

Inforailmed, a project to develop rail services in the French-Italian-Monaco border area
In brief

Network news
Europe news

Press review
Publication

Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis

For better access to cross-border jobs

In 2006, under the impetus of civil society, three public employment services (those of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region, Wallonia and Flanders) and Unizo (the Union of Independent Flemish Entrepreneurs) set up the "Eurometropolis Jobs Forum". Every year in the area of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, it brings together Walloon, Flemish and French businesses and enables them to meet job-seekers directly.

The results are positive, with 50,000 visitors, 1000 businesses from all sectors and 15,000 vacancies offered. In 2014, 100% of businesses and 70% of the public reported that they were satisfied with their participation in it. This cooperation allowed players in the field of employment to get to know one another better and to understand the territory's

strengths and needs before implementing common actions and measures on the ground.

The three employment services collaborate via the Eureschannel network, which was set up to facilitate job mobility in the border region. They have created a tripartite range of services and have submitted a "Jobs without Borders" project under the European Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme, in particular to remove obstacles to job-seeking in the cross-border region.

Actors in the "Eurometropolis 2020" strategy, they are continuing with their collaborative work in 2015, with the goals of developing work/study programmes and training, and adapting the Jobs Forum to make it better suited to the current market. [More info \[FR\]](#)



A European project for greater security on the Rhine

After the launch in 2008 of the first French-German rapid intervention facility on the Rhine - the "Europa 1 fire-boat" - the Fire and Rescue Service of the Bas-Rhin Department has worked for five years on the implementation of a new INTERREG project focused on the training of rescue services in the Upper Rhine in combating river-related risks.

Boat fires, pollution, damage to vessels, persons who have fallen into the water, retrieval of products in insecure containers, etc. - the scenarios for initial and ongoing training can be multiplied by means of seven simulators. They are

provided to firefighters by the Rhine Centre for Training in the Management of River-Related Risks (Centre rhénan d'entraînement à la maîtrise des risques fluviaux - CRERF), which is installed in an old barge-tanker. Carried out with eight French and German partners¹ at an overall cost of €3 million, this pilot project, which is co-financed by the European Union, has been operational since September 2014. It draws on scenarios that are close to reality over an area of 1500 m².

In the light of the ever more dense river traffic in Europe, the objective is to prepare teams to

intervene together, irrespective of their nationality, in the event of accidents occurring, taking care to harmonise operational practices. The CRERF aims to provide 3200 training days per year, a proportion of which will be offered to firefighters from other European regions that face river-related risks.

¹ Co-financed by: the Länder of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, Gewerbepark Breisgau, France's Ministry of the Interior, the Alsace Region, the fire and rescue services of the Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin Departments, the Autonomous Port of Strasbourg, and the European Union. [More info \[FR\]](#)

EVENTS

MOT's annual conference and general assembly

Please note the date of the MOT's 2015 annual conference and general assembly, which will take place in **Chamonix on 17-18 June 2015**, at the invitation of the "Espace Mont-Blanc", a member of the MOT's network.

The topic of the conference will be: **"Territorial reforms: what impact for cross-border cooperation?"**

Conference "Shared Services, Shared Opportunities: New Models of Public Sector Collaboration and Partnership", 29-30 January 2015, in Enniskillen (Northern Ireland)

Forthcoming workshop in 2015: "The combined training-work experience approach is the way forward in the PAMINA area", 4 February 2015 in the Festhalle Würth (Pfalz, Germany)

Annual meeting of the EGTC Platform, 3 March 2015 in Brussels

7th Festival of Geopolitics: "What purpose do borders serve?", 12-15 March 2015 in Grenoble

[All the events](#)

Inforailmed, a project to develop rail services in the French-Italian-Monaco border area



Every day, more than 2300 people take the train to cross the border between France, Italy and Monaco, whether for work or for leisure.

However, since 2009 and the arrival of competition in cross-border rail services, there are no longer trains that make the whole journey between the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Region and Liguria. All passengers are obliged to change trains in Ventimiglia, with the attendant consequences in terms of journey time and comfort.

The "Inforailmed" project, which is co-financed by the Alcotra programme, aims to improve these cross-border rail links. It brings together three main partners (Liguria, Monaco and the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Region)

and comprises three components: the first aims to develop "passenger information", the second to improve services (notably by ending the enforced change of trains in Ventimiglia), while the third focuses on seeking a permanent framework for the governance and financing of cross-border rail services among the partners.

