



**Jean Rottner**  
Mayor of Mulhouse  
President of the FNAU\*

**The EuroAirport, a “French-Swiss success story”**

"The world's only binational airport, located in the French-German-Swiss region, the Basel-Mulhouse EuroAirport is an example in terms of cross-border cooperation. Boosting the attractiveness and the prosperity of our territories, it represents a great success with trickle-down effects in southern Alsace in particular.

**Some markers:**

- 6,500 jobs on the site, 67% of which are occupied by French residents.
- 6,5 million passengers in 2014.
- Freight traffic of 94,300 tons, with the target of winning 50% of the air freight of the trinational region by 2020.
- One of the world's leading skills centres dedicated to aircraft maintenance and outfitting.
- Services to more than 90 airports by 600 flights per week.

**An atypical status!**

The EuroAirport is a binational public establishment in its operation and its status, although it is located entirely on French territory, while the industrial developments are in the Swiss sector.

The recent calling into question of the exceptional tax status of the airport mobilised Alsace's elected representatives. A favourable outcome is taking shape, confirming the joint goal of the two countries to guarantee the legal security and maintain the attractiveness of this essential infrastructure for the whole of the trinational region. It is worth wagering that the meeting planned in April between French president François Hollande and Didier Burkhalter, head of the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, will finalise the terms of an agreement."

## Mulhouse and Switzerland: 500 years of history in common

2015 marks the 500th anniversary of the alliance between Mulhouse and the Swiss Confederation. An occasion to throw light on the strength of the historical links as the roots of today's cross-border cooperation and to celebrate the event by making 2015 "The year of Switzerland in Mulhouse".

A brief historical review: In 1515, Mulhouse signed a defence alliance treaty with the 13 Swiss cantons, an alliance that it maintained during the subsequent centuries, along with actively cultivated economic, intellectual and religious links. In 1798, following the customs blockade which paralysed the city, the Republic of Mulhouse voted to join the fledgling French republic.

To celebrate these still-relevant links between Mulhouse and Switzerland, a series of listed activities is offered to the citizens. The aim is to promote Switzerland and its relationship with

# 2015



500 ANS DE L'ALLIANCE  
MULHOUSE SUISSE

Mulhouse through a programme of events, including exhibitions of Swiss heritage and contemporary artists, Swiss author cafés, participation of Swiss bands in the Carnival, company meetings, and conferences focusing on the economy and the potential for cooperation between the two territories.

A novel treasure hunt, the "seal through time", has been created for the event. Starting on 10 April, it poses a series of riddles to solve based on major events or anecdotes that have marked the history of Mulhouse and Switzerland, leading up to the final discovery in the summer of a seal hidden in Mulhouse.



A novelty: Guided tours of Mulhouse are available in German each month so that the Basle public can get to know more about the links between the two cities.

Information:  
+33 (0)3 69 77 77 30

More info on the websites of:

- [the city of Mulhouse](#)
- [the Canton of Basel-Stadt](#)

\* The network of the French urban planning public agencies

# EVENTS

## MOT's general assembly and annual conference

### "Territorial reforms: what impact for cross-border cooperation?"

on 17-18 June 2015 in Chamonix, at the invitation of the "Conférence Transfrontalière Mont Blanc", a member of the MOT's network.

[Download the programme.](#)

Online registration will be soon available on the MOT website.

**Interact Seminar: "Interreg for EGTCs"**, 14 april 2015 in Madrid

**Workshop "What European territory do we want?" on Territorial Scenarios and Visions of Europe for 2050**, 23 April 2015 in Luxemburg

**TransParcNet meeting 2015: "The value of healthy ecosystems for nature and people"**, 9-11 June 2015 in Stozec (Czech Republic)

[More info, all the events.](#)

## Kiosk office: opening of the first cross-border co-working space in Europe

Starting in January 2015, business creation consultancy cooperative START HOP welcomes French-German entrepreneurs to its convivial "Kiosk office" spaces at locations in Strasbourg and Offenburg, helping them to develop their market with a 360° view. Engaged in the cross-border economy, START HOP offers a range of services to this dynamic community: events, consultancy and networking.



The Kiosk office is intended to be a working and meeting place for the cross-border economic network. It is a venue for workshops and courses on the French-German market, and provides innovative bilingual services. Project cafés\* and thematic after-work events are organised regularly in the French and German spaces in order to strengthen the links across the border between entrepreneurs.

This cross-border space is intended for mobile entrepreneurs and workers who need freedom and flexibility: business creators, start-ups, freelancers, salespersons,

microbusinesses, etc. A total of 30 places are available for a day, a week or six months. The Kiosk office also enables French and German entrepreneurs to immerse themselves in a common economic culture and study the market of the neighbouring country.

