

## European Seminar on democratic governance of cross-border areas

A European Seminar on democratic governance of cross-border areas was held on 22 and 23 October 2015 in Saint-Louis (France). The seminar was organised by the Council of Europe with the collaboration of the City of Saint-Louis, the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel, the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (Italy). Representatives of member States from the European Committee on Democracy and Governance of the Council of Europe as well as transfrontier cooperation bodies, institutes, practitioners and experts took part in the discussions.

An introductory report identified examples of citizen participation in the governance of cross-

border activities. Further exchanges during the seminar allowed to take stock of the legal instruments and tools developed by the Council of Europe and to highlight the latest research, trends and experiences in the field.

The seminar concluded that effective and active participation of citizens offers real support to the realisation of cross-border projects. Citizens' information and consultation as the ultimate beneficiaries of any cross-border cooperation initiative remain a guarantee of transparency and legitimacy of the decision-making process and consideration of the particularities of each border. The seminar's conclusions and follow-up to be given will be examined by the CDDG in December.

[More info](#)



## An exhibition on the subject of borders at the Musée de l'Histoire de l'immigration, in Paris

The Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration (Museum of Immigration History) in Paris is curating an exhibition focusing on borders, from 10th November 2015 to 29th May 2016. From works of art to maps, contemporary photographs and migrants' own accounts, this unique exhibition sheds light on the role of borders around the world and contemporary issues surrounding them.

The exhibition avoids simplification when addressing the complex questions surrounding borders, and instead gives the visitor the tools to understand how, historically and geographically, borders are constructed. The path through the exhibition, punctuated by singular stories of border crossers past and present, invites the visitor to question first the role of the border as a barrier, then the opening and closing of internal and external borders of the European

Union, and the evolution of French borders in Europe and the rest of the world. The exhibition resonates with events of recent months in Europe and the humanitarian refugee crisis. **It is also the subject of a partnership with the MOT, which will be holding its next General Assembly and Annual Conference – save the date – at the Palais de la Porte Dorée on 24th and 25th May 2016 (more info soon).**

[More info on the exhibition](#)

# EVENTS

## Save the date: MOT Annual Conference

Organised around the "Frontières" ("Borders") exhibition (see page 1), the MOT's 2016 General Assembly and Annual Conference will be held at the Palais de la Porte Dorée, in Paris, on 24th and 25th May 2016.  
More info soon.

**Closure event for the Alcotra 2007-2013 Programme for cooperation between Italy and France**, 4th December 2015 at Bardonecchia (Italy)

**ESPN Seminar "A world without borders - Refugees, cooperation and territories"**, 8-9 December 2015 in Luxembourg

**Study day on "Borders and Security"**, 11 December 2015 in Mons (Belgium)

[All the events](#)

## Trinational Agglomeration Basel unveils the contents of its toolbox for cross-border cooperation

The seminar organised by the Council of Europe (see page 1) was an opportunity to examine cross-border cooperation activity organised around the work of the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict (ETB), the international architecture exhibition IBA Basel 2020 and the Basel Agglomeration programme.

The director of the ETB association, Frédéric Duvinage, explained to attendees how the work of the last twenty years had allowed the construction of two cross-border tramlines, a footbridge over the Rhine linking France and Germany, as well as the planning of two future footbridges and a road bridge on the Rhine between the three countries. He also described the planning processes underway which allow spatial planners from the three countries to work on a



new vision of shared strategic spatial planning for the year 2030, and on the common development of a new trinational urban district, 3Land, situated at the France-Germany-Switzerland border tripoint, where the ports of Basel (CH), Weil am Rhein (D) and Huningue (F) are located. The latter project demonstrates the capacity of the stakeholder community in the three countries to work together in a process of co-construction, on strategic issues in urban development, which would have been unimaginable just twenty years ago.

Most of all, this seminar showed how elected representatives of the Trinational Agglomeration Basel support initiatives from its citizens and organisations from the three countries in the fields of sport, culture, the

environment and training, either by a support fund, or by sponsoring projects like the slowUp (a cross-border cycling event), theatrical productions with a trinational dimension, and sporting events or gardening festivals.