This project, which has benefited from substantial technical and legal input from the MOT, was completed in December 2014, with the first tangible operational results in terms of passenger information, coordination of services at the border and handling of situations of disruption.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the actions initiated, in December the

three partners signed a declaration of intent to continue this cooperation, a first political act towards enhanced cooperation for the benefit of users.

The conclusions of the MOT's work, which was carried out through the whole of 2014, were presented in Monaco on 11 December. They related to the technical and legal solutions making it possible to implement the project's three components and recommended the creation of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation to bring together all of the competent partners in order to jointly manage the organisation of rail services.

[More info](#)

[Tourism leaflet](#)

[Map](#)

Sport without borders



On 12 December 2014 in Dunkirk, the closing event of the INTERREG project "TransSport – Sport without Borders" was an opportunity to present the achievements of this project, which since 2012 has brought together seven partners from West Flanders and the North of France.

This project resulted from the desire of these partners to broaden the range of sports on offer in the cross-border region to all citizens whatever their age or sporting ability and to make them more accessible to the population. The territories on either side of the French-Flemish border do indeed offer a whole range of possibilities for the practice of sport in terms of facilities, associations and sporting events.

www.transsport.fr

French-Swiss cooperation to count the real number of border residents

The Canton of Geneva and the Ain and Haute-Savoie Departments are going to cooperate in order to better identify "false Swiss residents", who are responsible for a shortfall of nearly €40 million on the French side. It's the first time that the Canton of Geneva is going to provide this type of information to the French authorities.

As Christian Monteil, President of the Haute-Savoie Conseil général, explains: "A cross-border worker brings in an average €2000 a year to his or



her municipality. The shortfall is therefore substantial since 10,000-20,000 people are not being counted". These Swiss people buy second homes in France, where they live during the year, whereas their declared main residence is in Switzerland.

Interreg VA 2 Seas: first call for proposals

The first call for proposals under the 2 Seas Programme (2014-2020) between France and the United Kingdom has been launched. To coincide with this, the programme is making available to potential leaders of projects five information sheets in order to give them very practical information in accordance with the point that their ideas and project have reached. The process will take place in two stages: the submission of a "Concept Note" (the deadline for which is 15 February) followed by the submission of an application form.

[More info](#)



Conference in Paris on cross-border healthcare

On 10 December 2014, the conference entitled "What solutions for cross-border healthcare?" took place at the Assemblée Nationale in Paris. Organised by the Assemblée Nationale's "Border Regions and Workers" study group, with support from the MOT, this conference brought together cross-border healthcare experts and elected representatives from all of France's border areas.

In their introduction to the conference, Jean Peyrony, the MOT's Director-General, and Philip Cordery, the MP for French nationals in the Benelux and Chairman of the study group, highlighted the important role of MPs in improving public policy for the benefit of citizens. Lawmakers need to work towards the removal of obstacles in the area of cross-border healthcare.

A first roundtable devoted to healthcare cooperation between France, Belgium and Luxembourg explained the process of setting up and operating Organised Zones of Access to Cross-Border Healthcare (Zones organisées d'accès aux soins transfrontaliers – ZOAST), which currently cover five areas that provide patients with continuity of care between France

and Belgium.

The second roundtable focused on the French-Spanish border and the functioning of the hospital in Cerdanya, Europe's first cross-border hospital, which opened in September 2014 and which has made major efforts to ensure the compatibility of medical procedures.

The third roundtable presented projects on the French-German and French-Swiss borders, notably the difficulties encountered since the calling into question of the Swiss-EU agreements (the vote of 9 February 2014). The issues relating to the end of the system of the right to choose one's health insurance for cross-border workers in Switzerland were also highlighted.

In the presence of Agnès Monfret,



Head of Unit in the European Commission's Regional Policy DG, the discussions made it possible to identify numerous obstacles and problems that need to be overcome in the area of cross-border healthcare, for example the question of the nationality of children born on the other side of the border or the need to sign bilateral agreements for the cross-border transportation of the remains of deceased people. They also stressed that France's 2015 Healthcare Act could be an opportunity for better account to be taken of the cross-border dimension in healthcare.

NB: On 7 October 2014 in Brussels, a seminar was held on French-Belgian healthcare cooperation: [proceedings online](#).

