of the Trans-Jura Arc (OSTAJ)<sup>4</sup> was developed, from 2005. This establishment is the result of a partnership between the Franche-Comté Region, the French government, the INSEE, arcjurassien.ch and the statistics offices of the four border cantons (Berne, Vaud, Neuchâtel and Jura).

## 2000-2010 VARIETY OF MEDIA

With the arrival of Internet, the decade 2000-2010 saw the emergence of online cross-border geographic information systems (GIS).

The territory projects tended to be on the scale of the Euroregions, for example the Upper Rhine geographic information system<sup>5</sup>, introduced in 2004. Other tools such as the OSTAJ, the GIS of the Canton of Geneva<sup>6</sup> (with a cross-border aspect) and the GIS of the Greater Region<sup>7</sup> enabled customised maps to be posted on line.



These cross-border statistical observatories in many cases produce regular publications on specific topics (for example the fact sheets of the observatory of the France-Vaud-Geneva space) or contribute to the publications of their member statistics institutes, such as the journal INSEE Première<sup>8</sup> in France.

Cross-border observation work can be purely qualitative<sup>9</sup>, as shown by the collection of sixteen Cahiers de l'Atelier transfrontalier de la COPIT<sup>10</sup>, published from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s on topics as varied as the landscape, cultural facilities and the "trame bleue" watercourse and wetland biodiversity protection schemes.

5 Map from the **Upper Rhine geographic information system**.

6 Map from the **Greater Region geographic information system**.

3 [www.statregio-francosuisse.net](http://www.statregio-francosuisse.net)

4 [www.ostaj.org](http://www.ostaj.org)

5 [www.sigrs-gjsor.org](http://www.sigrs-gjsor.org)

6 <http://ge.ch/sitg>

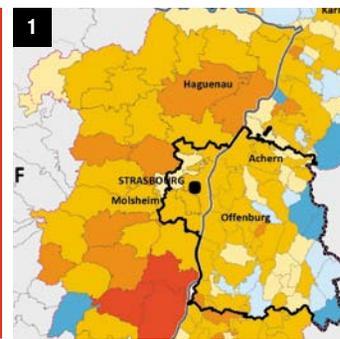
7 [www.gis-gr.eu](http://www.gis-gr.eu)

8 [www.insee.fr/fr/publications-et-services/collection.asp?id=1](http://www.insee.fr/fr/publications-et-services/collection.asp?id=1)

9 Not based on numerical data.

10 French-Belgian structure prefiguring the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis.

# In France, an experimental approach at national level



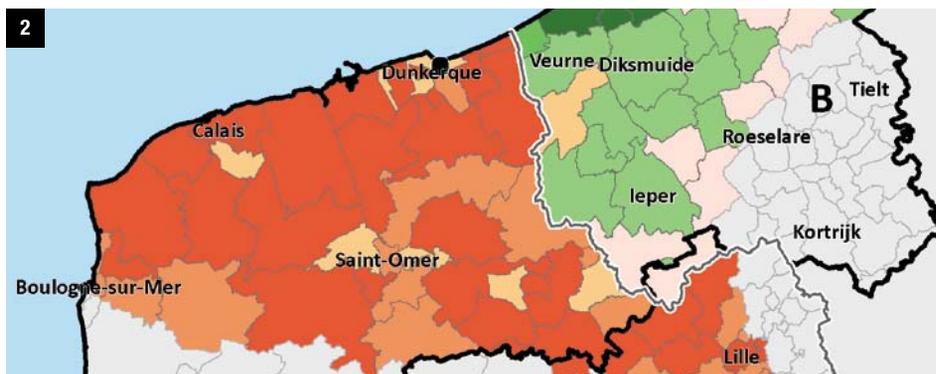
Noting the absence of overview and national coordination of cross-border statistical observation, in 2007 the DATAR commissioned from the MOT an exploratory study concerning statistical observation of territories.

It first concerned three pilot sites: Dunkirk, Longwy and Geneva. A list of key indicators was produced from this work. The objectives were to obtain better knowledge of the functioning of the sites, encourage their development and measure their trends. The conclusions of this work were incorporated into the report of the DATAR Observatoire des territoires, in 2011.

In 2010, continuing this pilot approach, the DATAR commissioned a new study from the MOT and the FNAU, adding seven territories<sup>1</sup>: the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, the Lorraine Corridor<sup>2</sup>, Strasbourg-Ortenau, the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict, the French-Italian-Monacan Riviera, the Catalan cross-border space and the Basque Eurocity. For more than twelve months, the work involved nine urban planning agencies and produced three volumes<sup>3</sup>, a cartographic appendix comprising 115 maps, and indicator and metadata fact sheets.

## THE STUDY

The first part describes the context, the methodology, the study sites and their involvement in cross-border observation. The second part covers the mapping and its analysis by site (each indicator is mapped for each site).



The third part covers comparative analysis and puts forward a set of recommendations.

This study consolidates a baseline of effective indicators, data for which can be entered by the sites<sup>4</sup>.

All the results are available on the Observatoire des territoires website<sup>5</sup> and on the Travaux en ligne<sup>6</sup> page of the DATAR website (in French).

