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# Espaces transfrontaliers

Cross-border areas



The letter of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

## Towards a second generation cooperation



**Luís Filipe Menezes,**  
president of  
Eixo Atlântico

The cross border cooperation is an essential instrument for the development of bordering territories, generally peripheral towards decision centres. Cross-border cooperation is also a way to build the Europe of citizens, presenting concrete answers to concrete problems. Therefore, we must reflect on the second generation cooperation. The development of services that cover the needs of citizens, the improvement of competitiveness, innovation and use of new technologies in cross-border territories must be the main objectives in order to increase their internal cohesion.

The RTDI (Research, Technological Development and Innovation) policies should integrate, as main concern, the agenda of cross border policies to favour the accomplishment of Lisbon Objectives. To achieve this purpose, it's necessary to go more deeply into the analysis of cross-border territories, to share best practices and common solutions for common problems. We should think about this among us, but also with the Community institutions. We are talking about growth, welfare and sustainable development for a cohesive and polycentric Europe. These common objectives demand consensus policies and the continuity of EU funding for cross border cooperation after 2013. For this reason, EUROMOT must have a decisive position in this process of reflection and analysis. This organization shall have a privileged relationship with the European institutions in the field of cross-border cooperation, at the service of the European development and construction.

## First meetings for EUROMOT

**EUROMOT, the European network of cross-border local authorities, was launched officially on 8 November 2007 in Lille during the European conference on "Cross-border territories: Day-to-day Europe". A cooperation agreement was signed between the MOT, Eixo Atlântico and City Twins, and a strategic alliance was concluded between EUROMOT and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).**



Left to right: Xoán Vazquez Mao, secretary-general of Eixo Atlântico, Pierre Mauroy, president of the MOT, and Martin Patzelt, Mayor of Frankfurt (Oder), Germany.

EUROMOT aims to act as an instrument of dialogue between cross-border local authorities, the states and European institutions. Its work will focus on operational assistance for projects, studies, training and research on cross-border cooperation, networking and interfacing from local to European levels. The alliance with the AEBR enables coverage of the different scales of cooperation (local and regional).

The EUROMOT political committee is chaired by Pierre Mauroy, president of the MOT, and has two vice-presidents: Luís Filipe Menezes, president of Eixo Atlântico, and Joachim Paulick, mayor of Görlitz (Germany), representing the City Twins network.

The final participant in this arrangement is the secretary, Alain Lamassoure (member of the European parliament and MOT vice-president).

The executive committee has met twice since the beginning of 2008. It is tasked with defining a three-year strategic plan for operational implementation of the objectives defined by the agreement. It also aims to define the operating procedures and organisation of the EUROMOT structure, which will be set up by the end of this year. Achievement of these objectives will involve aid from European programmes. An Interreg IVC project to support the work of EUROMOT was submitted to this end in January 2008. ■

1. Network of border cities involving North-Portugal and Galicia in Spain.
2. Network of twin cities involving Germany, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Finland and Russia.
3. Comprising a president (Jacques Houbart, MOT director-general) and two vice-presidents (Xoan Vazquez Mao, secretary-general of Eixo Atlântico, and Klaus Baldauf, international cooperation officer of Frankfurt-Oder city council).

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## Cross-border cooperation

# "Building Europe in its territories"

The European conference "Cross-border territories: Day-to-day Europe" organised by the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière on 8 and 9 November 2007 brought together more than 800 persons in Lille. Thirty-six countries in Europe were represented. This report summarises the discussions at the conference.

The conference identified the fundamental issues of cross-border cooperation as facilitating the daily life of 35%<sup>1</sup> of Europe's population, building "laboratories for the construction of Europe" and promoting a concrete Europe close to its citizens. It emphasised the need to take better account of the specific nature of the cross-border situation in national and European policies, in order to encourage this development. Lastly, it was the occasion of the establishment of EUROMOT, with objectives including the organisation and follow-up of the conference results.

### Cross-border territories under construction

As emphasised by Stefaan De Clerck, burgomaster of Kortrijk in Belgium, at the first plenary panel discussion, Europe does not provide instruments allowing arrangements outside bilateral frameworks. Authorities are too often obliged to restrict their actions to national models which do not take account of cross-border reality. For example, it took 15 years to establish the "Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis"<sup>2</sup> cross-border Eurometropolitan area on the French-Belgian border.

In the field, there is no doubt about the added value of cross-border organisation. All involved in the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict (ETB) on the French-German-Swiss border, for example, have rapidly realised that the cross-border economic space multiplies the opportunities for work and development. The cross-border governance structure formed, the ETB, has been characterised by its operational effectiveness and its democratic

basis, as the conference was reminded by Walter Schneider, ETB president.

According to Alain Lamassoure, vice-president of the Bayonne-San Sebastian Basque Eurocity (France/Spain), the formation of a

developing recently and political contacts are helping to overcome a troubled past.

