



**Jean Peyrony**

Director general of the MOT

Interreg is 25 years old! A good opportunity to celebrate the unquestionable achievements of cross-border cooperation, but above all, to look to the future. Our economies are called upon to look outwards; our societies to forge multiple forms of citizenship at the local, national, European and global levels; and with them our governments to reinvent, along with the territorial authorities and Europe, sustainable management of our common goods. To this end, we need to combine innovation, environmental responsibility and solidarity both within Europe and with respect to our European neighborhoods. The way forward relies on more cross-border integration, but many obstacles remain. The 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes won't be enough. We also need to have greater knowledge of our cross-border territories, and the potential for and impediments to cooperation, as the Commission is inviting us to do with its consultation; to invent new legal tools, as the Luxembourg presidency of the European Council is proposing; and to align legislation, strategies and above all people's determination on each border. The European and cross-border cohesion requires both engineers that put together technical systems and economic players that create value beyond their national territories, and political leaders that coordinate institutions, in dialogue with citizens who develop projects across borders. The prerequisite for this is that our maps no longer end at our borders and that we learn our neighbours' languages! The MOT – its network and technical team – will actively work towards achieving these objectives.

## 25 years of Interreg, projects take pride of place!

"Reconciling citizens with Europe" is the message we will take from Interreg's 25th anniversary, which was celebrated on 15-16 September at a major European conference organised at the emblematic location of Esch-Belval by the Luxembourg presidency, the European Commission and the Interact programme.

Examples of projects aimed at the inhabitants of territories along all of Europe's borders were showcased, demonstrating that Interreg is a crucial tool for cooperation between regions and helps to bring populations on either side of national borders closer together. A roundtable devoted to the major topic of the cross-border labour market was introduced by Olivier Denert, the MOT's Secretary General. Among the issues identified, the lack of data and the need for better observation of cross-border dynamics were underscored. To conclude the conference, Walter

Deffaa, the Director General of DG Regio, stressed the need for Interreg programmes to be more targeted and strategic. He also emphasised the importance of a "new vision" to develop border regions, reduce administrative and legislative obstacles and simplify programmes. To do this, the Commissioner Corina Cretu announced the launch on 21 September of an [EU-wide public consultation on the remaining obstacles to cross-border cooperation](#).

"Interreg is the most European part of cohesion policy, because its purpose is to show how to cooperate across borders. This is the key instrument of European integration which should be known to the general public," he said, regretting that only 31% of European citizens living in a border region know about Interreg.

[More info](#)



# EVENTS

Final conference of the project "The integrated economic development of cross-border territories", 30 September 2015 in Paris – [More info](#)

16th Council of Europe Meeting of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention: "Landscapes and transfrontier cooperation: Landscape knows no border", 1-2 October 2015 in Andorra la Vella

The "Territories" Commission of the Conseil National de l'Information Statistique (CNIS – National Council of Statistical Information) devoted to cross-border statistics, 7 October 2015 in Paris

Political Conference of the European Straits Initiative, 8 October 2015 in Vlora (Albania)

OPEN DAYS 2015 - MOT/UNCDF Workshop "Cross-border cooperation and regional integration, a worldwide approach", 14 October 2015 in Brussels  
[More info](#)

European seminar of the Council of Europe on democratic governance of transfrontier territories, 22 October 2015 in Saint Louis (Haut-Rhin, France) – [More info](#)

[All the events](#)

## The MOT is publishing two handbooks to encourage cross-border economic development

Since January 2014, the MOT has been carrying out a project supported by the national technical assistance programme Europ'Act relating to the economic development of the cross-border territories along France's borders.

The results of this work will be presented at [the project's final conference on 30 September in Paris](#).

This project has led to the publication of two handbooks aimed at project developers and stakeholders involved in cross-border economic development:

- An Introduction to the topic, accompanied by ten illustrative project factsheets, sets out the cross-cutting issues and analyses nine European borders. This 132-page document also contains recommendations that help players take greater advantage of the potential for the economic development of cross-border territories.

