



Impact of border-related measures taken by Member States in the fight against COVID-19

Lessons learned, challenges for CB regions and their future

Conference on the Future of Cross-border cooperation

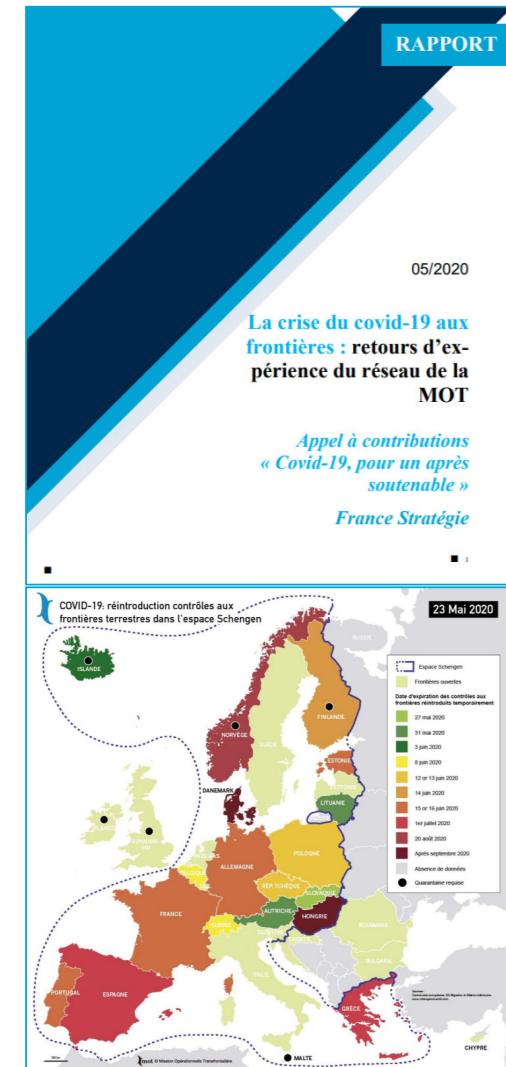


Study for DG REGIO: understanding the impact of border measures on CB communities

- Refers to spring 2020, 1st wave of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Internal land borders (including CH, NO, AD, LI)
- 21 interviews
- Involved MOT, AEBR and CESCO's networks

► 4 main tasks :

1. Mapping of the border measures taken
2. Impact on CB communities, (20 case studies)
3. Role of CB structures
4. Lessons and recommendations on CB governance





Lessons learnt and recommendations

1. What can be done at the local level of cross-border regions
2. What can be done within the framework of a bottom up, multi level governance and at EU level

> for crisis management, also valid for the recovery and beyond



All regions suffered, but **Cross Border regions suffered double penalty.**

When borders were suddenly closed, **persons** were hurt as:

- **Economic** actors (CB workers...): mobility was drastically limited !
- **Users of CB public services**: they were the 1st to be interrupted !
- **Citizens**: suddenly only national ! (restrictions based on ID cards). What about EU citizenship ?
- **Informed**: there was no more CB information !
- **Inspired** by culture, ethics: stigmatization of the “stranger” !
- **Engaged** in couples, families...: sometimes divided by the border !

After the border closure, **persons** reacted first.

But existing CB governance showed the way.

We need **institutions**, also in the CB context.



- => **Start from CB life of persons** with all its dimensions
- => **in their CB communities: consider borders as living areas**, rather than lines.
- => **Prefer a functional approach**, rather than institutional, vertical, bureaucratic.
- => **Give EGTCs or equivalent structures a more prominent role to manage borders**



What can be done at the local level of border regions: recommendations

- For **CB users**: develop **Cross border public services (CPS) and maintain them** in case of crises: establish a **EU framework for CPS**
- For **CB citizens**: ease persons' and families' border-crossings, with a **"CB citizen status" (CB living area convention)**
- Provide CB communities with permanent democratic **CB councils**
- For **CB workers, consumers, businesses**: develop **CB information centers**
- For **informed citizens**, develop **local CB observatories** delivering harmonised CB data -with support of national and EU level
- For **inspired citizens**, fund **people-to-people projects** to (re)-build **trust**



During the crisis, most problems came from lack of State coordination across the border

National level also matters to manage crisis and recovery

In crisis context, States have legitimacy to limit mobility; but should **coordinate**, horizontally and vertically.

We need **sovereign States** (legal and funding capacity); but **acting together**

EU did much, but with a limited mandate =>room to increase its intervention:

Check that State action is fair and proportionate; provide information and coordination.





What can be done within the framework of a bottom up, multi level governance: recommendations

Increase EU competence on health policy

- Harmonize crisis management from the EU level, including CB emergency plans,...

Reinforce a bottom up CB multi-level governance with 3 level (CB regions - States- EU)

- **National level:** Coordinate on each border; adapt legislation; develop a **CB impact assessment** procedure for new legislation
- ✓ **different models: bilateral** (Aachen DE-FR treaty, ...); **multilateral** (Nordic Council, ...)
- **European level**
- ✓ Use Interreg: **integrated territorial approaches** (Objective “A Europe closer to citizens”); **strengthen CB governance**, CB data, mutual trust (Objective “Better cooperation governance”)
- ✓ **Adopt the ECBM regulation:** establish national/regional **CB coordination points, acting within a network monitored by the EU border coordination point**





Conclusion

CB regions deserve EU's special attention (article 174 TFEU), because of their **handicaps** (CB obstacles) and **potentials** (fully open border).

CB interdependencies revealed by the crisis require new policies: **functional approach** considering **persons in their CB living areas**.

Join the **European CB Citizens Alliance** !

➤ build CB contributions to the **Conference on the Future of Europe!**

The « **ever closer union of the peoples of Europe** » happens **in CB regions** !





Thank you !
Merci !

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