

## The Lille European Metropolis's commitment to further cross-border cooperation

For the Lille European Metropolis, the proximity of the border constitutes an asset in terms of development and attractiveness.

With 84 km of shared border with Belgium, the city of Lille forms, with the districts of Kortrijk, Mouscron, Roselaere, Tournai and Ypres, a cross-border conurbation of 2.1 million inhabitants.

Initiated in the early 1990s, with political dialogue between Belgian and French local authorities, this cooperation was stepped up with the creation of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis. The numerous cross-border projects that have been carried out by players in the territory, with support from European funds, have given this cooperation concrete form. Many projects come out of the development strategy drawn up jointly, notably in the areas of the economy, jobs and tourism (with the tourist portal

[visiteurometropolis.eu](http://visiteurometropolis.eu), the tourist map, the economic investment portal [investineurometropolis.fr](http://investineurometropolis.fr), cross-border train fares, etc.).

The primary aim of the Lille European Metropolis is to make this cooperation more visible and concrete in the eyes of the territory's inhabitants. Out of this ambition grew the idea of a programme of festive, cultural and sporting events around the waterways that criss-cross the region. Thus, the Délices de la Lys festival, which will take place from May to September 2015, will celebrate the waterway's metamorphosis with a series of exhibitions, concerts, cycle tours and community picnics. Heartbeats, a cross-border music festival supported by the MEL and the Eurometropolis, will bring entertainment to the banks of the Lys in June. For more info:

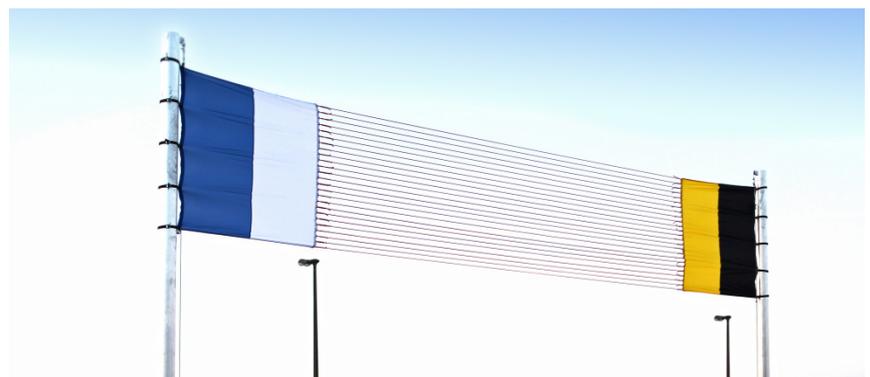
[www.lillemetropole.fr](http://www.lillemetropole.fr)  
[www.eurometropolis.eu](http://www.eurometropolis.eu)



### Damien Castelain

President of the Lille European  
Metropolis  
President of the Lille-Kortrijk-  
Tournai Eurometropolis

"On 1 January 2015, the Communauté Urbaine de Lille (Urban Community of Lille) became the Métropole Européenne de Lille (MEL – Lille European Metropolis). The MEL is one of only two cross-border metropolises to be recognised as such by law, alongside Strasbourg. This new status reaffirms the role played by our city authority as an engine for cooperation with our Belgian neighbours. The Lille metropolis has always been a pioneer in the area of cross-border cooperation, having participated in the creation of Europe's first European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, in 2008. This commitment continues today: we involve our Belgian neighbours in consultation about our major development projects and the revision of our town planning documents. There are many infrastructure projects that link our territories: the plan to construct a suburban rail network between Lille and the nearby former mining area, with a branch going into Belgium, the Seine-Nord-Europe Canal, etc. The MEL's cross-border cooperation programme will reaffirm our desire for permanent governance at the level of the Eurometropolis, around a coordinated strategy in the area of territorial development and services to the population. Our objective is above all to improve the daily lives of those who cross the border for work, study or leisure activities. I am therefore very pleased about the initiative launched by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to identify and eliminate some of the legal obstacles that hamper cross-border territories."



The French and Belgian flags redesigned by the Northern French artist Thierry Verbeke during his residency at the former border post of Rekkem-Ferrain, from April to October 2014, as part of the INTERREG project "300 years of border".