This action is supported by the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, the Eurométropole Strasbourg, the Maison de l'Emploi et de la Formation and the TechnologiePark in Offenburg. It has been coordinated by the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Région Alsace, the Chambre des Métiers d'Alsace, the IHK Südlicher Oberrhein, and the Offenburg Hochschule and

Agentur für Arbeit.

The project, an example of good cross-border practice on the scale of Europe as a whole, is planned to be extended to other territories, as poor knowledge of the 'rules of the game' in the neighbouring country is a difficulty encountered by entrepreneurs on all borders, highlighting the inadequacy of the provision of information and guidance for cross-border economic activity.

### More info

\* Topics covered include: financing, how to develop a customer base, location, French-German differences in web marketing and social networks, creativity and innovation across the Eurodistrict.

## Inauguration of the first French-Spanish high-voltage line



On 20 February 2015 at Montesquiou-des-Albères in the eastern Pyrenees, French prime minister Manuel Valls and Spanish head of government Mariano Rajoy inaugurated the new high-voltage electricity interconnection line between the two countries.

Running for 64 km between Baixas at the French end and Santa Llogaia at the Catalan end, the line will double transmissions between the two countries, with interconnection capacities (2800 megawatts) equivalent to those between France and Switzerland, Germany or Italy.

"This interconnection has been talked about for 25 years, but since the decision by the governments in 2008 the process has advanced rapidly," declared Dominique Maillard, chairman of the executive board of French transmission system operator RTE. The link was originally planned as an overhead line, but opposition from the population resulted in it being buried instead. In the end, three years of work and an investment of 700 million euros were necessary to connect the Iberian peninsula with the rest of the European electricity system.

A few days after this event, the European Commission presented its plan for an Energy Union, which sets a target of 10% of the electricity produced in the EU able to cross borders between the various Member States by 2020.

## A Moselle strategy in response to Saarland

In response to the "France Strategy" presented in January 2014 by Saarland, aiming to make the border region a multilingual space by 2043, on 12 February in Forbach Patrick Weiten, leader of the Moselle department council, referred to the department's "Moselle strategy", with the opening in June of an "open house of services for Germany" (Mosa). Modelled on the "maison du Luxembourg" inaugurated in 2007 in Thionville, it will be the first facility in the department intended to welcome, inform and guide the inhabitants and businesses of the cross-border territory between Saarland and Moselle.

[More info](#)

## Workshop in Jerusalem

Organised by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and by the IPCC\*, and taking place from 9 to 11 February 2015 in Jerusalem, a workshop entitled "Between the Jordan and the Mediterranean: 2050 strategic plan" brought together some twenty Israeli, Palestinian and European experts - including the MOT, the AEBR, the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai and the PEACE programme in Ireland - on the issues of cross-border cooperation in the Israel-Palestine region. The underlying assumption for the researchers was that peace in this region involves not only two states that recognise common borders, but also infrastructures (water, transport, religious sites, etc.) under joint management as well as open international city status for Jerusalem. In order to achieve this objective, the development of cross-border cooperation implemented by local practitioners must be concomitant with the diplomatic settlement.

\* *International Peace and Cooperation Center, a Palestinian think-tank.*



## Luxembourg presidency of the EU Council

### Identifying the obstacles to cooperation



Présidence luxembourgeoise  
du Conseil de  
l'Union européenne



**The MOT network is mobilised under EU Luxembourg's presidency (2nd half of 2015) to identify the obstacles to cross-border cooperation.**

Twenty-five years of European territorial cooperation have passed since 1990 and the launch of the EU's INTERREG initiative. In spite of the very positive progress made, an assessment in 2015 shows that many obstacles to cross-border cooperation still remain to be overcome, even though territorial cohesion has featured in the EU Treaty since 2007. That is why the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has placed cross-border cooperation serving European integration and territorial cohesion at the heart of its priorities for its EU Council presidency.

If we wish to continue to strengthen this functional and citizen-oriented integration, a quantitative leap needs to be made in the regions that underpin it: cross-border territories. This is therefore an opportunity to engage in genuine joint reflection aimed at identifying the different obstacles that hamper cooperation.

Mandated by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the MOT has launched a consultation of its network in association with its strategic European partners\* in order to obtain updated knowledge of the obstacles to cooperation, prerequisite for proposed solutions at the European level. These proposals could be applied on each border at the administrative, legal and political levels.

The search for solutions may for example involve:

- the joint action of two or more States (governance, international agreements, changes to national legislation, etc.),
- changes to European legislation (directive, sectoral regulation, inter-service coordination, cross-border impact assessments, etc.); in particular, Luxembourg wishes to try out the idea of a new European legal instrument that makes it possible to experiment

\* *Such as the AEBR, the Committee of the Regions, INTERACT, the Budapest Platform partners, the TEIN network, the Nordic Council, the RIET, and many other "resource" practitioners on the European borders.*

## Launch of the first call for projects for URBACT III

Attended by European Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu, [the URBACT III programme launch seminar](#) took place on 16 March in Brussels. In addition to an evaluation of URBACT II, the seminar was an opportunity for the participants to discuss potential partnerships and prepare the future thematic urban development networks of the new programme.

