

**Position of the MOT
on cross-border tourism**

March 2016



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I. Introduction

The network of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) would like to participate in this consultation, in particular on aspects linked with cross-border cooperation.

Presentation of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT - Transfrontier Operational Mission):

The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, created in 1997, is both an association and a French inter-ministerial structure, which has the main objective of facilitating cross-border projects. Its missions are operational assistance to leaders of cross-border projects (project development, legal structures, studies, etc.), networking, assistance in the definition of overall strategies in cross-border cooperation, and implementation of European projects. The MOT brings together within its network sub-national authorities and their groupings, associations, cross-border structures, large corporations, states, etc. involved in cross-border cooperation and situated on both sides of the border. It has more than 60 members, from 10 European countries.

To date, the MOT has concentrated its work on cross-border proximity cooperation and assistance in the definition of policies regarding cross-border territories.

Website: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

II. Cross-border tourism

1. Projects of great importance for local development

Tourism represents one of the most dynamic economic sectors in Europe. It is an important component of local economic development for certain territories, and is also associated with cultural themes like the creative industries, natural and cultural heritage, the arts and the media. In border regions, which represent 20% of European territory, cross-border tourism projects have a real impact on the growth of local economies. The improvement of tourism infrastructure contributes not only to job-creation in rural regions or regions in industrial decline, but also to attracting new investment. The mutualisation of resources, amenities, and tourist attractions at the cross-border level represents a real opportunity for local actors to promote the local economy and the attractiveness of the territory.

For example, within the Sarre-Lorraine-Luxembourg region, numerous cross-border projects have helped to raise the region's profile in terms of tourism and the economy.

As the essence of a cross-border territory's identity, the border itself can become a tourist attraction and be the starting point for a cross-border project idea. Examples include the cross-border networks of fortifications between France and the United Kingdom ("Historic Fortifications Network"), and between France and Italy ("Sentinels of the Alps"), within which the notion of "border" is very present and the element that once constituted a barrier between the two countries has become the very focus of cooperation.

Tourism is a principal factor giving rise to meetings and interactions between populations, and this aspect takes on another dimension in a cross-border context: it is first of all a "social and cultural link" across the border between two populations. It contributes greatly to the reinforcement of cross-border cultural identity and the feeling of belonging between the population and the cross-border territory.

2. Projects supported by the European funds

In order to exploit this potential, the European Territorial Cooperation programs support numerous cross-border tourism projects in Europe, with the following main objectives: the improvement of the quality of tourism at the regional and local level, the development of more sustainable models of tourism, and the establishment of stronger cross-border links between economic and cultural actors.

Between 2007 and 2013, more than six billion euros from the EU's regional policy funds were granted for the development of tourism. From this sum, 3.8 billion euros have been reserved for the improvement of tourism services and 2.5 billion euros for the protection, development and promotion of natural heritage. Although tourism does not figure among the eleven thematic priorities for cohesion policy 2014-2020, cross-border tourism projects, with high stakes of economic, environmental and job creation should be able to once again be co-financed by territorial cooperation programs 2014-2020.

For example, for priority No. 6 "Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency", the ERDF regulation allows for the financing of:

- Protection, promotion and development of cultural heritage;
- Protection of biodiversity, soil conservation and promotion of services linked to ecosystems, including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures;
- Initiatives for the improvement of the urban environment, notably for the rehabilitation of former industrial zones and the reduction of atmospheric pollution.

3. Characteristics of cross-border tourism projects

Tourism projects can be carried out at different levels:

- **At the level of cross-border bodies and institutions**, within which thematic working groups can be set up on the question of tourism (e.g. the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis).
- **At the local and regional level**: local authorities and regional councils can for example lead projects directly.
- **At the level of public or private structures** not of a cross-border nature, such as tourism offices, protected natural areas such as national parks, etc. in partnership with other equivalent structures on the other side of the border.

Cross-border tourism projects can be put into two categories: some take existing tourism offerings and translate them to a cross-border scale (homogenisation of offerings, joint commercialisation and promotion, networking...) and others are conceived from the outset in a cross-border dimension.

The objective of tourism projects is, generally, to propose cross-border actions capable of encouraging the emergence of a shared cross-border identity.