# EVENTS

## MOT's general assembly and annual conference: Registration is open!

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

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

[Programme, online registration and practical information.](#)

**2015 Upper Rhine Citizens' Forum: "Sport beyond borders"**, 16 May 2015 in Strasbourg

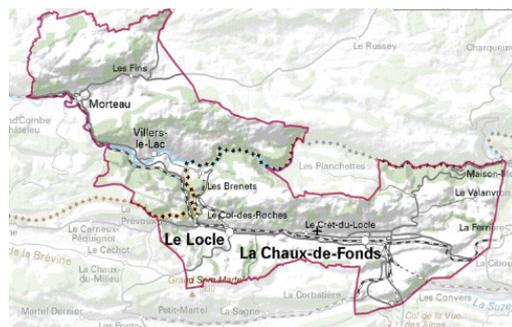
**Workshop "The need for specific legal provisions to boost cross-border cooperation"**, 19 May 2015 in Luxembourg

**"Energy policies in France and Germany: focus on the Strasbourg-Ortenau cross-border area"**, 19 May 2015 in the Strasbourg

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

## A unifying and citizen-based project for the Doubs Urban Conurbation

On the territory of the French-Swiss Jura Arc, the Doubs Urban Conurbation (Agglomération Urbaine du Doubs – AUD) has launched a cross-border intercultural and intergenerational project aimed at involving the populations and civil society of the French and Swiss municipalities that make it up: Morteau (F), Villers-le-Lac (F), Les Fins (F), La Chaux-de-Fonds (CH), Le Locle (CH) and Les Brenets (CH).



The AUD is the main cross-border conurbation in the French-Swiss Jura Arc. Centred around a community based above all on a shared history of watchmaking, the six municipalities have cooperated for many years. Today, following the economic surge in the Swiss part sparked by the bilateral agreements, this part attracts over 7,000 cross-border workers on a daily basis (out of total of 65,000 inhabitants). But at the same time, a mutual lack of knowledge about the population on the other side can be observed, with the "cross-border experience" often being limited to economic or commercial exchanges and the possibility of giving rise to anti-cross-border worker feeling.

It was against this backdrop that the AUD\* presented, on 2

March 2015 in Villers-le-Lac, its project "Two Countries – One Population" aimed at promoting social cohesion and harmonious coexistence.

The aim of the project is to foster concrete partnerships involving people on both sides of the border in the area of leisure, sport and culture, potentially taking the form of cross-border events that bring the different populations together. The project aims to be intergenerational, with people of all ages participating: children, young people, working-age people, senior citizens, etc.

Thus, the project's main areas of activity are:

- Setting up French-Swiss projects between schools, local companies and associations that are active in the territory.
- Organising cross-border

cultural, tourism and sporting events.

- Coordinating and promoting all of the actions undertaken, and encouraging exchanges between the six municipalities involved, representatives of the administrative departments and other relevant players.

The project is based on a request for funding in the framework of the 2016-2020 "Periurban – Cohabitation in a Rural Setting" programme from Switzerland's Federal Commission on Migration, whose decision is expected by the end of June 2015. A search for funding on the French side is under way so as to balance out the sources of financial support.

*\*Alongside its other partners: the Neuchâtel Urban Network and the Canton of Neuchâtel.*

## "Alsace 2030"



The Alsace Region has just published "Alsace 2030 – a project for the whole of Alsace", the fruit of work carried out during 2014 at the Region's instigation, in a process of broad consultation with all of the territory's active stakeholders. The document highlights the challenges, issues and opportunities to which Alsace will have to respond over the coming years. One of the sections is entitled "For an open Alsace: expanding Strasbourg and Alsace's Euroregional and international role". [More info](#)

## French-German tax agreement

The French-German Council of Ministers, which met on 31 March 2015 in Berlin, adopted an amendment to the tax agreement between the two countries. The amendment concerns the specific situation of cross-border workers (currently employed and pensioners) working in Germany but living in France, who are liable to be subject to double taxation. The agreement enables "the taxpayers concerned to no longer be taxed in Germany, in return for which financial compensation will be paid by France". Three German Länder are concerned: Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland.

[More info for members](#)

## Call for projects from the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion

The Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion has launched a thematic call for projects in the areas of "Culture, Education, Multilingualism, Sport and Youth". It is a tender procedure designed to support cooperation players in the two regions, with funding of €250,000. Applications are to be submitted solely in electronic form and via the Euroregion's website.

[www.aquitaine-euskadi.eu](http://www.aquitaine-euskadi.eu)

The deadline for applications is 19 May 2015.