- A 40-page practical guide

gives players methodological tools and practical advice aimed at helping them to establish partnerships and set up projects.

*With 37.5% of the EU population living in border areas, regional disparity on the rise and faced by the growing challenge of migration, the CoR's President, Markku Markkula, called on 2nd September 2015 at a meeting in Luxemburg, for cross-border cooperation to be reinforced: "Encouraging synergies between cities and regions can foster innovation, open-up markets, promote local investment and boost economies".*

*Yet today the work carried out by the MOT shows that the potential for the economic development of cross-border territories is insufficiently exploited.*

*The movement of people, goods, services and capital, and as a result, the integration of territories, no longer takes place just within each country, but*

*within the European area as a whole, and this mobility plays a more significant role in the context of cross-border regions, where it is a potential source of prosperity, if it is regulated in a coordinated manner by the countries on either side of the border.*

*Looking at economic development across the whole of a territory shared between two countries, requires coordination of public - and private- sector players in two different legal, administrative and tax systems.*

Drawing on these analyses, the handbooks published by the MOT provide operational and concrete elements to support cross-border territories and local players within them in this development.

**Click here to download: [Introduction – Practical guide](#)**



This project is financed by the European Union in the framework of the Europ'Act programme.

Europe invests in France with the European Regional Development Fund.



## 15th year of the Saar-Moselle bike festival

On 6 September, this cross-border cycling festival that has been held every year in the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict celebrated 15 years of existence with the slogan "70 years of peace and friendship". The French-German intermunicipal associations and many local organisations helped to organise this friendly gathering that brings together the populations on either side of the border around musical, culinary and touristic activities.

[More info \[FR\]](#)



## A platform for French-Swiss car-pooling

A web platform to promote car-pooling in the Greater Geneva region went live on 1 September: [Covoiturage-leman.org](#). This new tool launched by the Swiss cantons and French departments centralises all of the offers in the Lake Geneva area. It has also received financing from the French-Swiss Interreg programme. We may recall that there were no fewer than 550,000 border crossings every day in 2011.

[Key figures for the territory \[FR\]](#)

## A new Euro-Institut (PL/CZ/SK)

On 30 June 2015 at the University of Silesia the inaugural international conference of the Polish-Czech-Slovak Euro-Institut was held, organised by the Association for Development and Regional Cooperation "Olza" (representing the Polish side of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion) and the Institut EuroSchola in Trinec (Czech Republic). The event, during which the MOT made a contribution, was an opportunity to present the new Euro-Institut within the framework of the closure of the Interreg project "Euro-IN". [More info](#)

# NEWS IN FRANCE

## Promulgation in France of the "NOTRe Act"

The New Territorial Organisation of the Republic Act (the "NOTRe Act") was promulgated on 7 August 2015 in France. In particular, it redefines the competences of the regions and departments and strengthens intermunicipal cooperation. With respect to cross-border action, the removal of the general competence clause for the regions and departments does not call into question the role of these territorial authorities, which may act in their own and their shared areas of competence. With respect to economic development, the regions may include in their SRDEII\* a cross-border component drawn up in consultation with the relevant territorial authorities in the neighbouring country. Lastly, the French territorial authorities that are the contracting authority of a project co-financed by the ERDF will be able to contribute a minimum of 15% of the total cost, compared with 20% previous. [More info \[FR\]](#)

\* Schéma Régional de Développement Économique, d'Innovation et d'Internationalisation – Regional Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation Plan.

## The TV programme

### "Le Dessous des Cartes"

On the occasion of the conference on 15-16 September in Luxembourg, an edition of the television programme "Le Dessous des Cartes" was devoted to European territorial cooperation. In making the programme, the LEPAC laboratory headed by Jean-Christophe Victor was notably given assistance by the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière.

