

Geodata dedicated to innovative projects in Greater Geneva

Helping entrepreneurs located on either side of the border to create new digital services thanks to geodata on Greater Geneva – this is the aim of the Interreg project "Geofab Greater Geneva" launched on 4 April 2017.*

The principle of Geofab is to facilitate the exploitation of a large number of digital spatial, land registry and geographical data, accessible as open data, by selecting and supporting innovative Franco-Swiss digital projects through four calls for projects over two years. The objective is:

- to help project developers to put their innovative digital services on the market;
- to promote access to digital geographical data by project developers in the Greater Geneva area;
- to develop the digital market at the cross-border level. [More info](#)

* The partners in the project are the University of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva and the French Geneva Region Cooperation Assembly (ARC), supported by technical and institutional partners.



Franco-Swiss agreement for the binational Basel-Mulhouse EuroAirport

On 23 March 2017 in Paris, France and Switzerland signed an intergovernmental agreement that clarifies and defines the tax regime governing the binational Basel-Mulhouse EuroAirport, bringing to an end a dispute that has lasted for over two years.

The French and Swiss authorities reached an agreement on the principles of non-double taxation of companies and compensation of local authorities for the loss of tax receipts. In concrete terms, the document stipulates that

Swiss firms will be subject to Swiss VAT, and it defines how tax receipts from companies should be shared between France and Switzerland. Thus, firms on the Swiss side will also be subject to French income tax and Swiss tax on capital, but will be exempt from the main French associated and local taxes.

Having benefited from binational status since its creation in 1949, the Basel-Mulhouse EuroAirport, established on French soil, had become a source of conflict regarding the tax regime governing it.

The new agreement removes this misunderstanding and source of tension between the two countries following fruitful negotiations. "It's an important step towards ensuring the continuation of a flourishing cross-border collaboration initiated in 1949 between France and Switzerland," declared the Senator of the Haut-Rhin Department, Jean-Marie Bockel.

[More info](#)

EUROPE NEWS

NETWORK NEWS

"PASSAGE" to a low-carbon economy in the Dover Strait

On 13 March 2017, around 50 French and British stakeholders from either side of the Dover Strait met in St Margaret's Bay, in Kent, to discuss an action plan for the low-carbon transition. The Strait, which is at the heart of the Franco-British border, is currently one of the most heavily-used maritime routes in the world. The resulting movements and activities contribute directly to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, making this a shared challenge for the territories on either side of the border.

This meeting was organised by Kent County Council and the Pas-de-Calais Department within the framework of the Interreg Europe project "PASSAGE".

[More info](#)

Study on cross-border issues in mountain areas

At the request of the CGET,* the MOT has conducted a study on the cross-border issues in mountain areas, which cover nearly 42% of mainland France's borders.

This work, which has taken place in the context of part II of the Montagne Act, adopted on 22 December 2016, involved the updating of the knowledge on border region mountain ranges in mainland France, as well as the analysis of the issues relating to their development, planning and protection, with the aim of improving support in the implementation and coordination of public actions.

Four mountain ranges were analysed: the Alps, the Jura, the Pyrenees and the Vosges, which encompass all of the "natural areas" involved in cross-border cooperation projects:

- the Northern Vosges-Pfälzerwald Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve in the Vosges mountain range;

- the Franco-Swiss Doubs Cross-Border Park project and the Haut-Jura Regional Nature Park in the Jura;

- the Espace Mont-Blanc, the Hautes-Vallées Conference, the Mont-Viso Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve and the Alpi Marittime-Mercantour European Park in the Alps;

- the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation of the Espace Pourtalet, Huesca Pirineos-Hautes Pyrénées, Pirineus-Cerdanya, the Cross-Border Art and History Country, the Pyrenees and Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Parks, and the Pyrénées Ariégeoises and Pyrénées Catalanes Regional Nature Parks in the Pyrenees.

The study consists of three parts:

- an analysis of the cross-border issues specific to each mountain range, and a comparative analysis of the common issues;

- a typology of the areas specific to each mountain range: the inhabited border mountain area, the periurban border mountain area, the border mountain area in demographic and economic decline, and the tourist destination border mountain area;

- an examination of good cross-border practices in domains such as transport, accessibility, biodiversity and ecological development, access to services, governance, territorial marketing and tourism.