## Energy: Europe in networks

Some months ahead of the next COP 21, Michel Derdevet, Secretary General of Électricité Réseau Distribution France (ERDF), has published in Documentation française a report for François Hollande entitled "Energy, Europe in networks: twelve proposals for a common energy infrastructure policy". Proposal No. 3 of the report aims to encourage cross-border cooperation between distribution system operators (DSOs), whose importance is still "underestimated at European level". "We now need to focus the EU's attention on the roll-out of smart energy networks. [...] In this sense, cross-border initiatives between DSOs are desirable."

[More info](#)

# EUROPE NEWS

## Launch of European programmes

Along France's borders, several INTERREG VA programmes (OP) have launched their first calls for projects or are organising their launch events soon:

- **The France-Wallonia-Flanders OP:** projects to be submitted by 8 May.
- **The France (Channel)-England OP:** projects to be submitted by 11 May.
- **The 2 Seas OP:** projects to be submitted between 4 May and 13 July.
- **The Alcotra OP** is holding its launch seminar on 6 May in Montmélian.
- **The France-Switzerland OP** is holding its launch event in Montreux/Veytaux in Switzerland on 29 May. Before the launch of the first call for projects, it proposes that applicants fill out a "pre-project form".
- **The Upper Rhine OP** is also putting out an initial "project idea form" before the launch of the first call.

### The ESPON programme

The new ESPON programme for 2014-2020 was adopted by the Commission in March 2015. More info.

# NETWORK NEWS

## An online platform for the Cross-Border Strategic Committee on observation

Following an exploratory study carried out by the CGET\*, the MOT and the FNAU\*\* and the first European seminar on the observation of cross-border territories held in Nancy in December 2012, **France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Andorra and Spain** concluded an agreement that affirmed their desire to **coordinate their initiatives for the statistical observation of border territories**.

In this context, a **cross-border strategic committee (CSC)** made up of representatives of the ministries in charge of territorial development in these different countries was launched in 2013. Its role is to give impetus to and coordinate a multi-annual work programme, to analyse priority topics for the observation of cross-border



territories, to identify sources and to gather data.

To assist it, a **technical working group (TWG)** brings together national and regional statistical institutes, ministerial departments and experts in the field.

The work carried out in 2014 and 2015 led to the launch in April 2015 of an online "**Platform of the cross-border strategic committee on observation**", hosted on the MOT's website.

This platform provides information about the CSC and TWG's actions and records statistical data, at national and local level, on the partners' territories with respect to **two major topics: flows of cross-border workers and cross-border observation**.

At its last meeting on 15 April 2015, the CSC decided to **widen**

**its field of research** to include other topics such as positive and negative disparities that generate not only flows of workers but also flows in terms of **commerce, tourism and healthcare**.

In addition, work is being carried out to prepare a **session on cross-border observation** with a view to better identifying obstacles to cooperation, at a **seminar devoted to this issue to be held on 19 May in Luxembourg (preparation of the Luxembourg presidency)**.

Other European partners are taking part in this work, such as the Netherlands, the European Commission and the Interact programme.

\* *Commissariat Général à l'Égalité des Territoires (General Commission for Territorial Equality, France).*

\*\* *Network of the French urban planning public agencies.*

## Meeting with George Pau-Langevin, Overseas Minister

The MOT's President, Michel Delebarre, met the Overseas Minister, George Pau-Langevin, on 31 March 2015 in Paris, in order to discuss the need to establish a permanent connection between "cross-border territorial issues" and "overseas regions". In order to promote the great potential for the cross-border development of France's overseas regions, a partnership between the ministry and the MOT would enable greater account to be taken of them in public policy. The MOT, which already has several representatives from France's overseas regions\*, has

carried out several projects concerning these territories (drafting of the Amazonia and Caribbean operational programmes for 2007-2013, outline of a cross-border house on the French Guiana-Brazil border, etc.). We should also recall that 2014-2020 European programme has reinforced the priority given to and funding for cooperation of overseas regions, with the aim of expanding the operational projects that can be financed by EU programmes.

\* *French Guiana Region, Guiana Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Community of Municipalities of West Guiana.*



## Discussion day with the SGARs

On 9 April 2015 the General Commission for Territorial Equality and the MOT held a day of discussions with the SGAR\* research reference people. The aim was for them to gain a better understanding of the role and actions of the General Commission and the MOT regarding cross-border issues (observation, etc.), to discuss good practices and to work towards better coordination of national, deconcentrated (SGARs) and regional players.