## SOME RESULTS

The cross-border territories analysed show contrasted functional dynamics, related to their geographical variety. Their territorial functioning does not make them “geographical aberrations”. They show the customary “centre-periphery” gradients, but these are distorted if the centre of the conurbation is located in one country and the periphery in another. In the case of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation, the centre is located in Switzerland (Geneva) and the peripheries in France (Annemasse, Saint-Julien en Genevois, etc.).

**1** Average demographic growth rate in the Strasbourg area. Until recently the average annual demographic growth rate was similar on both sides of the Rhine. Growth is now slowing on the German side and the population is getting older.

Source: ADEUS

**2** Youth index (ratio of under-20s to over-60s) in the Dunkirk-West Flanders area Northern France with a young population is next to south-western Belgium with an older population.

Source: AGUR

- 1 Covering the main conurbations on the French borders.
- 2 Epinal-Nancy-Metz-Thionville.
- 3 460 pages. The documents will soon be available on the DATAR and Observatoire des territoires website.
- 4 Comparative age structure, number of inhabitants from the neighbouring country, border worker flows, employment density, number of students at the place of study, etc.
- 5 [www.datar.gouv.fr/observatoire-des-territoires](http://www.datar.gouv.fr/observatoire-des-territoires)
- 6 [www.datar.gouv.fr/travaux-en-ligne](http://www.datar.gouv.fr/travaux-en-ligne)



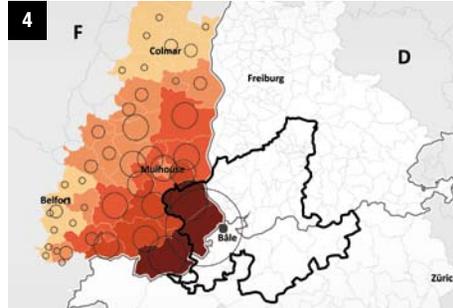
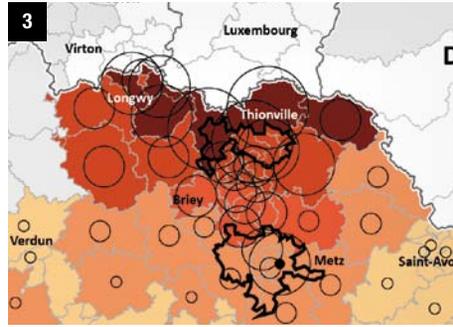


For many indicators, these spaces behave in the same way as the national territory to which they belong. In terms of demographics, for example, behaviour is linked very clearly with the trends observed at national level. This is shown by the positive demographic trends on the French side compared with the trends in several neighbouring countries (see Maps).

The cross-border territories benefit from the border (lower employment rates, higher incomes, etc.) as much as they suffer from it<sup>7</sup>. They are exposed head-on to the processes of internationalisation and globalisation, while acting as crucibles of a common European culture. Which, over the past few years, has not prevented the growth of anti-cross-border worker sentiment linked to the economic crisis.

The phenomenon of the formation of metropolises that develop in cross-border territories is linked above all with the presence of a predominant urban centre on one side of the border, such as Geneva, Basel, Luxembourg or Lille, rather than with the addition of the forces and populations from both sides of the border.

**These spaces show diversified functional integration justifying the introduction of cross-border governance, today undertaken to varying extents.**



**3 Worker flows to Luxembourg in the Lorraine Corridor area.** The attraction of Luxembourg extends over the entire northern part of the territory as far as Nancy.  
Source: AURM

**4 Border worker flows to Switzerland in the Basel area.** Southern Alsace is strongly affected by border work in Basel.  
Source: Sillon Lorrain

<sup>7</sup> Real economic dependence of some French border territories with a high proportion of residential economy, congestion of transport infrastructures, pressure on land and real estate, etc.

A real cross-border statistical database has been produced, enabling unduplicated mapping, indicator by indicator, using the same presentation for each site.

# The political issues



© Ville de Nancy

The Nancy seminar, 10 December 2012.

Other interested countries would be able to join this type of approach.

“Observation is essential before any political action.”

André Rossinot, opening the Nancy seminar.

- 1 In partnership with Nancy city council and the Nancy conurbation urban planning agency (ADUAN).
- 2 For more information: [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/la-mot/evenements-et-groupes-de-travail](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/la-mot/evenements-et-groupes-de-travail)
- 3 Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland.



## The Nancy seminar

Following their exploratory study, the DATAR, the MOT and the FNAU organised<sup>1</sup> the first European seminar on cross-border territory observation, on 10 December 2012<sup>2</sup> in Nancy. The objective was to present the work that had been done and to highlight the part played by observation in the context of cross-border planning policies.

With the debate organised around the expectations of the entities involved at local level, it provided the opportunity to discuss the role of the public authorities (States, statistics institutes, European institutions).