**This programme was also broadcast on 19 September on Arte.**

[More info](#)

# EUROPE NEWS

## Luxembourg presidency, European Commission and Committee of the Regions in unison to strengthen cross-border cooperation

Meeting in Luxembourg on 2 September 2015, the members of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) called on the EU to step-up its efforts to strengthen cross-border cooperation. The discussions took place within the framework of the work currently being carried out under Luxembourg's presidency.

"Cross-border must evolve as a "territorial opportunity" rather than being seen as a "geopolitical handicap", underlined the CoR's President, Markku Markkula.

Speaking on behalf of the Luxembourg Presidency of Council of the EU, Camille Gira – State Secretary for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure – proposed that European instruments supporting cross-border cooperation be developed, "so that specific legal provisions can be applied in border regions with a view to the implementation of projects or strategies which could not be achieved under disparate legal systems."

He recalled that the Luxembourg presidency is currently working – with support from the MOT\* – on a new "pragmatic" instrument and a "legal framework to boost cross-

border cooperation" through the adoption of legal provisions specific to border territories. This proposal has been submitted for an opinion from the CoR, which will adopt a report on the subject at its plenary session in October. According to Camille Gira, EGTCs constitute "soft" cooperation and the objective is to go further: "As soon as you want to build even the most minor infrastructure, you come up against several problems," he stressed, citing the example of the construction of a French-Luxembourg wastewater treatment plant. [More info](#)

The debate took place ahead of the 25th anniversary of INTERREG. Within this context, the CoR members adopted a Declaration: "[25 years of Interreg: new impetus for cross-border cooperation](#)".



## CoR sets up an interregional group on cross-border cooperation

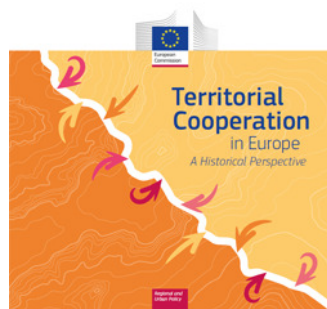
On 7 July 2015 at the 161st meeting of its Bureau, the CoR set up an interregional group devoted to cross-border cooperation, whose aim is to influence European policy in this area, to share experiences and to contribute to discussions on the future of cohesion policy. The MOT's President, Michel Delebarre, will participate in it. [More info](#)

## Consultation by the European Commission

Within the framework of these common objectives, on 21 September the Commission launched **an EU wide public consultation on the remaining obstacles to cross-border cooperation.** [More info](#)

\* View the study commissioned by the Luxembourg presidency from the MOT in this context: "[Cross-border Cooperation: Obstacles to Overcome](#)".

## "Territorial cooperation in Europe, a historical perspective"



In the context of the 25th anniversary of the launch of Interreg, this month the European Commission is publishing a book entitled "Territorial cooperation in Europe, a historical perspective". This work, which is totally novel in its ambition and approach, is the fruit of collaboration between two researchers (Birte Wassenberg and Bernard Reitel) and the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière. The MOT produced 26 original maps showing the impact of

cross-border cooperation at the European and national levels. This book fulfils two objectives: providing a key to understanding the complexity, richness and diversity of all of the territorial cooperation initiatives in Europe; and illustrating their role in the process of European integration. It is part of a broader project to produce a critical dictionary of cross-border cooperation in Europe.

[Download the brochure](#)

# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ The Juncker Plan risks excluding the smallest projects

**Euractiv, 3 September**

"The representatives of the EU fear that the Juncker Plan will only promote large infrastructure projects and will overlook more modest local proposals. The European Commission's investment plan provides for total investment of €315 billion, which will mainly be allocated to digital, energy and transport-related infrastructure projects across the whole of Europe."

## ▲ Schengen - an area without borders... almost without exception

**AFP, 15 September**

"The Schengen Area, one of the European Union's most concrete achievements, is an area of free movement in which border controls have been abolished for travellers, except in exceptional circumstances."

