

VIEWPOINT



Jacques Koenig
Deputy City Manager -
Forbach city council

What are the challenges of this project for the cross-border area as a whole?

The principal objective of this project is to promote the museums and cultural heritage of the cross-border region. It has enabled us to implement an initiative extending beyond the urban area and encompassing the whole of the Moselle, Saarland and the western Palatinate.

The conversion of our area, a coalfield formerly dominated by the heavy coalmining industry, necessitates this type of communication and promotion campaign. It is important to highlight the richness of our cultural heritage and our potential for tourism, all the more so in that we are located between two areas with strong identities, the Lorraine corridor to the West and the Rhine corridor to the East, which does not make it easy for us to gain recognition.

The association "Zukunft SaarMoselle Avenir", which brings together all the partners, organizes other projects working towards the same objective, including the publication of a bilingual tourist brochure, the production (in progress) of a web site on the cultural, natural and historical heritage of the region, "Warndt Weekends" intended to promote our nature areas, and the "Saar-Moselle by bicycle" initiative which provides better facilities for cycling along the Saar and the Blies.

Finally, I should add that, in order to define the boundaries of our cross-border conurbation, it is important to "generate" flows on both sides of the border. The Ticket, free and very widely available, is thus aimed at a new audience to encourage it to discover the cross-border conurbation as a whole.

What are the other structural projects in the cross-border conurbation?

The flagship project is the establishment of a "eurodistrict". We have already drawn up a charter setting out the guidelines, validated in May 2004. We are now working on the definition of the content of this new instrument, on the basis of a study conducted in 2003 which inventoried the strengths and weaknesses of the cross-border conurbation. Early in 2006 we plan to launch a consultation on this topic both with the local authorities and other public-sector partners and with civil society. It will also be very important, in view of the results of the French government's call for metropolitan cooperation (positive for our conurbation), to provide linkage between all these approaches.

Saarbrücken/Moselle-Est

Discover French and German museums with "Ticket 2005"

The "Ticket 2005", sixth edition of the cross-border museum passport, is produced by the cross-border cooperation association "Zukunft SaarMoselle Avenir", which aims to raise awareness of the diversity of the museums in the cross-border area.

As in previous years, this initiative promotes not only the best-known museums but also the "small" museums which are not in a position to undertake major communication campaigns but are nevertheless particularly original. The number of museums presented has increased every year. In 2005 the initiative was extended to the western Palatinate. The list gains not only in volume but also in diversity (fine art, industrial and craft heritage, local and military history, etc.).

The bilingual brochure describes 138 museums in Saarland, the western Palatinate and Moselle. The museum descriptions consist of a short text and a photograph. In addition to the address and the opening times, information about temporary exhibitions and guided tours is provided. For the museums that are not free, "Ticket 2005" offers reduced entry prices.

This tourism promotion tool is thus intended to encourage new visitors to discover the museum collections of the entire cross-border region. It targets the local population as well as people in transit or from the surrounding areas.

The "Ticket" is valid for the whole year, and

35,000 of them are distributed free of charge, mainly through tourist offices and the museums taking part in the operation.

The formula attracts a growing number of visitors (the 2005 edition is already almost fully taken up).

For carrying out this operation, this year the association benefited for the last time from financial support from the European Union through

the Interreg III programme. The Forbach Agglomeration Community, the Sarreguemines Agglomeration Community, the Freyming-Merlebach Municipality Community, the Saarbrücken Stadtverband, the Moselle department, the Sparkasse Saarbrücken and the Saar Ferngas and EnBW foundation also contribute to the funding. However, the future of the project depends strongly on the commitment of sponsors.

Further information: www.saarmoselle.org



France/Spain

New cross-border television channel

Two local television channels, Televisio Comtal in Barcelona and Perpignan Infos in Perpignan, have joined forces to set up a cross-border channel. The framework agreement establishing the partnership was signed on 27 June 2005 at the Perpignan Delegation in Barcelona, in the presence of the Mayor of Perpignan, Jean-Paul Alduy, and the directors of the two channels.

Perpignan Infos, a cable channel available in the Pyrénées-Orientales department, and Televisio Comtal, a 100% Catalan channel broadcast in Barcelona, have joined forces with the aim of strengthening the social and cultural links on both sides of the border.

Three types of cooperation are planned:

- exchange of existing programmes,
- production of new cross-border programmes in French and Catalan,
- broadcasting over the whole French-Spanish area.

The links that are starting to develop between the Pyrénées-Orientales department and the autonomous province of Catalonia (projects in the areas of health, tourism, nature areas and economic development) are strengthened by this cultural cooperation project, which should not only reduce cultural and linguistic disparities on both sides of the Pyrenees but also encourage closer contacts between the habitants and the feeling of belonging to the cross-border region.

Moreover, cooperation on the Mediterranean end of the Pyrenees takes on a particular dimension in the context of the official launch, in July 2005, by the French and Spanish ministers of transport, of the Perpignan - Barcelona high-speed railway line, which should considerably strengthen the links between the two cities.





SPECIAL REPORT

NEWS IN BRIEF



Motorways of the sea

Conceived as an alternative to road transport, the principle of the motorways of the sea is to put lorries on ships. Expectations are very high at European, national and local levels, since this new transport system is intended to relieve road transport congestion and is a sustainable, non-polluting and economically beneficial mode of transport.