To respond to the first call for projects that has just been launched, applicants can submit

their proposals on the [URBACT website](#).

This new call for projects is an opportunity not to be missed by cross-border territories – these are home to 196 million inhabitants, 40% of the EU population – and more directly by cross-border conurbations. The MOT, through its network and its contacts throughout Europe, is ready to facilitate the search for partners in any project on urban cross-border cooperation.

It should be remembered that the

MOT was lead partner of the "EGTC project" funded by URBACT between 2008 and 2010 on the governance of cross-border conurbations in Europe. The programme is organising a workshop at the end of April to provide guidance for the applications. [More info for preparing your application.](#)



## The ACTS initiative of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This Sahel cross-border cooperation support project of the priority solidarity fund financed by France aims to set up an integrated management strategy for the border areas between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, through coordinated instruments in the areas of security and development aid. [More info](#)

# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ The State defines the management procedures for the European funds

Contexte, 4 March

"A decree sets out the working of the State-Regions Committee tasked with supervising the use of the 26 billion euros of European funds available to France up to 2020. Stipulated in the act of January 2014 on the modernisation of public action, the decentralisation of European funding is now applied in the field, as the regions have begun to implement their investment programmes for up until 2020."

## ▲ A virtual exchange for cross-border projects

Métro, 2 March

"The Forum of the Eurométropole Lille-Courtrai-Tournai, the civil society assembly of the Euro-metropolitan area, has launched a virtual exchange for establishing contact between persons with ideas for cross-border projects."

## ▲ Border workers in Luxembourg, a constant challenge for Lorraine

AFP, 6 March

"Employment Eldorado for Lorraine workers, Luxembourg is also an immense challenge for the Lorraine region, which has been slow to react to the reality of border workers. It is now attempting to reconfigure its saturated transport routes and push back the spectre of dormitory towns."

## ▲ 301 new cross-border jobs in 2014

La Semaine de Nancy, 12 March

"After just over a year of operation, the French-German cross-border placement service located on the territory of the Eurodistrict SaarMoselle has published its first balance sheet. Good news: 301 job-seekers have found a job, out of 538 who have been supported."

## ▲ Exemption from CSG-CRDS: 'not such good news as it seems'

L'Est républicain, 2 March

"Following a decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union, border workers are now exempted from payment of the CSG/CRDS on their property and capital income. But only those who are affiliated with the social security system of the country where they work."

## ▲ Politicians launch an appeal to break the Greater Geneva deadlock

La Tribune de Genève, 3 March

"All citizens are invited to sign a manifesto to make known their support for cross-border construction. 'A wake-up call, a cry from the heart, an appeal!' That's how Geneva politician René Longet describes the manifesto for Greater Geneva."

## ▲ A digital advice kiosk for cross-border procedures

Le Dauphiné libéré, 5 March

"[...] Last week's installation of a digital kiosk used to display the employment and training services available in the cross-border region, was agreed quite naturally."

## ▲ Trans-Pyrenean cooperation

TSA, 13 March

"How can national barriers be overcome in order to cooperate on social action with bordering neighbours? The Pyrénées-Atlantiques department council is attempting to answer this complex question, with an extra impetus given over the last few months."

## ▲ Regional nature park: towards a French-Catalan collaboration

La Dépêche du Midi, 7 March

"Six years after the opening of the Parc naturel régional (PNR) des Pyrénées ariégeoises, the idea of a collaboration between French and Catalans continues to make progress. Yesterday, the Ariège PNR hosted a meeting with its Catalan Pyrenees counterparts at its base, the Ferme d'Icart in Montels. The aim was to share and improve knowledge on subjects important to each of the two entities."

## INSEE study: "Live in France and work in another country: a fast-growing situation"

According to a study by the INSEE published in February 2015, the number of French people living in France but working abroad has increased by 42% since 1999. The study analyses the different causes and characteristics of the resulting flows.

"Living in France while working in a bordering country is increasingly frequent. The two leading destinations are Switzerland and Luxembourg. In 2011, 353,000 French residents declared that they were in this situation, an increase of 42% compared with 1999. The movements are concentrated in five major urban areas. Each of them has a particular role in the French economy and the characteristics of their commuters are very different. The Geneva conurbation receives 88,000 commuters, with a large proportion of managers and graduates. The situation is very different in Saarbrücken and in Belgium, where workers and personnel with few qualifications predominate. In Luxembourg, there are more white-collar workers." INSEE Première, no. 1537, February 2015

Download the study [FR]: [click here](#).



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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Director of publication: Jean Peyrony  
Production: Domitille Ayral

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