



Michel Delebarre

Former Minister of State, Senator of the North, President of MOT

The current territorial reform in France is going to reinforce the role of regional and local players who are better placed to take action at territorial level. France is converging with most of its neighbours, which should facilitate cross-border cooperation. Today I want to send a positive message on the undertaking of the reforms: the Law will bring clarification between the regional, departmental and intercommunal competences. We should dispel fears and perceive the opportunities. If the will is there, everything is possible, including at a cross-border level!

Cross-border cooperation, and consequently the activity of the MOT, are part of the solution, not the problem!

I am happy to continue for the coming three years my presidency of this public instrument of support for cross-border cooperation actors. Today we are taking a major step forward in our development and we need everyone's contributions: from the network, through the membership fees, but also from the national partners, with continuing support from the state and from the Caisse des Dépôts.

Other funding will supplement these arrangements: European programmes, specific commissions from cross-border actors, etc.

All these levers are to be operated simultaneously: that will ensure that the efforts made by everyone remain reasonable, and that the present balance between the various tasks of the MOT is maintained. With the new statutes and the three-year programme approved at the MOT general assembly on 18 June 2015 in Chamonix, we have a roadmap for 2015-2017. It's up to all of us to follow it!

MOT general assembly More than 150 people meeting in Chamonix!

More than 150 people, elected officials and stakeholders in cross-border territories, national and European representatives met in Chamonix on 17-18 June on the occasion of the MOT General Assembly to debate on the impact of territorial reforms on cross-border cooperation. Michel Delebarre, former Minister of State, Senator of the North, has been re-elected president of the MOT, on the basis of renewed statutes for MOT, with a new "Advisory Committee" and a new "Board"(read page 3).

At the foot of the Mont Blanc, "roof of Europe, roof of cooperation", Eric Fournier, Mayor of Chamonix, welcomed the participants calling for greater recognition of cross-border spaces and in particular mountain areas, to build "consistent solidarity territories". Christian Dupessey, Rhône-Alpes Regional Counselor, Vice-president of the MOT, stressed the urgency of this support: "border regions are carrying a positive

message on Europe to our fellow citizens, the improvement of the living conditions of the inhabitants being the first stake." According to Jacques Lévy, Geographer, Professor at the Ecole polytechnique fédérale of Lausanne, who moderated the debates throughout the three round tables: "it is the individual actors who build the spaces, and each actor is bigger than any space". The local political decision on the border areas should therefore fully take into account the reality of the border. He thus stressed the "virtues" required for cross-border territorial development:

- **the correct scale:** the local has to manage the local
- **the Republic:** create a space of deliberation beyond the intergovernmental arrangements
- **Democracy:** give a voice to the people
- **the imagination:** invent territories beyond the borders.

[...] Continued on page 2.



EVENTS

Save the date!

Final conference of the MOT project "The integrated economic development of cross-border territories"

30 September 2015 in Paris. [More info](#)



This project is financed by the European Union in the framework of the EuropAct programme. Europe invests in France with the European Regional Development Fund.

Registration open for the OPEN DAYS - The MOT workshop

The MOT is organising a workshop on 14 October (09:00-10:45) during the 2015 session of the OPEN DAYS in Brussels, entitled "Cross-border cooperation and regional integration, a worldwide approach". Code: 14C02.

[More info and registration](#)

Conference "25 years of Interreg"

15-16 September 2015 in Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg). [More info](#)

[All the events](#)

Continued from page 1.

[...] The first round table, focusing on the local level, put forward several experiments such as the Mont Blanc area, the Greater Geneva and the European Metropolis of Lille. Anna Karina Kolb, representing the Canton of Geneva, stressed that "cross-border cooperation is international cooperation in the field". "It is necessary to go beyond our own rules in order to work together, out of a national vision to invent new and hybrid forms.



The second round table focused on the regional level has answered to other questions related to the reforms. According to Christian Dupessey, the distance from centres of decisions regarding the borders, due to new regions, does not mean that cross-border issues will be 'less' or 'less well' processed. On the contrary, this should reinforce the need for local and cross-border governance. The example of the Saarland, more autonomous than the French regions in terms of decision-making, illustrated the balance of the difference of competences on either side of the border, claiming that the creation of a single large region on the French side (Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine) could promote a more consistent and common voice towards Paris, Berlin

and Brussels.

During the third round table focused on national and European levels, the representative of the European Commission, Agnès Montfret, underlined the outcomes of the last 25 years cross-border cooperation. "It is now necessary to show citizens that this Europe works, thanks to projects that match not only the vital functions of territories, but allow to increase investment in growth and employment", she added.

Representing the European Parliament, Anne Sander, newly elected MOT Vice-president, enhanced the role of the European Parliament which wants to capitalize on the experience of networks such as MOT to adapt European legislation and place cross-border issues in

the heart of its policies. She thus announced the creation of a new EP working-group on cross-border cooperation.