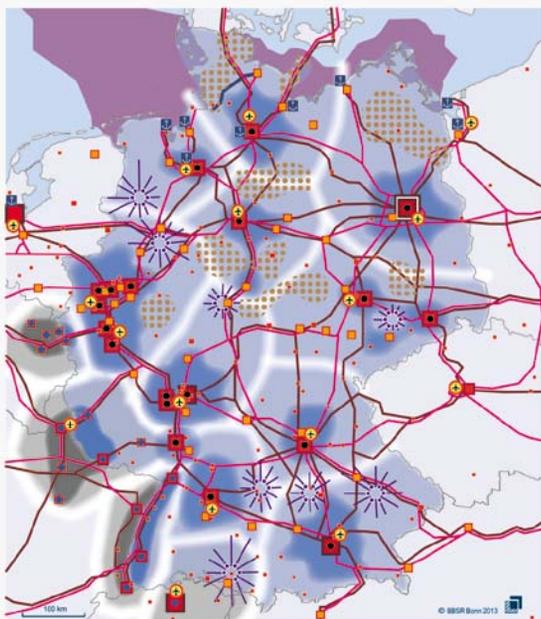
The seminar concluded with an agreement between the represented States<sup>3</sup> affirming the need to coordinate the statistical observation procedures of the border territories.

## Emergence of coordination between States

Following these discussions, the States, aware of the impossibility of total harmonisation of cross-border data, agreed to give priority to a process of improvement and gradual enrichment of the data and indicator baseline, which will in the long term provide more detailed knowledge of the cross-border context.

## Towards a cross-border strategy committee

To go further and clear the way for real cross-border statistical observation at European level, these States are moving towards establishing a cross-border strategy committee. Its role will be to start up and coordinate a multi-year work programme and, with support from a technical working group, to propose and analyse priority topics in order to identify and secure data sources and data collection.



## BOOSTING COMPETITIVENESS AT THE GERMAN BORDERS

This map, produced by the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), features in the 2013 draft “Guidelines and strategies for the territorial development of Germany”. These guidelines are undergoing a broad consultation process, in particular with the neighbouring states;

they will eventually be validated by the conference of German spatial planning ministers (MKRO), comprising the ministers from the federal government and the Länder. The map illustrates the benefit of reinforcing areas of cross-border integration in Europe. It is based in part on statistical work on functional cross-border urban areas.

Further information: [www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/EN/Publications/Ablage\\_Meldungen/\\_KM\\_Initiative\\_group.html](http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/EN/Publications/Ablage_Meldungen/_KM_Initiative_group.html)

Source: MKRO draft, Berlin, 2013

# INTERVIEW

## DATAR viewpoint



**Michel Ruffin**, head of the territorial intelligence department, DATAR (Interministerial delegation for spatial planning and regional attractiveness)

### Why has the DATAR initiated work on cross-border statistical observation?

The DATAR endeavours to promote balanced and sustainable planning of territories facing challenges, such as rural, coastal and mountain areas, but also cross-border areas. The latter are of dual interest. On one hand, they are examples of an overall trend, discussed in the latest report of the Observatoire des territoires,<sup>1</sup> of growing interdependence between territories under the effect of increased mobility of persons, goods and information resources. On the other hand, taking these cross-border trends into account involves looking away from the centre and raising the question of spatial planning at an international level, i.e. of intelligent and mutually beneficial guidance of existing trends. These cross-border spaces are a practical illustration of the necessary nesting of the scales of analysis and action (local, national,

European), nesting that must now be taken into account for all territories but which is no doubt more easily perceivable in the case of cross-border spaces.

However, in order to expand knowledge of these multidimensional interdependencies, it is necessary to be able to mobilise a whole array of information on very diverse subjects.

Statistical observation comes up against the difficulty of obtaining consistent data at comparable resolutions for our neighbouring countries. That is why the DATAR has worked with the MOT and the FNAU, in collaboration with the INSEE, to study the cross-border areas and compare them between borders<sup>2</sup>.

### What are the issues of cross-border observation at national level?

Cross-border spaces are rich in diverse potentialities in which local, regional and international processes intersect differently according to the contact situations. Understanding the differences in attractiveness either side of the border is thus a major spatial planning issue.

In terms of the geographical factors at work either side of the borders between France and the neighbouring countries, border worker flows are one of the most spectacular and most tangible regular phenomena<sup>3</sup>. They indicate the variety and the intensity of cross-border integration of the territories involved. The territories of northern and eastern France are the main generators of daily migrations of border workers attracted by a better paid or available job on the other side of the border; in some cases the number of border workers reaches levels that provide evidence of the effective economic integration of the cross-border space.

This coexistence of very different population structures in proximity can be a source of complementarities between territories, such as a better match between the available labour and the needs of the employment market. But it can also generate a number of difficulties, for example in terms of saturation of public transport or changes in property prices, along with urban sprawl controlled with varying effectiveness. Similarly, facilitating the establishment of an active cross-border employment market may require stronger coordination of public policies in terms of identification of labour or vocational training needs. Such initiatives depend on access to a base of robust knowledge.

### How is the DATAR intending to follow up this approach in the future?

The path to a lasting collaboration was outlined at the Nancy conference<sup>4</sup> on 10 December 2012. In 2013, two preparatory meetings for a cross-border strategy committee gave the participating countries the opportunity to reaffirm their acceptance of this common approach, which cannot be effective without strong political will and coordination at transnational level. All these discussions increase mutual knowledge of the observation systems and are consequently worth continuing.