The development of cross-border tourism therefore involves:

- the creation of shared tools and methods
- concerted spatial planning including that of tourist sites, through the networking of actors
- the joint organisation of promotion and commercialisation
- the use of Information Society tools
- the creation of new tourism products and actions in favour of the training of operators
- Aside from the cultural, economic and environmental challenges already addressed, other parameters are important to consider for the viability of a project:
- the different partners need to have a common interest
- the tourism services and products developed as the foundation of the project on either side of the border must be capable of responding to expectations or needs of the population
- the partners leading the project must have the appropriate language skills and professional competencies

4. Typology and examples of project

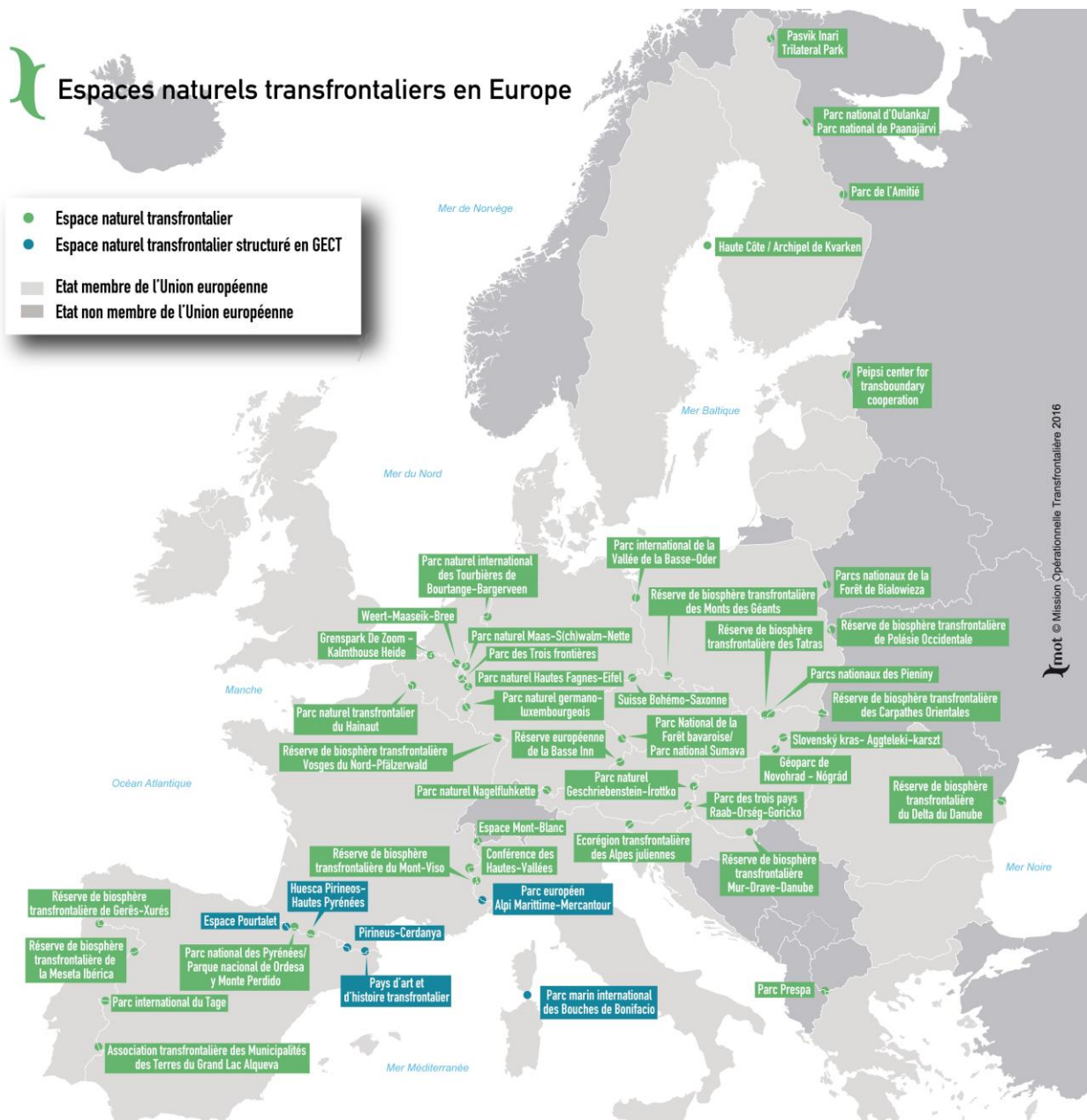
- **Joint entry ticket systems for tourist sites:** the "[Ticket](#)" in the SaarLorLux region; the "[Museum Pass](#)" in the Upper Rhine Region.
- **Cross-border tour guides and tourist maps:** "[Panorama du Léman](#)" (Lake Geneva Panorama, cross-border guide to 142 tourist sites, produced by the Lake Geneva Council and the association "[Léman sans frontière](#)" – Lake Geneva without borders); [cross-border tourist map of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis](#).
- **Cross-border promotion of tourism and economic development:** the study and evaluation of cross-border tourism with the "[Transvisite](#)" project on the Franco-Belgian border, which aims to improve understanding of the commercial and tourism sectors' cross-border needs; or the project "[Tourism enhancement on the coastline West Kust – Flandres Côte d'Opale](#)" which aims to improve the attractiveness of the territory.
- **Cross-border spatial planning to promote tourism and develop the local economy:** one example is the study carried out in early 2013 by the [Eurodistrict Pamina](#), the association "[Vis-à-Vis](#)" and the communities of communes concerned for the development of Franco-German cycle paths with the aim of stimulating tourism and the economy.
- **Internet and multimedia:** creation of electronic tourism information networks (Greater Region); creation of shared websites (www.leman-sans-frontiere.org); the example of the network of cities, "[QuattroPole](#)" (Saarbrücken, Trier, Metz and Luxembourg), which set up a "Culture and tourism" working group to implement ICT and multimedia projects in the fields of culture and tourism. One such project was the creation of a common system for online hotel reservations.
