

**Jean-René Etchegaray**President of the Basque Country
Conurbation Community**The Basque Country Conurbation Community,
naturally without a border**

Right from the time it was set up on 1 January 2017, our Conurbation Community was aware of its responsibilities and its importance in the Euroregional landscape. Beyond geography, it's a whole history, identity, language and culture that we share with HEGOALDE (the southern part of the historical Basque Country).

The cross-border dimension will be a major feature of our project for the territory. It should be reflected in all of the components of our public policies – not as a European requirement, but as an asset for our territory's standing and the construction of a shared vision of our development paths.

Our primary ambition is to base cross-border action in a pragmatic approach that contributes to the construction of European citizenship. In order to do this, we need to find solutions together to facilitate the mobility of our fellow citizens, share our water systems and coordinate and manage better the risks to our coastline.

Lastly, joining forces is also a way to increase the dynamism of our territories, by stimulating innovation, fostering social links in and the attractiveness of our mountain areas, and by encouraging the use of the languages of the cross-border territory.

A cross-border project to predict coastal risks in the Basque Country

MAREA ("Modélisation et Aide à la décision face aux Risques côtiers en Euskal Atlantique" – Modelling and Assistance with Decision-Making faced with Coastal Risks in Atlantic Euskal) is a cross-border research project aimed at gaining a better understanding of storm episodes on the Basque coast, in order to predict risks of coastal flooding and erosion. Thus, alongside the Basque Government's meteorological agency – Euskalmet, the University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour, the Basque technological centre AZTI and the Suez Eau France's coastal R&D centre Rivages Pro Tech, the Basque Country Agglomeration Community, via the Basque Coastal Scientific Interest Grouping, is leading the development of high-resolution modelling capable of predicting locally the energy and water levels reached by extreme waves, as well as the volumes of

sediment displaced by storms. These tools, which complement prefectural alerts, will make it possible to anticipate risks at the ultra-local level of individual beaches. This new knowledge will facilitate better coordination of actions to prevent and manage coastal risks. Lastly, the project will improve the way that "risk culture" is taken into account in public policy. Over three years, the project has a budget of €1.5, with 65% of the funding provided within the framework of the France-Spain-Andorra territorial cooperation programme POCTEFA. The project received the EU's 2017 Atlantic Project Award in the category "Creating a sustainable regional development model conducive to social integration" for being exemplary, innovative and reproducible in other European coastal territories. More info: www.marea-paysbasque.fr



EVENTS

The MOT's General Assembly in Nice – just a few more days to enrol!

The programme is online.
You can enrol until 4 May.

At the invitation of the Nice Côte d'Azur Metropolis, the event will take place in Nice and Ventimiglia on 22-23 May, with field visits on either side of the border.

[More info](#)

ESPON seminar: "New thinking on functional urban areas, polycentric territorial structures and cross border collaboration", 16 May 2018 in Nova Gorica (Slovenia)

Seminar on the Interreg European territorial cooperation programmes in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, 29 May 2018 in Lyon

[All the events](#)

Launch of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis's "Parc Bleu"



More than 100 people – elected representatives, technicians and civil society players – took part in the event on 22 March to launch the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis's "Parc Bleu". This event, which was supported by the European Committee of the Regions as part of its initiative "Reflecting on Europe", was an opportunity to kick off the Eurometropolis's Parc Bleu by presenting a book, which will be available soon, and a website (www.espacebleu.eu, currently under construction).

The Parc Bleu is a network of natural areas that connect people to one another and to nature. Rivers, canals and

waterways constitute its framework, to which villages and towns are linked. The park then forms a continuous space for people, animals and plants. While creating a park like this is an ambitious goal, it is an achievable one and is already taking shape in several parts of the Eurometropolis. Its aim is to make the cross-border region stronger and more visible.

While the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis is fortunate in being a territory that boasts numerous remarkable areas, many of them are not known by the general public and need to be publicised. The book, the website and the launch on 22 March are – or have been – an opportunity to show the

potential of water, in all its forms, to be a means of connecting people across the territory, on both sides of the border.

The aim of the project is also to launch a call for a citizens' pact. All of the citizens of the cross-border region are concerned: its inhabitants, elected representatives, organised civil society, technicians, public bodies, businesses, and so on. The Eurometropolis has the role of coordinator and has undertaken to draw up a list of initiatives and to foster the emergence of new projects by means of partnerships.

[More info](#)

Creation of a new Franco-Spanish EGTC: "Pirineos-Pyrénées"



A new European Grouping of Cross-Border Cooperation (EGTC) was set up on 13 March 2018. Called "Pirineos-Pyrénées" ("Pyrenees" in Spanish and French), it groups together the main territorial authorities of the centre of the Pyrenees mountain range: the Diputación de Huesca, the Hautes-Pyrénées and Pyrénées-Atlantiques Departments and the Government of Aragon. It merges into a

single structure the already existing bodies: the Aragnouet-Bielsa Tunnel and the two Huesca-Pirineos-Hautes-Pyrénées EGTCs and the Pourtalet Pass EGTC. As Michel Pélieu, President of the Hautes-Pyrénées Department emphasised when the joint declaration for the creation of the grouping was signed: "Together, our territories constitute a large and beautiful tourist destination that will give us an international dimension and put the 'Pyrenees' brand on the map." The tool is also aimed at joint management and development of cross-border infrastructures. [More info](#)

Agreements signed between France and Luxembourg

On 20 March 2018, at a summit meeting, France and Luxembourg signed four bilateral agreements, including one to strengthen cooperation with respect to cross-border transport. These are "a set of agreements that have a concrete impact on the daily lives of our citizens. Our objective is joint and equal financing of a number of transport infrastructures," explained the French Prime Minister, Édouard Philippe. Currently, some 95,000 cross-border workers from Lorraine cross the border every day to go and work in the Grand Duchy, which has a significant impact on rail and road transport. Paris and Luxembourg have also concluded a tax agreement (in order to avoid double taxation and to prevent tax evasion and fraud), an additional protocol on scientific and academic cooperation, and an administrative cooperation agreement concerning posted workers and the prevention of undeclared work.