A European objective

The concept, expounded by the European Commission in its White Paper on transport (September 2001), is part of a more general objective to organize an integrated "trans-European transport network" (TEN-T) in Europe.

The "Community guidelines for the development of the TEN-T" (1692/96/EC) provide a legal framework for the project. The motorways of the sea are included among the 30 priority projects, defined in the relevant documents as "to start before 2010". Four major corridors have been defined (refer to the map). Through these documents, the Commission invites the member states to "jointly establish transnational maritime links on the basis of calls for tender." The following funding sources are available for project developers: European grants (TEN-T rules and guidelines, Marco Polo programme, cohesion fund, ERDF, INTERREG) and state aid.

A priority for the French government

The development of motorways of the sea is one of the priority projects defined at the CIADT (French Interministerial committee for regional planning and development) meeting on 18 December 2003. Two coastal shipping lines (short haul) for goods transport were defined, the first in the Atlantic between France and Spain and the second in the Mediterranean between France and Italy. Conditions at the crossing points on these two borders are difficult in practice: the roads between France and Italy are used by 20,000 vehicles per day, including 4000 heavy goods vehicles, while between France and Spain 7000 to 8000 lorries per day are counted at the Biriattou border post (Pyrénées-Atlantiques).

Concrete projects

An initial project, between Fos-Sur-Mer in France and Savona in Italy, was abandoned in early 2005 by the shipowners "in the absence of concrete commitments by road haulage carriers" and in the face of an environment that was too competitive.

On 27 January 2005 the first line from a French port was set up between Toulon and Rome. This link receives state aid amounting to one million euros. Each week it embarks 150 trailers, 150 cars and 900 passengers for a lower cost than the road journey. Break-even is forecast after three years of operation. Other links are in the project stage: between Drammen (Norway), Boulogne and Spain and between Nantes and Bilbao.

As far as the Toulon-Rome link is concerned, the road haulage carriers seem satisfied: rest times are complied with, the drivers spend less time at the wheel, safety is improved, etc. The carriers make savings on vehicle wear, tolls and fuel. The large companies are confronted with a few difficulties, since their complex logistic systems are difficult to modify. As for the shipowners, the question not yet answered is that of profitability, since this would require a monthly average of 1700 trailers. The figures are increasing, so there is still hope.

The expectations of the border regions and local authorities, facing the saturation of their road infrastructure, are very high. For example, the "Atlantic Arc", which brings together 31 regions from Scotland to Portugal, is strongly committed on this issue and expects "strong incentive measures" from the states and the Commission.

■ "Learning on the border - The neighbour's language in the border region"

Biarritz, 14 and 15 October - 1st International Conference on languages in border regions of the Comenius LAB 'Languages and borders' network.

Further information:

<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org> (Events)

■ Cross-border map of the conurbation of the Pôle Européen de Développement

The cross-border association of the conurbation of the Pôle Européen de Développement has published a cross-border map. A promotional tool for the region, the purpose of this road and tourist map is to strengthen the feeling of belonging to the cross-border region.

Further information:

<http://www.agglo-ped.org/>

SPOTLIGHT ON A SITE



<http://www.agglo-sarreguemines.fr>

Accessible in English, French and German, the new site of the Sarreguemines Confluences Agglomeration Community includes a section on the cooperation projects implemented in the cross-border area.

In the press in July

■ Cross-border healthcare: French-German agreement, *Le Républicain lorrain*, 23 July

The German and French health ministers have signed a cross-border framework agreement on emergency services and patient management...

■ Taxes without borders, *DNA*, 3 July

The Saint-Louis tax office twinned with Lörrach...

■ Fribourg - centre and south Alsace: the Eurodistrict comes to life, *DNA*, 14 July

Born in late 2000, extended in 2003, the Eurodistrict of the Fribourg/centre and south Alsace region is being assembled gradually. Yesterday its steering committee, meeting in Sélestat, drew up a list of projects to be implemented, in areas from transport to health...

■ The new border residents are young, single and mobile, *Tribune de Genève*, 12 July

Statistics - We know the profile of the most recent incomers a little better [...] Thanks to data collected by the DEEE (department for the economy, employment and external affairs), the profile of these new border dwellers has been refined...

■ Rectangle d'Or: "The ball is in the court of the municipalities", *Le Dauphiné libéré*, 28 July

PAYS DE GEX - Studies have confirmed the economic and financial feasibility of the Rectangle d'Or. "It is the municipalities that will decide whether the community of municipalities goes any further," stated Jocelyne Boch, vice-chair of the CCPG...

■ Future Perpignan-Figueras high-speed train, *L'Indépendant*, 20 July

The assault on the Pyrenees has begun - Dominique Perben, minister of transport, and his Spanish counterpart Magdalena Alvarez, inaugurated at La Jonquera the construction of the future high speed line, on the site of the tunnel-boring machines that will bore through the Pyrenees...

■ Strengthened links, *Sud Ouest*, 28 July

SAINT-ETIENNE-DE-BAIGORRY - An inter-Pyrenean agreement was signed last Thursday...



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Contact: +33 (0)1-55-80-56-86 - Subscriptions: domitille.ayral@mot.asso.fr

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