The DATAR, which initiated and supports this approach, is of course a stakeholder in it. In 2014 it is going to support proposals to pursue this collaboration, while reinforcing its European base. At the least it seems essential to develop a common culture, to set up appropriate tools and encourage exchanges between the participants. But there must also be a collective expression of the need to develop statistical observation on a well-defined topic, cross-border flows for example.

The tremendous opportunity offered by the 2014-2020 programming of European funds should also be grasped, in order to propose the introduction of a cross-border statistical observation strand. The European presidency to be held by Luxembourg<sup>5</sup> in second semester of 2015 could provide us with the occasion to take another step, the objective being to organise ourselves to eventually produce a shared knowledge base on the cross-border spaces.

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- 1 As well as in some research and forecasting work
  - 2 See page 11.
  - 3 See page 5.
  - 4 See page 11.
  - 5 See page 14.



The Nancy seminar, 10 December 2012.

# Luxembourg viewpoint



**Romain Diederich**, government first advisor, responsible for general coordination of the spatial planning department, Ministry of sustainable development and infrastructure, Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg.

## What are the issues of cross-border observation for Luxembourg?

Given the small size of our territory, everything or nearly everything is cross-border. There is practically no hinterland. Whenever we talk of planning, mobility or forecasting, the cross-border dimension has to be considered, based on data and studies. In this respect, two levels are relevant:

- At multilateral level, the ESPON Metroborder study has defined a cross-border polycentric metropolitan region forming the central space of the Greater Region. A territorial development coordination committee, which I chair, has since been set up, along with a Greater Region geographic information system (SIG-GR). A development scheme for this space based on the work of the committee is being produced.
- At bilateral or trilateral level, the relevant territories are local functional areas. On the border with France, the principal example is Alzette-Belval — the EGTC

will have to set up databases that can be used to track cross-border urban development. With Germany, the Moselle valley is involved; with Belgium there is less demographic concentration, except around Arlon and in the area covered by the European development cluster (PED) (Athus-Longwy-Pétange). A Luxembourg-Lorraine cross-border mobility scheme (SMOT) is already in effect. SMOTs with Wallonia and Germany are in preparation.

## The ESPON programme has started to explore the issues of cross-border observation. How can ESPON contribute to it in the future?

ESPON, an essential instrument for the European regions and countries to compare themselves with each other and to grasp the cross-border issues and the issues of Europe as a whole, is going to become a permanent observatory of European territorial development. However, the NUTS 3 level currently covered by ESPON is suitable for analyses at the scale of the Greater Region, but not for observation at the local level on the borders. If we want ESPON to be able to produce high-resolution analyses for the regions, the regions must supply it with high-resolution data. ESPON is going to see its resources increase for the 2014-2020 period; the Grand-Duchy, which is its managing authority, will fulfil its responsibilities.

## What is your assessment of the project initiated by the DATAR on cross-border statistical observation?

Luxembourg is very much in favour of the DATAR initiative. Without statistical

coordination between the States, it is very difficult to conduct cross-border studies. This necessitates considerable effort, organisations that can ensure continuity of the observation work. Regular updating of the data must be guaranteed. But it is a non-negligible investment, and the resources are limited.

After twenty years of complaining about the lack of cross-border data, it is time for action. The Interreg programmes must be able to co-fund the initiatives, with backing from the European Commission. The DG REGIO must now take account of the inclusion of territorial cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty.

At overall European level it is difficult, as one comes up against the reluctance of some of the Member States which refuse with varying degrees of firmness any interference by DG REGIO in their national development policies. In any case, ESPON will make its contribution regarding observation data.

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*Territorial cohesion plays a part in particular in the cross-border territories.*  
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Looking beyond observation, not all obstacles can be eliminated from the top down. But the DG REGIO must at least produce a legal toolbox enabling willing States to overcome the obstacles to cross-border development. Luxembourg will take related initiatives leading up to its presidency of the European Union during the second half of 2015, in the framework of the trio Italy-Latvia-Luxembourg.

FEATURE

# FIELD EXPERIENCES



## Table of Contents

The atlas of the Lille metropolitan area ..... p. 16

The cross-border statistical observatory of the France-Vaud-Geneva space ..... p. 18

The Upper Rhine geographic information system ..... p. 20

Örestat, the statistical observatory of the Öresund region ..... p. 21



### THE LILLE METROPOLITAN AREA

« The atlas of the Lille metropolitan area aims to build a common culture, highlighting the assets, the disparities and the development issues. The data and their cartographic treatments enable the whole of the cross-border territory to be examined on a single view.



### THE UPPER RHINE

« The cartographic representation of a cross-border territory is very useful for the political decision-makers and enables the populations to obtain a better understanding of their territory. The purpose of the system is to answer requests from the Upper Rhine Conference working groups and expert groups.



### THE FRANCE-VAUD-GENEVA SPACE

« In the Genevan cross-border space, the nesting of cooperation and observation spaces demands a rigorous but flexible organisation, with variable geometry. Public statistics must provide a stable reference framework, integrating various scales.