Frédéric Duvinage, Director of the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict

### Trinational Agglomeration Basel in figures:

- Approx. 900,000 inhabitants
- 97,000 cross-border workers
- INTERREG IV projects backed by ETB: 4,250,000 €
- EuroAirport: approx. 7 million passengers per year

**More info:**  
[www.eurodistrictbasel.eu](http://www.eurodistrictbasel.eu)

## A report on TV channel "France 2" covering Franco-Swiss cross-border workers

"More than 150,000 French citizens cross the border every day to go to work in Switzerland, attracted by higher salaries in all sectors. Many believe they will find an Eldorado there. Reality is not always as one imagines..."



Geopolitics magazine programme "Un Œil sur la planète": "Le miracle Suisse". Segment: "Un phare pour les frontaliers?", broadcast on 2/11/2015 on France 2.

**More info – watch the report [FR]**

## The French Ministry of Finance sets the conditions for the refunding of social contributions from non-residents

Taking note of the "de Ruyter" decision of the CJEU, "the [French] Government specifies in a communiqué published on 20th October the conditions for the introduction of recovery procedures relating to refunds of social contributions made on capital gains by residents and non-residents who are covered by social security schemes of other Member States of the European Union, the European Economic Area, or Switzerland."

**More info [FR]**

## Europe Direct celebrates 10 years of bringing Europe closer to its citizens

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of its creation, the Europe Direct network is highlighting the role of its information centres (500 throughout Europe, of which 54 are spread across France), in informing citizens of European activities, and also representing a local asset for events in the area.

**More info**

# EUROPE NEWS

# NETWORK NEWS

## Annual Conference of the AEBR

After a workshop on EGTCs and territorial cooperation in association with the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions on 12th November 2015 in Brussels, a conference was held the following day on "The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe". It was jointly organised by the AEBR, DG REGIO, the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. This event confirmed the desire for cooperation between the European Union, the Council of Europe and the players concerned, and the need to confront the current challenges facing cross-border cooperation.

[More info](#)



## Towards the creation of an online forum for the MOT network

On 18<sup>th</sup> November, members of the MOT network gathered at the CGET (General Commission for Territorial Equality) in Saint-Denis, for a meeting of the Technicians' Platform and the Advisory Committee of the MOT.

The Technicians' Platform looked at plans to put in place during 2016 an online forum for exchanges between members of the network.

The previous meeting of the platform had permitted the gauging of members' expectations. The discussions of 18<sup>th</sup> November clarified the three main objectives for this new tool currently in development:

1. Facilitating dialogue and direct exchanges between members;
2. Obtaining technical responses, notably concerning obstacles and solutions, and exchanging experiences in this area;
3. Allowing the MOT to identify recurrent obstacles and, when necessary, relaying them to the competent levels of governance for

their resolution.

Participants discussed an analysis grid, which will soon be sent to all network members for their feedback. The need for reporting issues of concern with regular summaries was highlighted.

In keeping with the objective of pooling resources, the MOT has recently put online, for members, the notes produced within the framework of the MOT "service vouchers"<sup>\*\*</sup>. [Click here to access them](#) [in French].

The forum project was also addressed in light of other work moving in the same direction:

- The process of updating the diagnosis and the obstacles/solutions inventory for French-Belgian cooperation<sup>\*\*</sup>, undertaken by the Nord-Pas-de-Calais SGAR (General Secretariat for Regional Affairs) with the MOT's assistance – work demonstrating a relevant and replicable methodology for other borders;
- The work of the Luxembourg

Presidency on the question of obstacles to cooperation and the proposal of a new legal instrument<sup>\*\*</sup>;

- [The European Commission consultation currently underway](#), to which the MOT invites all the members of its network to respond.

Following these exchanges, the meeting of the Advisory Committee was chaired by Michel Delebarre, senator for the Nord department, president of the MOT, in the presence of three vice-presidents – Anne Sander, MEP, Jean-Marc Duriez, president of AGAPE (Northern Lorraine urban planning and sustainable development agency) and Laurence Navalesi, representative of Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur – as well as local and national representatives.

**More info for members:**

[On the Technicians' Platform meeting](#)  
[On the Advisory Committee meeting](#)

\* More info on the "service voucher" reserved for members: click here.

\*\* More info in the next newsletter.

## Date definitively set for the end of roaming charges

The removal of roaming charges for mobile phones in Europe is definitively set for 15th June 2017, following the passing of legislation by the European Parliament on 27th October 2015. These charges represent all the additional costs billed for calls, text messages and internet usage on mobile phones while abroad within the EU.