* General Commission for Territorial Equality.



The Fourth European Forum of the Outermost Regions

On 30-31 March 2017, before more than 500 participants, the Presidents of the outermost regions (ORs) submitted to the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, a memorandum urging for better account to be taken of their specificities in European policies through a "New Strategy for the ORs".

[More info](#)

[Briefing of the European Parliament on the New Strategy for the Ors](#)

["Omarjee" report on the development of the Ors](#)

["Vlody" report on the integration of France's overseas departments and regions in their geographical environment.](#)

Castle Talks and study day on the diplomacy of territorial authorities

On 20-21 March 2017 in Strasbourg, Jean Peyrony, the MOT's Director-General, took part in the second edition of the "Castle Talks on Cross-Border Cooperation", a series of conferences organised notably by the University of Strasbourg and the Euro-Institut in Kehl that brings together researchers, students and players involved in cross-border cooperation. The discussions focused on the threat of a return of borders in Europe. These participants also met for the study day on the diplomacy of territorial authorities that was held on 21-22 March, and that was aimed at promoting dialogue between practitioners and researchers in the context of the "Diplomacy and Territories" white paper. [More info](#)

Young European volunteers at the heart of Interreg projects

The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) manages on behalf of the European Commission the new initiative known as "Interreg Volunteer Youth" (IVY), which aims to give young Europeans aged 18-30 the opportunity to serve as volunteers in Interreg programmes and projects. Launched on 1 March 2017 for one year, this pilot scheme is designed to promote awareness of the concrete achievements of European territorial cooperation and the values of solidarity linked to it.

[More info](#)

EU: start of systematic checks on Europeans at external borders

Le Parisien, 6 April

"Europeans will be subject to systematic checks at the EU's external borders from Friday, under new European legislation targeting 'foreign fighters'."

Around 200 French cross-border workers at Caterpillar

La Nouvelle Gazette, 7 April

"The Caterpillar factory in Gosselies (Charleroi), which is soon to close, employs 100 manual workers and 79 managerial staff that are French cross-border workers, the Northern French daily La Voix du Nord reported on Thursday."

20 minutes, 20 April

"To develop cross-border cooperation in areas such as healthcare, transport or vocational training – this is the aim of the creation of a new metropolitan hub in the Grand Est Region. A report by the General Commissioner for Territorial Equality recommends this type of structure to provide

In Kehl, the last preparations to receive Line D of the Strasbourg tram network

France Info, 19 April

"On 29 April 2017, Line D of the Strasbourg tram network will cross the Rhine to stop at Kehl station, in Germany. This extension, which comprises four additional stops and 2.7 kilometres, required €70 million in investment."

44.5% of French cross-border workers live in the Grand Est Region

L'Alsace, 20 April

"160,000 employees in the Greater Region cross borders regularly to go and work abroad: Luxembourg (69,000) is the number one destination, followed by Germany (46,000), Switzerland (36,100) and Belgium (8500)."

Cross-border workers: concerns on three issues

Le Progrès, 14 April

"The cross-border worker interest group L'Amicale des frontaliers is sounding the alarm on several issues. 1. Road infrastructures unsuited to worker movements [...] 2. Unemployment benefit for cross-border workers – could Switzerland contribute more? [...] 3. Swiss taxes: cross-border workers contribute indirectly."

Cross-border committee set up to preserve flora

Nice Matin, 11 April

"Cophymed, an association based in Menton that brings together specialists from parks and gardens in the Mediterranean Basin, has just been launched to deal with the emergence of parasites [...]. Coming together within an association that has just been set up in Menton – Cophymed, standing for "Coopération phytosanitaire méditerranéenne" – the specialists intend to 'find solutions to regulate the situation'."

Var/Bastia/Livorno: consular and economic synergies

TPBM Semaine Provence, 19 April

"The Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Var, Upper Corsica (Bastia) and Maremma and the Tyrrhenian (Livorno) recently signed a partnership agreement making their historical cooperation links official and enabling them to sign up jointly to European programmes for the benefit of their territories."

Creation of the Tech and Ter Cross-Border Art and History Country

L'Indépendant, 2 April

"It's a great chance for the village as the centre of the Cross-Border Art and History Country to have hosted the signature marking the official creation of this European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)."