### THE ÖRESUND REGION

« The Örestat cooperation began in the 2000s when the Öresund bridge was built between Denmark and Sweden. The question was: How can integration and cross-border flows be measured on either side of the border?

# The atlas of the Lille metropolitan area

## Questions to Thierry Baert, study director at the Lille Metropolis development and urban planning agency



### What is the intended purpose of the cross-border atlas of the metropolitan area?

The atlas of the metropolitan area, a collaboration between the Lille Metropolis development and urban planning agency, the regional directorate of the INSEE and the Nord-Pas de Calais mining basin mission, is a knowledge resource for this territory, including its cross-border dimension. It aims to build a common culture, highlighting the assets, the disparities and the development issues.

### What is the particular feature of this resource?

The analyses performed at the scale of the atlas, which is that of the cross-border metropolitan area, do not correspond to the existing political and administrative units, and this is quite uncommon. The data and their cartographic treatments enable the whole of the cross-border territory to be examined on a single view.

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The major issues of the metropolitan cooperation appear, thanks to the simultaneous representation of common characteristics, disparities and complementarities.  
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The atlas has six chapters: the first describes the territory (history, geography, urban morphology, administrative and political organisation); the second covers the demographics and housing aspects; the third chapter analyses the data on employment, unemployment and training; the fourth covers economic topics; the fifth examines one of the major assets of the territory: its accessibility by the various modes of transport; the last chapter covers the scope of the influence of the territory, appreciated for example through its heritage and its amenities.

### What difficulties have been encountered?

The first difficulties encountered were methodological, resulting for example from the disparity of the administrative and political systems, the heterogeneity of the sources, dates and scales, the cultural differences between partners and the inadequacy of the data on cross-border flows at local level.

### How is the work of the metropolitan area linked with the political project of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis?

The approaches are complementary and convergent. Much work is done jointly. The inauguration of the Eurometropolis has given concrete form to long-standing cross-border cooperation for which it appeared essential to bring together all the levels of authority within a common structure.

### How is the work of the atlas of the metropolitan area linked with the work of the French-Belgian cross-border atlas?

The linkage is provided by the regional directorate of the INSEE. The cross-border atlas is very valuable, for example in its highlighting of the Euroregional issues of our territories. However, its observation mesh still seems too coarse for use as a support for the development of more local cooperation projects.





© Vincent Lecigne / Lille Métropole

“Euratechnologies”, ICT business park and incubator in the Lille conurbation.

## THE LILLE METROPOLITAN AREA

The Lille metropolitan area covers 7200 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of 3.8 million. On the French side of the border it consists of the Lille metropolis, the conurbations that grew up during the mining history from Valenciennes and Douai to Lens and Béthune, and those of Arras, Cambrai and the Val de Sambre; on the Belgian side, the intercommunales (inter-municipality agencies) IDETA (Tournai, Ath), IEG (Mouscron), Leiedal (Kortrijk), and part of WVI (Ieper, Roeselare and Tielt).

Today this territory is a functional reality and in increasingly integrated living and working area, having acquired a political dimension with the signature in 2005 of an initial memorandum of understanding, then with the establishment in 2007 of the association Aire métropolitaine de Lille (Lille metropolitan area), in parallel with that of the EGTC of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis.

[www.lillemetropole.fr:8080/index.php?sit\\_id=2](http://www.lillemetropole.fr:8080/index.php?sit_id=2)

[www.eurometropolis.eu/?noRedirect=1](http://www.eurometropolis.eu/?noRedirect=1)



# The cross-border statistical observatory of the France-Vaud-Geneva space



## Questions to Dominique Frei, former director of the OCSTAT<sup>1</sup>

### What are the characteristics of the observed territory?

The OCSTAT analyses have been focused on the Geneva cross-border space: the Canton of Geneva, the Nyon district and the French Genevois area. This area has a population of 900,000 and 440,000 jobs. Cross-border cooperation has developed on the western and northern 'front' of Switzerland, so essentially with France. The development of the Geneva urban centre, traditionally turned outward towards the world, is spreading across the borders of the canton. In the cross-border space, the effects of conurbation and complementarity take precedence over those of the border; however, public policies must refer to relevant regional spaces, with variable geometry.

### What national differences have to be taken into account?

There are substantial institutional differences between France and Switzerland. On the French side, statistics are produced at national level; on the Swiss side, they are produced at federal and cantonal levels. The institutional organisations are specific to each State. The missions and the organisations of the statistics institutions differ. Even the concept of "urban" varies from one country to the other, some of the statistical definitions are different, as well as the availability and the comparability of the data.

© Observatoire statistique transfrontalier



### What are the advances and the main achievements of cross-border observation?

The sharing of competencies has enriched professional practices, creating a common culture, principles and language, even though public statistics already has a strong and homogeneous discipline culture.

In Europe, it has been observed that the increase in mobility is accompanied by an elimination of the borders. The cross-border domain raises questions of the States and their regional institutional units in order to integrate this dimension into national statistical observation practices. The challenge to be met by the statistics institutes is to know how to look ahead in order to deal with the intrinsic complexity and the inertia of the production of statistics.