\* *Secrétariat général pour les affaires régionales (General Secretariat for Regional Affairs), which comes under the authority of each region's prefect with the aim of coordinating central government policy in the area of territorial development.*

# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ The cross-border agreement that changes the situation

**Le Républicain lorrain, 12 April**

"A small revolution for the world of agriculture, an unprecedented cross-border agreement and a boost for short supply chains. This experimental project that since January has brought together France, Belgium and Luxembourg is all of these things. Its aim is to facilitate trading in animals for slaughter between the three countries."

## ▲ Access to cross-border healthcare in Saarland and East Moselle

**L'Ami Hebdo, 5 April**

"The SaarMoselle Eurodistrict is calling on the French and Saarland governments to put in place a healthcare agreement to enable citizens in the districts of Forbach and Sarreguemines on the French side, and in the Saarbrücken conurbation on the German side, to have access to healthcare in the hospitals in Forbach, Sarreguemines, Freyming-Merlebach and Saint-Avold in France, and in Völklingen and Saarbrücken in Germany, with no administrative or financial barriers."

## ▲ An agreement for cross-border employment

**L'Alsace, 14 April**

"Thanks to the cross-border employment platform (Plateforme pour l'Emploi Transfrontalier – PETra), around one hundred job-seekers have found a job on the other side of the Rhine. Today, the objective is to contribute to developing the potential of candidates for jobs in Germany."

## ▲ 'If we close the border, it will bring the region to its knees'

**Le Pays Gessien, 9 April**

"The President of the Union of Geneva Employers Associations, Jean-Luc Favre, from Champanges in Haute-Savoie, is the boss of bosses in the Canton of Geneva. Defining himself as a 'Lemanic citizen' he sets out his view of the territory and the position of the businesspeople he represents regarding the sensitive issues of the strong Swiss franc and quotas for cross-border workers."

## ▲ 'Geneva cannot develop in a vacuum'

**La Tribune de Genève, 14 April**

"The President of the Rhône-Alpes Region's Conseil régional recalled yesterday in Geneva the need to relaunch cross-border cooperation: 'Geneva cannot develop in a vacuum, turning in on itself is good neither for the Canton nor for the conurbation!'"

## ▲ Surprise! Hollande speaks out for Greater Geneva

**La Tribune de Genève, 16 April**

"France and Switzerland declared their mutual friendship yesterday, without hiding the frictions between the two countries. François Hollande expressed his concern about national preference with regard to employment. [...] During his State visit to Bern yesterday, the French president, François Hollande, stated before the seven federal councillors that he was making Greater Geneva a priority issue."

## ▲ Progress for the Escartons Hospital

**Le Dauphiné libéré, 11 April**

"[...] The minister Marisol Touraine pointed out that the MP's idea would be pursued so that very isolated hospitals can have not a full resuscitation unit but first-level resuscitation facilities. Thus, Joël Giraud had an amendment approved that makes obligatory a cross-border component in regional healthcare organisation plans."

## ▲ Inauguration of the cross-border study centre

**L'Indépendant, 14 April**

"Completed a few months ago, this unique place for linguistic and cultural exchange, promoted by the Catalan Summer University and supported by Europe, has been officially inaugurated."

## ▲ Electricity: green light for a new method that will facilitate cross-border exchanges

**AFP, 31 March**

"On Tuesday the French regulator approved a new method for calculating the maximum capacities for transferring electricity from one country to another, which will facilitate cross-border exchanges of electricity between six European countries."

## "Qu'est-ce qu'une frontière aujourd'hui ?"

"Today, the importance of borders in people's lives is more than theoretical. Borders unite and divide they have become mobile and individualized, letting some move around freely and restricting access to others. Hence, whether they are opening or closing, borders have become an object of public policy as well as an essential resource for private interests they are both a governing tool and an advantageous one for the market economy. They represent a point of political, social, economic exacerbation, a laboratory of our times. For the moment, international borders remain the basis of citizenship, on which democracy is built... But the manner in which they oscillate reveals the uncertain future of our political systems. To understand what a border constitutes today means raising fundamental questions in order to visualize our future societies, as well as redefining our relation to the world."

*A geographer, Anne-Laure AMILHAT SZARY is a professor at the University of Grenoble-Alpes. Member of the IUF, her research focuses on territorial dynamics. She directs a research group entitled 'Borders, alterity, peripheries, globalization'.*

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ANNE-LAURE AMILHAT SZARY

Qu'est-ce qu'une frontière aujourd'hui ?

## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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