These are the ways in which cross-border territories gradually develop, in a multicultural way, on the basis of cross-border projects,



The "projects" space organised in the exhibition facilities of Lille Grand Palais was a place for fruitful sharing of information on cross-border projects.

living space in the Basque country was made possible by Europe. Since the opening-up of borders, cross-border relations have expanded, with committed elected representatives who have been able to identify problems and prepare joint projects. The difficulties have been administrative and bureaucratic for the most part, strict application of European law providing little help for putting projects into effect.

On the borders in the east of Europe, cooperation is less advanced, for historical reasons. On the border between Germany and Poland, for example, Frankfurt-Oder and Slubice were separated for a long time, but trust has been re-established by a willingness to work on joint development projects.

Similarly, in the North-West, between Newry (Northern Ireland) and Dundalk (Irish Republic), cross-border exchanges have been

responding to the needs of the citizens and acting as vectors for integration of Europe's internal borders and pacification of its external borders.

### An objective: establish the link

Despite these challenges and this development potential, cultural, linguistic, administrative and legal barriers are still a substantial hindrance to cooperation initiatives. Competences diverge on either side of the border and the problems arising in the daily life of the population are often dealt with empirically, or remain unresolved.

The discussions emphasised the fact that cross-border governance, which is a lasting response to such problems, must be organised and applied on the right scales. The closer this comes to local level, the more it allows the citizens to support cooperation projects, a necessary condition for the success of a cross-border territory project. Other factors were highlighted, such as ➤

### A cross-border territory

is a bounded project space which, even when legally constituted, does not aim to administer the territory but rather to implement action programmes intended to meet the needs of the inhabitants.

- the need for strong political determination, the development of language learning and the importance of the media.

This is why mobilisation at local level cannot be effective without strong support from national and European Community levels. However, structural funds for the post-2013 period are under threat. As Jan Olbrycht, member of the European Parliament, put it at the second plenary panel discussion, it is vital to invest in territorial cooperation now.

Furthermore, cross-border cooperation is not taken into specific political account by Europe, even though the Lisbon Treaty now mentions it, as Rui Nuno Baleiras, Portuguese state secretary for regional development, and Jean-Pierre Jouyet, French state secretary in charge of European affairs, both emphasised.

Michel Delebarre, president of the Committee of the Regions, also commented that “the accumulation of sector policies does not generate regional development”. This requires dedicated funding and cross-cutting and territorial approaches. The EGTC and EUROMOT are responses to these needs.

According to Philippe Herzog, president of Confrontations Europe, “the strategy and the projects must be built up from the territories”. In practice, project developers are not consulted sufficiently in the construction of European programmes. The method should be changed, promoting “bottom-up” approaches and the transfer of know-how. The general standards recommended by the European Union cannot be adapted to the specific characteristics of territories without dialogue between the Union and the cross-border territories.

That is the objective of EURO-MOT: to establish the locally-focused dialogue that is lacking between local actors and national and European institutions! ■

1. 35% of the population of the member states live in territories covered by European cross-border cooperation programmes.

2. The first European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) formed in Europe, on 28 January 2008 in Kortrijk, Belgium.



Second plenary panel discussion “The support of national and European public authorities for cross-border projects and territories”. Right to left: *Pierre Mauroy*, president of the MOT; *Dominique Rousset*, journalist; *Peter Wostner*, deputy director of the bureau of local authorities and regional policy, Slovenia; *Jean-Pierre Jouyet*, French state secretary in charge of European affairs; *Rui Nuno Baleiras*, Portuguese state secretary for regional development; *Jan Olbrycht*, member of the European Parliament; *Michel Delebarre*, president of the Committee of the Regions; *Rudolf Niessler*, director of policy coordination, DG REGIO, European Commission; *Philippe Herzog*, president of Confrontations Europe.

## Twelve emblematic recommendations

The 12 workshops organised during the conference were prepared by technical working groups which met throughout 2007. They provided opportunities for topic-by-topic highlighting of issues, projects and good practices in cross-border cooperation in Europe, leading to operational recommendations now collected in a manifest\* addressed to national and European institutions. Here we highlight 12 emblematic recommendations.

### Cross-border territories

Encourage the establishment and networking of local statistical monitoring bodies on the scale of the cross-border territory.

### Cross-border conurbations

Make cross-border conurbations places of convergence of national and European policies within the framework of European strategic implementations and network them at European level.

### Cross-border rural and natural territories

Organise the governance of cross-border rural territories and natural spaces to manage biodiversity and natural resources on the cross-border scale and to develop human activities, in particular by pooling public services.

### Maritime cooperation

Develop assistance for the definition and implementation of joint local maritime cooperation projects.

### Economic development

Encourage the setting-up of cross-border development agencies involving local authorities, businesses and research centres.

### Employment and training

Develop the EUREST system (involving employers, trade unions and public employment services) on all internal borders of the EU to facilitate worker mobility and encourage the development of businesses in cross-border living areas.

### Health

Contribute to the emergence of true cross-border health communities linked with cross-border territory projects.

