



Special Dossier on the European elections

A crucial issue in cross-border cooperation

... actions of local elected representatives and EGTCs in the area of cross-border cooperation is exemplary and I salute their determination.

In order to promote this cooperation, we need to act at both national and European levels.

First at the level of France, cross-border regions represent 20% of the country's territory and more than ten million of its population. The research group at the Assemblée nationale, of which I have been made Chairman, and which is composed of around 40 members of parliament from all of France's border areas, works with local stakeholders and national partners including the MOT. Its aim is to share local experiences and to seek legislative solutions for cross-border cooperation so that it is incorporated into the major national public policies that we adopt in the Assemblée nationale.

I am determined to improve French legislation in order to encourage and simplify cross-border cooperation. For example, thanks to a private members' amendment, the Banque Publique d'Investissement (Public Investment Bank) can now propose integrated cross-border strategies to promote economic development in these

regions. In the area of higher education, seeking partnerships with cross-border universities has also become a priority thanks to an amendment that we succeeded in getting adopted.

The next major challenge in promoting cross-border cooperation will be the future law on decentralisation. The major regional programmes that this future legislation is supposed to put in place will have to take account of this cross-border dimension. To encourage the development of shared cross-border living spaces, territorial authorities or groupings of authorities need to be able to build integrated strategies with the territorial authorities on the other side of the border.

At European level, cross-border areas are laboratories for Europe - it is in these areas that Europe is lived out on a daily basis. They are examples of the process of EU integration. The European Union should support cross-border cooperation more by encouraging mobility (portability of social security entitlements, recognition of educational and professional qualifications, etc.) and by facilitating the territorial governance of these regions. My wish is therefore that the future European Parliament makes cross-border cooperation a priority."

Editorial



By Philip Cordery
Member of parliament for French residents in the Benelux and Chairman of the Parliamentary Group on Cross-Border Cooperation at the Assemblée nationale (FR)

➡ "France's border regions possess remarkable assets. By virtue of their proximity and interconnectedness with the border regions of neighbouring countries, these areas put in place innovative public policies that take integration with their neighbours into account. The

French border region MPs have their say

Etienne Blanc, MP from the Ain Department

"The campaign for the European elections has seen the emergence in all EU countries of real worries that are prompting calls for protectionism and the re-establishment of national borders. The economic crisis is undoubtedly the reason for this. But there is another which politicians are responsible for: the lack of will, strong messages and clearly expressed ambitions. The merits of European construction are more obvious and more visible in the border areas. Let's take advantage of the major debate

that has started to demonstrate this and above all to let people know about it."

Joël Giraud, MP from the Hautes-Alpes Department

"Cross-border territories, which are testing grounds for shared projects, spaces that have a common culture and important areas with respect to jobs and trade, demonstrate the realities and pluses that Europe can bring. But cross-border cooperation is too often the victim of compromises that prevent our citizens from being aware of the projects carried out as they often lose some of

their original objectives, their visibility and even their lasting character. The major problem remains the concrete realisation of partnership projects. The difficulties encountered often prevent the partners from actually implementing projects designed to reinforce the unification of the territories concerned and are most often caused by the administrations in each country."

Claude Stumi, MP from the Bas-Rhin Department

"Northern Alsace is part of the PAMINA Eurodistrict, which has made possible

many advances. Nonetheless, in the context of the European elections, much remains to be done in Europe's cross-border regions: tax harmonisation with respect to pension schemes and health care coverage in order to prevent social dumping and the distortion of competition; ending the double reporting of income from state pensions; enabling people to take advantage of mobile phone offers; encouraging the provision of public transport links."

EVENTS

The MOT's Annual General Meeting and conference-debate, on the topic "Cross-border networks: mutualising services and experimenting with Europe on each border", will take place on 18-19 June 2014 in Paris.

The draft programme is available: [click here](#).