The limits to rendering the statistics results consistent and to the juxtaposition of national indicators raise the question of the construction of cross-border data by dedicated surveys.

Cross-border observation has also made it possible to put the experience acquired in cross-border cooperation to good use. In the Genevan cross-border area, the nesting of cooperation and observation spaces demands a rigorous but flexible organisation, with variable geometry. Public statistics must provide a stable reference framework, integrating various scales.

The municipal level is essential for cross-border observation, but can be

heterogeneous according to the countries. The gridding<sup>2</sup> must be developed and the use of administrative files enables this. Switzerland joined the European statistics system in 2007. The production of Euro-compatible statistical results is now integrated into Eurostat's distribution procedures.

The limits to rendering the statistics results consistent and to the juxtaposition of national indicators raise the question of the construction of cross-border data by dedicated surveys.

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1 Office cantonal de la statistique du Canton de Genève.  
Contact: frei.dom@bluewin.ch

2 Fine localisation of statistical information independent of municipal boundaries.

## THE CROSS-BORDER STATISTICAL OBSERVATORY

An initial statistical cooperation agreement between the OCSTAT and the INSEE Rhône-Alpes was signed in 1994 and resulted in the first joint product: the Atlas du Bassin genevois.

The cross-border statistics observatory is a shared diagnostic instrument. It meets the needs for information on both sides of the border in order to understand

and coordinate the development of a dynamic cross-border space, by providing consistent and reliable information in support of cross-border public policies. It enables networking and sharing of the resources of certain technical infrastructures and statistical instruments of the OCSTAT and the INSEE Rhône-Alpes. It has self-referral powers.

<http://www.statregio-francosuisse.net>



France-Vaud-Geneva space, from the Mont Salève (France)

© GTE / Lucien Fortunati

# The Upper Rhine geographic information system (GISUR)



## Questions to Yasmine Soulaïmani, GISUR<sup>1</sup> coordinator

### What is the history of the project?

The first discussions took place in 2003 and 2004. The purpose of the system is to answer requests from the Upper Rhine Conference working groups and expert groups. It comprises a GIS unit,

a coordination unit and some twenty experts from France, Germany and Switzerland.

Reporting to the spatial planning working group of the Upper Rhine Conference, the GISUR receives requests from its various groups, which make data available to it which it uses to produce the requested maps.

The project was co-funded by the Interreg III programme from 2004 to 2007, then 100% by its various partners<sup>2</sup> between 2008 and 2011. Over the 2011-2014 period, the GISUR is again receiving funding through the Interreg IV Upper Rhine programme. It has an annual budget of 120,000 euros.

### What difficulties have been encountered?

The difficulties encountered have concerned data harmonisation, for example. The linguistic obstacle is relatively unimportant, since geomatics and cartography provide a common language.

© Ville de Strasbourg / J. Dorkel



Strasbourg (France) and Kehl (Germany), Jardin des Deux Rives.

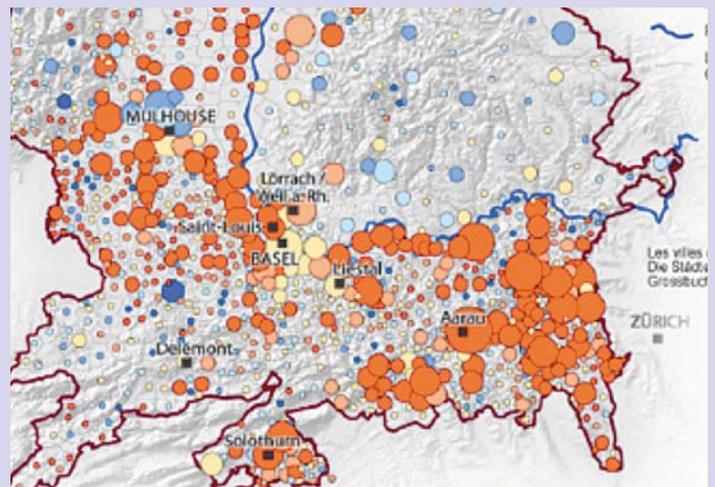
## THE UPPER RHINE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

The GISUR is developing common geographical databases in digital form, enabling the Upper Rhine Conference, along with its working groups and partners, to have a collection of maps and geographical and socioeconomic data corresponding to the cross-border and trinational area that they cover.

[www.sigrs-gisor.org](http://www.sigrs-gisor.org)

[www.conference-rhin-sup.org](http://www.conference-rhin-sup.org)

[www.rmtmo.eu](http://www.rmtmo.eu)



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The differences in definitions either side of the border also caused difficulties, for example for “protected natural areas”, which do not have the same legal definition in France and in Germany.  
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The cartographic representation of a cross-border territory is very useful for the political decision-makers and enables the populations to obtain a better understanding of their territory. For example, the map of science and research in the Upper Rhine raised awareness of

the scientific potential of this cross-border space.