Jean-Christophe Baudouin, Director of territorial strategies at the General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET, France), welcomed the "swarming" of experiences. "We are in the heart of the construction of Europe; the success of the European project depends on the success of the cross-border projects!"

Elisa Vall, Director of the support to territories at the the Caisse des Dépôts (France), for her part highlighted the willingness of the Caisse des Dépôts to develop cross-border public investment. [More info](#)

Conference in Metz on French-German cross-border cooperation

A French-German ministerial conference, attended by French secretary of state for European affairs Harlem Désir and his German counterpart Michael Roth, both general-secretaries for French-German cooperation, took place on 6 and 7 July in Metz.

Two years after the Saarbrücken conference in July 2013, the event brought together elected representatives, institutional entities including the MOT, and representatives of civil society. In agreement with the regions and Länder concerned, the two

ministers signed the [Declaration of Metz](#), a joint declaration defining a common agenda for stepping up cooperation, in particular in the areas of integration of the employment and professional training markets.

According to Harlem Désir, the objective is to "make sure that the next generation is bilingual. [...] Here and there we see that some people want to re-erect borders. We must aim for the opposite. Borders are not walls, they are bridges."

[More info](#)

Inauguration of the cross-border Kiosk Office

The Kiosk Office, a unique French-German co-production, was inaugurated on 10 June 2015 in Strasbourg in the presence of Harlem Désir, French secretary of state for European affairs.

The Kiosk Office is the first cross-border co-working space in Europe. With facilities in both Strasbourg and Offenburg, it is intended for entrepreneurs, business creators, consultants, traders, project leaders, etc., who position themselves in a dynamic 360-degree economic approach.

[More info](#)

France-Spain cooperation: seminar in Madrid

For the first time, on 29 May 2015, the French Embassy in Madrid brought together local elected representatives and state representatives of the border territories between France and Spain, as well as the leaders of the Aquitaine-Euskadi and Pyrénées-Méditerranée Euroregions, to enable in-depth discussions on all cross-border cooperation between the two countries. The seminar was attended by the ambassador responsible for cross-border questions, Frédéric Basaguren, and MOT director-general Jean Peyrony. [More info](#)

EUROPE NEWS

First meeting of the European Parliament working group on cross-border cooperation

"The end of roaming – additional charges for telephone calls made and messages sent from abroad – is anticipated with impatience by all border residents," declared Anne Sander, MEP and MOT vice-president, on the occasion of the launch meeting of a new parliamentary working group on border questions on 24 June at the European Parliament.

"The inhabitants of border areas are the ones who experiment day-by-day with European integration. They are also the ones who experience the limits of that integration [...]." The objective of the working group is to "convey the problems of border residents from the local level to Brussels."

[More info](#)

NETWORK NEWS

Annual network's meeting and Technicians' Platform

On 18 June, following the conference-debate, MOT annual bodies were the occasion of important votes for the association. New statutes, after several months working with members, were adopted. A new "Board" and a new "Advisory Committee" were elected.



New statutes allow to :

- Reaffirm the MOT status as a public multi-level cooperation tool;
- Take into account the new context for the cooperation and diversity of its actors;
- Consolidate the organisation and facilitate the functioning for its members and institutional partners.

According to these new statutes, the members then proceeded to the election of a new Board and a new "Advisory Committee" for a renewable term of three years. They allow a better geographical representation of the territories and levels of cooperation (local, regional, national and European), especially with the introduction of a new category of members: European and national parliamentarians.

A new scale of membership fees was adopted in order to adapt to

the evolutions of the French territorial reform (notably the number and size of French border regions).

New members were presented at this occasion - bringing total membership to 66 - as well as the activity report 2014. The annual programme was adopted as well as a three-year programme 2015-2017 focused on three main objectives:

- 1 - Support the cross-border cooperation stakeholders (operational and legal studies); network and capitalize experiences.
- 2 - Contribute to the definition, the evolution and the implementation of cross-border policies regarding the various territorial levels.
- 3 - Represent the interests of the territories at European level; develop activities on the overseas and at international level.

[More info](#)

The Technicians' Platform

A meeting of the Technicians' Platform, a forum for interactive discussions with the members of the network, has taken place after the general assembly. The discussions covered the pertinence of working on the setting-up of an online forum for network members. Its objective would be to facilitate direct discussion between the members, and also to provide assistance and identify common solutions for overcoming obstacles, with the goal of building up a resource of good practices and experiences for sharing.

Members who did not attend can give their opinion by completing a questionnaire [in French] on this forum project: [click here](#).

** Region Rhône-Alpes, the Communauté de Communes of Western Guyana, the Secretariat of the Summit of the Greater Region, the town of Beausoleil, the Conference TransJurassienne and as a partner the Group Transdev.*

Launching of the "Interreg Europe" programme

The European Commission adopted on 11th June 2015 the new interregional cooperation programme ("Interreg Europe") between all EU Member States with the participation of Norway and Switzerland, worth more than EUR 359 million. The programme will focus on supporting the exchange of experience, the transfer of good practices, and joint initiatives among the regions.