Conference "Post-Cold War Borders: Global Trends and Regional Responses", 9-13 June 2014 in Joensuu (Finland) and St. Petersburg (Russia)

TransParcNet meeting, 3-6 June 2014 on the Franch-Belgian border, organised by EUROPARC and the Hainaut cross-border Nature Park.

French-German seminar "Reuse of mining sites: taking stock and exchanging views", 20 May 2014 in Göttingen (Germany)

[All the events](#)

French border region MPs have their say (suite)

Annie Genevard, MP from the Doubs Department

"The employment area of Morteau and that of the Neuchâtel mountains derive their specificity from their industrial character focused on high-quality watchmaking and highly-finished metalworking for the luxury goods industry. There is a real interdependence between these regions. I would like us to be able to give their inhabitants a vision of our border region that is not solely based on utilitarian function: work on one side, place of residence on the other. This is how we will succeed in constructing an integrated area based on a common culture."

Audrey Linkenheld, MP from the Nord Department

"The law affirming the role of metropolises gives the future Lille European Metropolis a leading role in the area of cross-border cooperation. It gives concrete form to a partnership embarked on more than six years ago with our Belgian neighbours in the context of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis."

Michel Liebgott, MP from the Moselle Department

"I am very aware of how vital cross-border cooperation is for our territories and their development. Luxembourg alone, by virtue of its geographical dimensions, captures 20% of all French cross-border worker flows, i.e. 360,000 people. While the dynamism of the Grand Duchy's job market does indeed benefit the neighbouring

territories and undeniably gives these euro-workers extra purchasing power, it nonetheless gives rise to a certain number of difficulties."

Antoine Herth, MP from the Bas-Rhin Department

"As the MP for a constituency situated along the border formed by the Rhine, cross-border issues are a constant concern. My colleagues and I intervened on the issue of the taxation of pensioners in border areas. After several years of efforts, we are now on the way to finding a solution to this French-German issue, so as to ensure that the cross-border phenomenon, which overall is positive, does not penalise our local economy."

Sylviane Alaux, MP from the Pyrénées Atlantiques Department

"As an MP for the Basque country, my concerns linked to cross-border issues come under four headings: decentralisation, languages, transport and trade. Decentralisation is a very fruitful topic and at the same time a complex one in terms of the division of competences between the local territory, central government and the region. A department in a border area can only operate within a rationale of cross-border cooperation. Languages."

Virginie Duby-Muller, MP from the Haute-Savoie Department

"The extension of the right of cross-border workers to choose with respect to health insurance is

an issue for which I have constantly fought since I was elected in June 2012. Ending this right to choose on 31 May 2014 will have disastrous consequences both economically and socially."

Martial Saddier, MP from the Haute-Savoie Department

"The issue of cross-border workers has always been at the heart of my action as an MP. I was worried about the possible consequences of the application of the new pay-as-you-earn tax rate for cross-border workers so I immediately made a representation to Pierre Moscovici for him to look with the Swiss authorities at changes to the new system."

Marc Francina, MP from the Haute-Savoie Department

"The negative consequences of ending the right to choose with respect to health insurance have not been taken sufficiently into account: a substantial drop in the purchasing power of cross-border workers, serious repercussions on our local economy, the major difficulties involved in absorbing the transfer of large numbers of patients to France, and the inability of this measure to address the social security deficit."

Marie-C. Dalloz, MP from the Jura Department

"I have made representations many times on subjects that all cross-border workers are concerned about. I have notably worked on jobs, the pension equivalent benefit and tax issues."

The Euroregion Aquitaine-Euskadi

Since October 2013, the EGTC Euroregion Aquitaine-Euskadi has been leading and developing its "2014-2020 Strategic Plan". It has enabled the production of the first complete diagnosis of the Euroregion space and the analysis of the different levels of cross-border governance. The exercise also examined the role of the EGTC as coordinator of cooperation and catalyst of leverage effects. It was the opportunity for an on-line

survey of key entities in cooperation, identifying six strategic topics that will be discussed at the end of May in working groups, in order to produce a final document by the summer of 2014. The process calls upon broad-based governance, complies with the principle of subsidiarity, and must also set out the roadmap from now to 2020 in order to encourage awareness of "Euroregional citizenship".