#### **What is the link with the political project of the Upper Rhine trinational region and the initiatives at local level?**

As the Upper Rhine trinational metropolitan region encompasses the Upper Rhine Conference, the GISUR also works for the region. The GISUR is also recognised by the European institutions, thereby contributing to improving the visibility of the Upper Rhine in Europe. At a more local level, the four Eurodistricts of the Upper Rhine are members of the GISUR group of experts. Although the maps are made at the scale of the Upper Rhine, the Eurodistricts benefit from the expertise of the group of experts and

participate in the technical conferences and in information sharing.

#### **What is the follow-up to the project?**

The GISUR is seeking to pursue its development in innovative ways. Following the recommendations of the European INSPIRE Directive, the GISUR is considering setting up a spatial data infrastructure (or geoportal), i.e. a computer system providing a range of services, including the production of dynamic maps.

- 1 The Upper Rhine geographic information system.
- 2 French State (Prefecture), Alsace Region, Haut-Rhin (project sponsor) and Bas Rhin departments, the Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg Länder, Basel-Stadt, Basel Landschaft and Aargau (which no longer co-funds the GISUR at present) cantons, and the Republic and Canton of Jura.

# Örestat, the statistical observatory of the Öresund region



## **Questions to Daniel Svärd, Örestat project coordinator for Skåne County (Denmark-Sweden)**

### **What is the history of the project?**

The Örestat cooperation began in the 2000s when the Öresund bridge was built between Denmark and Sweden. The question was: How can integration and cross-border flows be measured on either side of the border? Skåne County, other counties and cities, the newly-created Öresund committee and the Swedish and Danish statistics offices were involved





from the beginning of the project. They developed common data production methods for filling the Öresund database. Until 2006 this work was funded by two European projects; then, between 2006 and 2011, it was co-funded 50:50 by the Danish government and Skåne County. Skåne County received funds from the Swedish government for several years, because the data were also produced for the Statnord statistical database ([www.statnord.org](http://www.statnord.org)); however, this statistical database, which contains data on the worker flows between the whole of Norway, Denmark and Sweden, is going to be closed down.

**What difficulties have been encountered?**

The comparability and the difference between the statistical systems of the two countries, along with the different working methods, were the first obstacles. But they were overcome and are not a major problem in the long term (several similarities between the Swedish and Danish statistics systems, common understanding of the language, strong regional backing, etc.). The funding has been the most complicated part. We asked the Swedish government to include data on border workers in the national statistics offices. The government should have funded the database, but is showing little interest.

**What is the link with the political project of the Öresund Committee and other regional observation initiatives?**

The statistical observation project has strong links with the political project of the Öresund Committee. It attempts to focus on the committee's objectives. It does not have links with other initiatives at the level of the Baltic Sea macroregion. However, we are working with Västra Götaland County in western Sweden on common issues (cross-border flows with Norway), and also in the framework of the new 2014-2020 Interreg

Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak programme on the options for assessment of the programme objectives.

**What are the follow-ups to the project?**

There will not be another Örestat project in the Interreg framework. Our objective of creating a modern database, with new statistical indicators, has been achieved. Furthermore, Swedish and Danish funding is not yet committed, nor is the additional funding to be able to invest in new fields of observation, without involving Interreg.