[More info](#)

Cross-border conurbations

As part of the programme of the Luxembourg presidency of the EU Council, a workshop on the potential of small and medium-sized towns in polycentric cross-border metropolitan regions took place in Luxembourg City on 30 June. Producing an assessment of the situation and looking beyond, the objective was to generate input for the work of the presidency with a view to improving the consideration of the development needs and potential of cross-border conurbations in Europe. The MOT moderated a round table at the workshop. [More info](#)

The MOT inaugurates its online documentation portal!

After more than five years of work, the MOT is inaugurating its online documentation portal - available in French - and opening up its documentation centre to specialist users.

It provides access to more than 3600 documents on cross-border cooperation, border and cross-border territories, territorial cooperation and, more generally, spatial planning. More than 800 documents are in English.

The online portal enables targeted document searches¹. All visitors can use the search function and browse the bibliographic descriptions, but

downloading of electronic documents² is restricted to network members and, on request only, to students and researchers.

The documentation centre itself has a collection of more than 2700 hard-copy documents. It is accessible to the same specialist users, by appointment. The collection is divided into four categories: Borders and Territories, European Union, Topics, and Atlas. [Access the portal](#)

¹ Including through three highly-detailed thesauruses: borders and territories, European topics and general topics.

² 1430 documents can now be downloaded in PDF format.

PRESS REVIEW

European territorial cooperation: who does what?

La Gazette des Communes, 1 July

"The designation procedures and the tasks of the national authorities of the European territorial cooperation programmes and the cross-border cooperation programme with regard to neighbourhood policy for the 2014-2020 period are defined."

The end of roaming charges soon in Europe

ItrNews.com, 30 June

"Nearly two years after the proposal of a regulation intended to establish a single market for telecommunications, an agreement has been reached with the European Parliament and the Council. This compromise provides for the ending of roaming charges in June 2017 and strict rules on Internet neutrality which will protect the right of each European to access web content without discrimination."

The cross-border workers' centre will never open

La Voix du Nord, 19 June

"The frontage of the premises on the place Jacques-Delors in Halluin still bears the sign 'opening soon'. However, it is now certain that no-one will ever come to work in the cross-border workers' centre."

Europe funds the treatment of waste water

L'Avenir, 3 July

"Twenty years after the first cross-border project, at Martelange, on Friday afternoon the AIVE cut the ribbon of its 85th treatment plant, installed in the aptly-named 'Venice neighbourhood', in Signeulx, Belgium. With a treatment capacity of 3100 inhabitant-equivalents, it is also intended for two populations, the French of Ville-Houdlemont (25%) and the Belgians of Signeulx, Mussy and Bleid (75%)."

Inauguration of the *Maison de la Grande Région*

Greater Region website, 17 June

"Favour the establishment of synergies between the various entities and bring the Grande Région closer to the citizens. On Wednesday, 17 June 2015, the inauguration ceremony of the '*Maison de la Grande Région*' took place in Esch-sur-Alzette."

First French-German citizen photovoltaic power plants

EnvironnementOnLine.com, 19 June

"The first French-German citizen power plants have sprung up in Colmar (north-eastern France) and the surrounding area. Funded by the Énergie Partagée fund, they are to be inaugurated on 20 June."

Cross-border express network to be called *Léman Express*

Le Messager, 25 June

"Backbone of public transport in a conurbation of nearly a million inhabitants, the regional express rail network (RER) is now called Léman Express, [...] the name chosen by the public after a broad consultation."

No maternity hospital any more, but a cross-border local perinatal centre

Monaco Matin, 24 June

"[...] There has been a cross-border perinatal centre since 2003. Headed by French-Italian doctor Martini, it enables future mothers living on either side of the border to benefit from the services provided during their pregnancies."

'The Mediterranean Alps' on the road to UNESCO!

Newspress, 30 June

"Parc National du Mercantour – The application of the Mediterranean Alps for UNESCO World Heritage of Humanity status is progressing in giant steps! [...] A cross-border delegation gave a second presentation, on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Mediterranean Alps, to an IUCN France board [...] on 10 June."

Fourth report of the Observatoire des Territoires

The report "Qualité de vie, habitants, territoires" (quality of life, inhabitants, territories), delivered to the French Minister of Housing, Territorial Equality and Rural Affairs on 11 May 2015, is available for downloading from the Observatoire des Territoires website [in French]. It consists of two parts:

- a set of topical data sheets providing detailed, updated analyses of the major drivers of the French territories,
- a dossier on the quality of life.

The 2014 report is accompanied by a methodology guide intended for local entities wishing to conduct an assessment of the quality of life in their territories.

Cross-border cooperation is discussed in the document from the point of view of the observation of cross-border territories.

[More info](#)



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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