### Environment

Encourage joint management of the cross-border environment with regard to pollution, waste, and prevention of natural and technological risks (flooding, fire, water quality, etc.).

### Public transport

Organise dialogue and cross-border governance of local cross-border transport, and obtain recognition of its issues and the necessity for funding at local, national and European levels.

### Culture and territorial integration

Encourage the emergence of lean cross-border cultural cooperation platforms able to bring together local authorities and the actors concerned in order to implement cultural action programmes, components of the territory project in their own right.

### Legal instruments of cooperation

Develop operational assistance for the setting-up of cross-border projects and in particular for the governance structures of cross-border territory projects, and network their users to encourage exchange of good practices and transfer of know-how.

### Training in cross-border professions

Promote the establishment and development of training and consultancy bodies such as “Euro Institutes”; network them to introduce a “EUROMOT” label certifying the quality of training courses in and on cross-border topics.

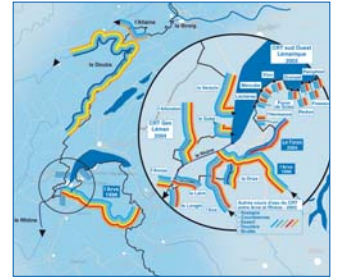
\*Downloadable: French, English and German versions from [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu).



## A new edition of the Cross-Border Cooperation Atlas

The MOT is updating its Cross-Border Cooperation Atlas, five years after the first edition. This new edition comprises nearly 100 maps providing views of the factors at work in all the cross-border territories between France and the neighbouring countries. The atlas is an unrivalled reference document in which the principal topics of cross-border cooperation are analysed. The areas of observation have been

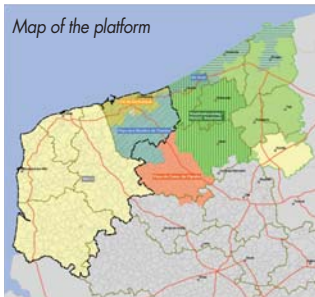
diversified and treated in greater depth. The topics covered include worker flows, employment, health, transport, rivers, cross-border territory projects, planning, urban spaces, rural and natural spaces, legal instruments, and the cross-border programmes of the "European territorial cooperation" strand. All of the maps can be downloaded from [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu) (section "Ressources"). ■



Cross-border cooperation on watercourses on the French-Swiss and French-Italian borders.

### West-Vlaanderen – Flandre-Dunkerque – Côte d'Opale platform

## Towards a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation



In September 2007, the platform partners asked the MOT, in association with the University of Leuven, Belgium, to provide operational assistance for the establishment of an EGTC. The objective for this territory is to structure its cross-border cooperation process, initiated in 2004 with the establishment of the cross-border platform.

The new structure will be tasked with:

- ensuring the representation, political discussion and coordination of the partners of the cross-border territory;
  - defining the strategies and the cross-border action programmes to meet the needs of the inhabitants;
  - carrying out joint cross-border projects;
  - acting as interface with third bodies, including the European Union.
- Following a reporting meeting in November 2007 in Diksmuide, Belgium, the political representatives\* of the project undertook to establish the EGTC in 2008 on a Euroregional scale. They agreed on the territory covered and on the tasks and organisation of the future EGTC. ■

### Expert group on the EGTC

The MOT has been selected to participate in the expert group on the EGTC set up by the Committee of the Regions. The first meeting took place on 17 January in Brdo, near Ljubljana in Slovenia, and the MOT attended. The task of this expert group is to identify common needs and define priority actions for 2008 in the context of a future inter-institutional conference on the EGTC. **Further information:** [www.cor.europa.eu](http://www.cor.europa.eu)

*\*For the French part: the Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque (Dunkirk urban community), the Syndicat mixte de la Côte d'Opale (Opal Coast public sector association), the Pays Moulins de Flandre and Cœur de Flandre, the AGUR (Flanders-Dunkirk region urban planning and development agency); for the Belgian part: Western Flanders province, the WVI (Flemish intermunicipal association), the Westhoekoverleg (Westhoek burgomasters conference) and the RESOC Westhoek (Westhoek economic and social partners).*

### Operational missions

Other operational assistance work being carried out by the MOT in early 2008 includes:

- legal assistance for the formation of a structure for running the Saarbrücken/Moselle Est Eurodistrict between France and Germany;
- assistance for the formation of a "Catalan cross-border space" Eurodistrict;

- guidance for the government of the Principality of Andorra with a view to setting up several cross-border projects with France and Spain;
- continuation of the mission on cross-border statistical monitoring of territories, led by the DIACT, France. ([www.territoires.gouv.fr](http://www.territoires.gouv.fr)).

### Agenda

#### The MOT general assembly

The MOT general assembly will be held on 29 May in Sarreguemines at the invitation of the association Zukunft SaarMoselle Avenir. A conference-debate on the launch of EUROMOT will take place on 28 May in Saarbrücken, Germany. Further information at [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu).