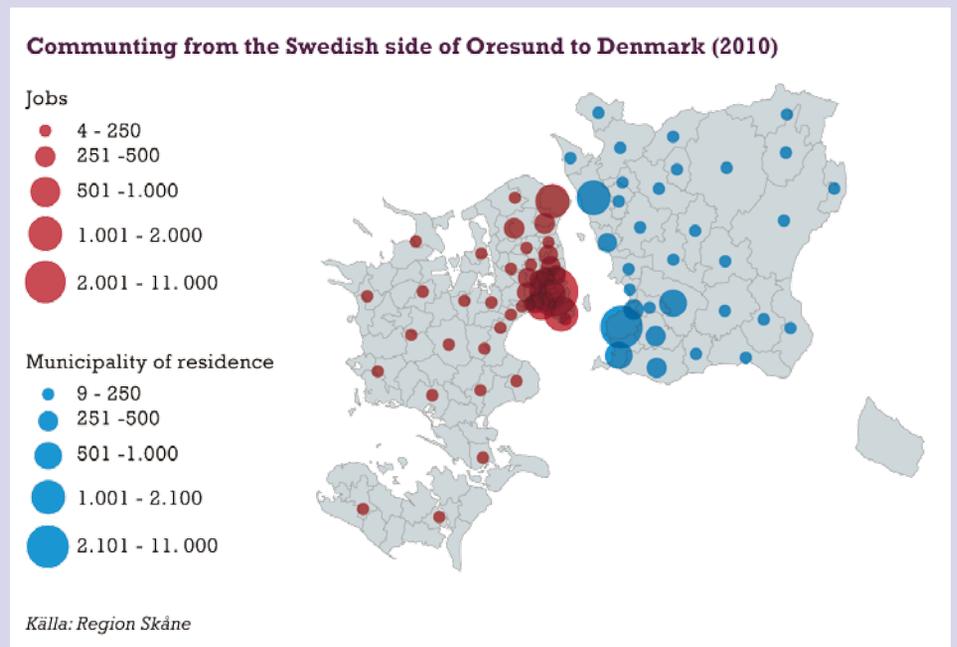
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 The Öresund database and [www.orestat.se](http://www.orestat.se) have become an important source of statistical information and data used in the major fields.  
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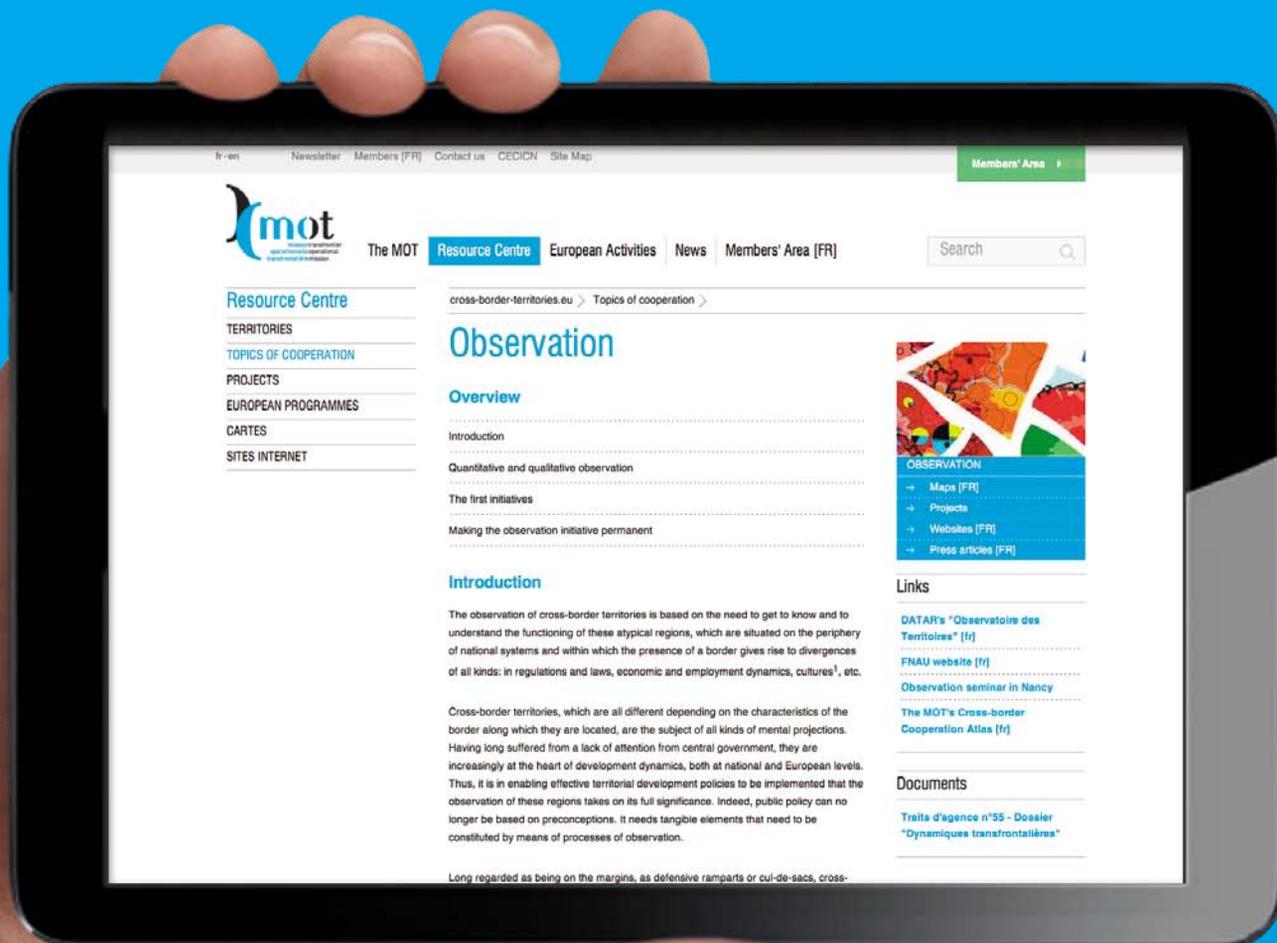


# ÖRESTAT

Örestat is a cross-border statistical database covering the Öresund region. It is used to observe the integration process that is taking place there. It contains comparable, harmonised and unduplicated cross-border regional statistics in several fields, including demographics, housing, employment and work. The Örestat database has been compiled with support from the Interreg Örestat I and II projects, which have established a comparative regional statistical boundary for the cross-border area.

[www.orestat.se](http://www.orestat.se)





For further material on the question of cross-border observation go to the MOT website <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/resources/topics-of-cooperation/> (then "Observation")

## TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Visit the Resource Centre at the MOT website for access to:

- 175 border and territory factsheets
- 27 topics of cooperation
- a database of cross-border projects
- a collection of 130 maps illustrating the reality of cooperation on the French borders
- in the members' area (in French): a database of press articles (6000 articles at present), an updated legal document collection, etc.

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