[More info](#)

Interregional Research Prize in the Greater Region

The Lorraine Region has launched the 6th Interregional Research Prize designed to reward scientific cooperation projects in the Greater Region. There are two prizes with a total value of €60,000.

The objective is to encourage scientific cooperation in the Greater Region. It is aimed at networks of researchers working at least bilaterally, preferably multilaterally, on a topic with a cross-border

dimension in the context of the Greater Region. Applications should be submitted by 1 September 2014.

[More info](#)



PRESS REVIEW

Metropolises: new statutes for new governance

Courrier des Maires, 10 April

"The metropolis [in French law] is a public intermunicipal cooperation establishment with tax-levying powers, the formation of which is now required by law. Going beyond the special position and characteristics of the metropolises of Greater Lyon and Greater Paris, the metropolises will exercise broad powers of variable scope. The formation of the metropolises entails major consequences on transfers of personnel, but also on the redefinition of the map of local governances through mixed local authority associations, associations of municipalities, and also of agreements. [...] [Note that:] the metropolis can join cross-border cooperation structures."

Tournai, Courtrai and Lille set up a cross-border network of crematoriums

La Gazette NPDC, 8 April

"Three intermunicipal structures have received European funding to implement cross-border cooperation on crematoriums. Belgium is a refuge for a number of French persons for reasons as varied as taxes, the grandes écoles (no entrance examinations) or cost of living. This is also the case for elderly persons and their families, who find more places in retirement homes on the other side of the border at lower rates than in France."

The small employment office in Kehl sets up everything to attract the French

Le Monde, 1 April

"There's nothing new about cooperation between the two public-sector employment services, but it has never been so official or taken so far. [...] The complementarity between the two banks of the Rhine is obvious."

Philippe Richert obtains government support for Basle-Mulhouse airport

Newspress, 27 mars

"In a letter dated 25 March 2014, Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault assured Philippe Richert, President of the Alsace region council, of 'the attention of the government in relation to the situation of Basle-Mulhouse airport, and of the objective of an agreement with the Swiss party in the coming weeks.'"

Cross-border workers, envied or given a hard time, contribute to the prosperity of Geneva

Le Dauphiné libéré, 3 April

"Cross-border workers and those who want to work in Switzerland have a show organised for them in Annemasse, opening its doors today and running until Saturday. The opportunity to focus on the subjects of concern to them, with the points of view of the Groupement transfrontalier européen..."

Right of option: Marisol Touraine confirms the date

L'Est républicain, 8 April

"In a letter dated 31 March 2014 addressed to Michel Charrat, president of the Groupement transfrontalier européen, the minister for social affairs confirms the introduction of the reform of border worker health insurance with effect from 1 June."

Béarn-Aragon: the thaw in cross-border cooperation

La République des Pyrénées, 4 April

"Col du Pourtalet – From the future snow-clearing centre, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) plans to multiply the partnerships with Aragon."

Figueras and Perpignan host the 2nd European cross-border cooperation days

L'Indépendant, 6 April

"Nearly a hundred high-level experts will meet on the 7, 8 and 9 April in Figueras and Perpignan to take part in the second European conference on cross-border cooperation in higher education, vocational training and employment, in the context of the Pyrénées-Méditerranée Euroregion."

A website for the Jura Arc Cross-Border Forum

The Jura Arc Cross-Border Forum is an independent grassroots movement that was founded on 23 January 2007 in La Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland. Its mission is to create and facilitate a forum for dialogue and joint projects in the Jura Arc region, by involving civil society players in Franche-Comté (France) and Switzerland. It is structured around the region's cross-border themes, starting with the project for a conurbation linking Morteau in the Haut-Doubs and La Chaux-de-Fonds, and other topics such as jobs, training, mobility and communication. It constitutes an interactive platform, a space for meeting and exchanges, information monitoring and promoting local initiatives.

www.forum-transfrontalier.org



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