- **Cross-border discovery tours:** "[Route du Feu SaarMoselle](#)", "[Maritime Heritage Trail](#)", "[Greenlinks](#)", "[Rhénatour](#)"; cross-border cycle paths (within the [Pamina Rhine Park](#) for example, or the [Franco-British cycle plan](#)), footpaths and cross-border hiking trails (in the [Espace Mont Blanc](#), for example).
- **Joint training for tourism professionals** organised by tourism offices (for example in the [Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis](#)) and protected natural area authorities.
- **Cross-border tourism initiatives in nature parks:** raising young people's awareness of flora and fauna issues ("[les routes du bois](#)"); joint communication (creation of a common logo); common signage for tourists, etc. (further information in the section [Territories>Natural and rural areas](#) and see the map below "Cross-border nature areas")
- **Joint exhibitions, travelling exhibitions:** network of "[Gardens without borders](#)" between France, Germany and Luxembourg.
- **Management and joint development, and networking of cross-border cultural and tourist sites:** "[Roman roads in the Mediterranean region](#)", "[Historic Fortifications Network](#)", "[Sentinels of the Alps](#)".

5. Cross-border maps

Cross-border protected areas in Europe

In Europe, there are several border nature areas which have decided to manage in common their cross-border area. In addition to nature conservation, tourism is one of most important aims of these projects. They are different types of parks at different levels of governance (local, regional, national). Some of the cross-border nature areas are established as “Transboundary Biosphere Reserves”, a tool provided by the UNESCO. Some other cross-border areas are certified by EUROPARC Federation as “Transboundary Protected Areas”. The most advanced cross-border areas have set up a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

Certain types of facilities are more and more complicated to maintain in these areas (health, culture, management of natural hazards, accessibility...) but the lack of recognition of the cross-border specificity of these areas makes any cross-border mutualisation much more difficult. There is still a need of sharing best practices and experience on management of cross-borders natural parks.



Cross-border ski areas in Europe

Winter sports contributed to the economic growth of mountain regions. In Europe, some of the ski resorts are located very close to the borders and most of them decided to connect their ski lifts across the border. Some other ski resorts have developed common ski passes when their lifts are not directly connected. In the cross-border ski areas, winter tourists can easily cross the border on skis to enjoy other culture, language etc.