In border areas, they significantly hinder the competitiveness of businesses and go against the

rights of citizens. Before the outright ban begins, a significant limit on the charges will be introduced from 30th April 2016 onwards.

"This banning of roaming fees was long awaited by all: ordinary citizens, start-ups, SMEs, or all kinds of organisations" declared the rapporteur Pilar del Castillo (EPP, ES), during the debate before the vote.

[More info](#)

## On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Schengen...

The DG for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission has produced seven two-minute films on the benefits of the free movement of people and goods, in English, French and German. These films touch on tangible cross-border topics such as employment, education, health, commerce, border controls, etc. [More info](#)

## The Proceedings of the MOT Annual Conference are online!



Actes  
Conférence-débat  
Les réformes territoriales :  
quels impacts pour la coopération  
transfrontalière ?

The topic of the conference was: "Territorial Reforms: what impact for cross-border cooperation?"

The proceedings [in French] are available [to download here](#).

# PRESS REVIEW

## Special edition: Press review on the strengthening of border controls and the Schengen area

Members only: [click here](#) to access all the articles (French borders) in the Members' Area.

## Dual threat to the Schengen area

*Le Monde*, 20 November

"Lethal cocktail for free movement in Europe. The Schengen area is doubly threatened. By the terrorism that struck France and by the wave of migrants coming from Syria that is travelling from Turkey to northern Europe via the Balkans, and is forcing, one by one, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria and even Germany to reintroduce controls at their borders, or even close them."

## New impulsion for the European Straits Initiative

Release, 8 October

"The members of the European Straits Initiative gathered in Vlora (Albania) on 8th October 2015, on the invitation of the Regional Council of Vlora. [...] A special time of exchanges has been dedicated to the issue of migrations and the debate ended with the adoption of a joint statement, the content of which highlights the key role of straits as maritime passageways in migratory roads and offers to create a fourth commission on this topic."

[More info](#)

## Nord-Pas-de- Calais/Picardie: a business figure warns against inward-looking attitudes

*Le Parisien*, 3 November

"[...] 'How can we advocate closing borders when our economy is immersed in the world, with one in four workers employed by businesses with foreign capital, when we boast in our brochures of this cross-border crossroads that is wide open (...) our successes in export?' writes Bruno Bonduelle [...]."

## French-Belgian border under control, but "not hermetically sealed"

*Le Monde*, 23 November

"It is midday at the French-Belgian border post of Rekkem. Queues of traffic, around ten kilometres long, have formed on either side of the border. The A22, usually a motorway, has been reduced to a single-file flow of cars that pass, one by one, under the gaze of the officers".

## Meeting of the Franco- Germano-Swiss Intergovernmental Commission in Berlin

Conference of the Upper Rhine, 1 November

"The Intergovernmental Commission met on 21st October 2015 [...]. Propositions were made for resolving the tangible problems of cross-border workers such as 'the obligation of social security affiliation for workers active in several countries' or the 'right to German unemployment benefits in the case of daily contributions made in Switzerland'.

## Removing the absurd barriers to cross-border MRI scanning

DNA, 7 November

"The French-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Council, in session yesterday in Strasbourg, has demanded that barriers complicating or preventing Alsatians from undergoing MRI scans in neighbouring Germany be lifted."

## "Nothing will replace local cooperation"

*L'Alsace*, 8 November

"On the fringes of the Upper Rhine Council, elected representatives from the three regions of the Upper Rhine are questioning their cooperation after the establishment of Alca [new French region superseding Alsace, Lorraine, Champagne-Ardenne], which will have neither the means nor the competences of its neighbours."

## The Corsican Assembly gives a boost to threatened sea links with Sardinia

*Corse Matin*, 31 October

"In a vote on Thursday, councillors approved two reports on maintaining threatened sea links between Corsica and Sardinia".

## European Parliament study: "European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation as an instrument for promotion and improvement of territorial cooperation"

The study proposes a critical analysis of EGTCs and emphasises the primordial role of this legal instrument in the development of cross-border cooperation in Europe.

Starting with a review of the state of affairs and case studies, the publication examines the different stages in setting up, the achievements, and the obstacles encountered by the different EGTCs established in Europe. The study concludes with recommendations to the European Parliament for improvements to the instrument.

Study published in July 2015 by the European Parliament. Language: English. [Download the study](#)



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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