## ▲ A fight without borders against floods

**La Dernière Heure, 15 September**

"In 1998, the River Chiers burst its banks following strong rain, which caused flooding in the region of Longwy [...]. The issue of floods is therefore a cross-border one, which has been the subject of studies and work over the past few years. In Buvange, in the region of Messancy, major work is in the process of being completed."

## ▲ A fresh perspective from Fabienne Keller

**La Semaine, 10 September**

"In our country, most of the decision-makers are in Paris and very far from the cross-border territories. This subject therefore remains marginal in France, unlike in Luxembourg where I met ministers who crossed borders several times a day," recounts the Alsatian senator. 'It is the border regions that make Europe, but they also show up the economic divides,' she continues."

## ▲ Cross-border training: the call of Germany

**L'Ami Hebdo, 13 September**

"The Steering Committee for Apprenticeships and Cross-Border Training recently met at the Alsace Conseil Régional. It emerged from it that Germany needs labour."

## ▲ A cross-border memorandum of understanding on sediment management for the Upper Rhône

**La Voix de l'Ain, 11 September**

"A few days ago, the French Government, represented by the Ain Prefecture, and the Republic and Canton of Geneva, represented by the Department for the environment, transport and agriculture, concluded a memorandum of understanding setting out the terms for the cross-border sediment management of the Upper Rhône."

## ▲ Very strong reactions on this side of the border

**Le Messager, 15 September**

"[...] 'The MCG [Mouvement Citoyens Genevois] is calling into question Geneva's financial compensation – the famous cross-border worker funds. If they were to succeed, they would deprive Geneva of SFr385 million... Because it would no longer be Geneva that would keep most of the taxes raised, but the French Treasury.'"

## ▲ The Alpine valleys are going to receive €150 million

**Les Echos, 9 September**

"Under the 'Grand Chantier' procedure, the Maurienne Valley will receive €40.7 million and the Suze Valley, in Italy, is expecting €112 million. While 10% of the basic tunnel has already been constructed, the Alpine valleys are preparing for the works in which 2,000 workers are expected to take part."

## ▲ Oyapock: the opening of the bridge becomes more definite

**France-Antilles, 24 September**

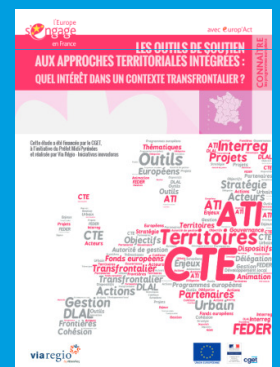
"Brazil's National Congress has approved three agreements already signed by the French and Brazilian governments for the opening of the bridge over the Oyapock River, between Saint-Georges and the road to Amapà. They are due to be promulgated today. They were awaiting this green light to be validated. The opening of the bridge, which cost €38 million, was on hold pending the approval of the agreements by the parliamentarians."

## "Tools to support integrated territorial approaches – an opportunity for territorial cooperation?" A study of the France-Spain-Andorra territory

At the instigation of the partners in the Spain-France-Andorra cooperation programme (POCTEFA) a study has been carried out on Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Community-led Local Development (CLLD). The aim was to provide an analysis of these instruments and to assess the benefits and feasibility of using them within the framework of European territorial cooperation programmes. Drawing on an analysis of the situation on the Spanish-French-Andorran border, the study was carried out on the basis of interviews with partners in the programme and in these territories, and an analysis of European regulations and of studies on the border. This work constitutes a tool to help with decision-making for partners in ETC programmes.

*Funded by the Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (CGET), initiated by the Prefect of the Midi-Pyrénées department and carried out by Via Régio - Iniciativas inovadoras, the study was published in July 2015.*

[Download the study](#) (in French).



## 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](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu)  
[mot@mot.asso.fr](mailto:mot@mot.asso.fr)

Director of publication: Jean Peyrony  
Production: Domitille Ayrat

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