Evaluation of the Committee of the Region's (CoR) platforms

On 9 December 2014, the MOT took part in a meeting of the CoR as part of the evaluation of its three platforms: the EGTC Platform, the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform and the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network. The CoR wishes to evaluate the effectiveness, visibility and political impact of these platforms, which are designed to promote the place of local



authorities in Europe. The preliminary results of an opinion poll show that members are generally satisfied with their functioning, but that there is room for improvement in some areas, notably with respect to the political impact of the EGTC Platform. [More info](#)

Meeting of the working group on changes to the MOT

After an initial day of discussions by the MOT's network in Paris on 15 October 2014, and an evaluation, in the form of a questionnaire, of its network's activities, structure and needs, a dedicated working group met on 18 December 2014 in the MOT's offices in order to discuss two important subjects: the revision of the association's statutes – new statutes that will be put to a vote at the next general

assembly on 18 June 2015 in Chamonix – and the MOT's 2015-2017 three-year work programme.

More info for members:

A second meeting will be scheduled in March in Paris. More info will be sent to members soon.

[To consult the results of the evaluation questionnaire.](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Michel Foucher - "All borders are artificial"

All Africa, 22 December

"Territories and borders' were one of the topics debated at the recent Dakar Forum on Peace and Security in Africa. If today we are talking again about borders in Africa, is it because the terrorists that threaten African States have no regard for borders?"

"Michel Foucher is a diplomat and geographer by training. He is also the author of several works devoted to thinking about borders. An expert on the border crises that the African continent has faced since coming out of the colonial period, he took part in the Dakar Forum on Peace and Security in Africa. His thinking about 'borders of Africa' that have become 'African borders' proper have contributed to a better understanding of both the security and economic issues involved in African strategic thinking for the future."

Creation of the metropolitan area dubbed "the Strasbourg Eurometropolis"

Le Moniteur, 26 December

"Subject: turning the urban community of Strasbourg into the Strasbourg Eurometropolis. Entry into force: the legislation comes into force on 1 January 2015."

THE RHINE PORTS: Enhanced interna- tional cooperation

L'antenne, 8 January

"The programme of cooperation between nine French, German and Swiss sports is moving towards the pooling of offers and services and investment in infrastructures."

The Swiss franc soars against the euro

L'Alsace, 16 January

"The surprise abandonment by the Swiss National Bank of the floor of 1.20 Swiss francs per euro triggered a crash on the Zürich stock market. For border residents working in Switzerland, it's good news: yesterday they saw their salaries increase by 15% in euro terms. [...] These cross-border workers who every day cross the border to go and work in the cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft are indeed the great indirect winners..."

The future super- region worries the Conseil d'Etat

La Tribune de Genève, 5 January

"The merger of the Rhône-Alpes and Auvergne Regions could jeopardise border region funds according to François Longchamp. 'While at first sight the discussion seems a purely French affair, it is of great interest to the President of Geneva's Conseil d'Etat. 'Of course it concerns us!'"

Aquitaine-Euskadi: concrete steps

Sud Ouest, 20 December

"The Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion is to take on concrete form in the coming months in the area of transport. Yesterday in Hendaye, Alain Rousset, President of the Aquitaine Region, and Iñigo Urkullu, President of the Basque Government, presented the strategic plan for the next six years."

The Saint Lazare Hospital and Nice University Hospital are stepping up their collaboration

Nice Matin, 8 January

"With the aim of stepping up and developing their cooperation to ensure continuity of care in the Upper Roya Valley, the Director-General of Nice University Hospital, Emmanuel Bouvier Muller, and the Director of the hospital in Saint Lazare de Tende, Yvan Rouvière, recently signed an agreement between the two institutions."

Healthcare: Aquitaine and Euskadi cooperate

La République des Pyrénées, 27 December

"Aquitaine and the Autonomous Community of the Spanish Basque Country (Euskadi) recently signed a cooperation protocol aimed at combating chronic diseases and population ageing. The objective is to promote exchanges between healthcare professionals in order to carry out actions to combat chronic diseases."

Publication of Volume 6 of "Vivre et penser la coopération transfrontalière: Vers une cohésion territoriale ?"*

Contributions from the research cycle on cross-border cooperation at the University of Strasbourg and the Euro-Institut.

This final volume of the publication series *Vivre et penser la coopération transfrontalière: Vers une cohésion territoriale ?* brings together the contributions from the second day of the symposium entitled "Building bridges across borders: towards territorial cohesion in Europe?" held on 18-19 October 2010 in Strasbourg. It examines the actual and potential contribution of cross-border cooperation to European territorial cohesion.

Published by Franz Steiner Verlag, eds Joackim Beck and Birte Wassenberg, 2014. 377 pages with 38 illustrations and 9 tables. €62

* "Living and thinking about cross-border cooperation: towards territorial cohesion?". [More info](#)



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière
38 rue des Bourdonnais
75001 Paris France
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

Director of publication: Jean Peyrony
Production: Domitille Ayral

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