[Download the joint declaration \[FR\]](#)

The MOT's Forum: come and participate in the ongoing discussions!

The MOT's Forum was launched in November 2017. It enables players involved in cross-border cooperation to exchange views on different topics as well as on obstacles to cooperation. Discussions currently ongoing relate to:

- Cross-border citizens' consultations
- Brexit and its impact on cross-border cooperation
- Closure of a cross-border road bridge
- Funding of a company managing a Swiss public service by a French local authority
- Prevention, risks of fire, natural risks and security along France's borders
- Cross-border spatial planning

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

If you wish to take part, please contact us at mot@mot.asso.fr

The MOT is arguing for cross-border citizens' consultations

Citizens' consultations are among President Emmanuel Macron's flagship proposals to give fresh impetus to Europe and "the link between its peoples and European construction". In France, they were launched in April and will continue until October 2018. The Economic, Social and Environmental Committee will organise a national presentation of the consultations' findings.

All of the EU Member States – apart from the United Kingdom – are committed to organizing them. The results will be examined at the European Council in December 2018. They will inform debates in the run-up to the European elections in the spring of 2019. The aim is to create a "public European space by identifying the issues that citizens wish the EU to respond to".

In France, the first consultation took place on 17 April in Epinal (Grand Est Region).

The MOT is supporting the organisation of cross-border citizens' consultations

Michel Delebarre, the MOT's President, wrote a letter to President Emmanuel Macron, arguing for the organisation of these consultations at the cross-border level. The President's Private Office responded favourably, emphasising the President's support for this initiative. The MOT has also promoted the initiative among its members. It will assist in setting up and promoting them at national and European levels. The MOT wishes this process to be ongoing and to continue beyond the 2019 timeframe.

The organisation of citizens' consultations

These consultations will combine*:
- debates organised by governments, but above all by territorial authorities and elected representatives, as well as by civil

society (associations, businesses, trade unions, chambers of commerce, cultural players, universities, etc.). All of the planned consultations will be the subject of a flexible and transparent labelling process; they should reflect the diversity of opinion.

- for the first time, a broad digital consultation in Europe, aimed, like the debates across the territories, at reaching a large number of Europeans, including those that do not usually give their opinion on Europe; it will be launched on 9 May.

- citizens' panels to think qualitatively about the major important issues.

[For more information, go to the website \[Touteleurope.eu\]\(http://Touteleurope.eu\)](#)

[Exchanges between MOT members take place within the network's Forum: \[more info\]\(#\).](#)

* Extract of the proceedings of the Council of Ministers of 14 March 2018.



France: a mission on Franco-German cooperation



A mission on deepening Franco-German cross-border cooperation, under the aegis of the Minister in charge of European Affairs, Nathalie Loiseau, has just been entrusted to the MP for the Bas-Rhin

Department, Sylvain Waserman. The aim is to think about how renewing the Elysée Treaty would help to further develop Franco-German cross-border cooperation. A questionnaire for citizens is open until 30 April.

The report is due to be submitted on 7 May 2018.

[More info](#)

Urban hubs – accelerators of territorial cooperation



The MOT has contributed to this publication produced by the French Urban Planning Agencies Network (FNAU), in two chapters: "Urban hubs and cross-border cooperation – a tool for dialogue across borders" and "How is inter-territoriality dealt with in other European countries?" [More info](#)

The cross-border dimension in the ONERC's report on global warming

The 2017 report of the ONERC – National Observatory on the Effects of Global Warming entitled "Towards a second plan for adaptation to climate change in France – Issues and recommendations" has been published. The MOT wrote section 32 of the report on the cross-border dimension.

[Download the report \[FR\]](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Posted workers: prospect of derogations

Le Monde, 31 March

"In the draft legislation 'for the freedom to choose one's professional future', which has just been sent to the Conseil d'Etat, the government has inserted provisions designed, in very specific circumstances, to make the rules applied to posted workers more flexible. [...] The aim is 'to adapt to the particular situation of cross-border workers who are liable to cross the border several times a week, providing very short-term services'."

Soon two bilingual classes in Dunkirk?

La Voix du Nord, 3 April

"Already taught as an extracurricular activity, in Dunkirk the teaching of Dutch could be introduced into two classes in September 2018. A project that has been studied since December 2016."

Cross-border commuters: Luxembourg makes a gesture on transport

Les Echos, 20 March

"Luxembourg has promised to co-finance the cross-border transport projects [...] But the elected representatives of Lorraine want more. [...] Jean Asselborn, the Luxembourg Minister of Foreign Affairs, rejected the demand for the handing over of tax receipts set out by the elected representatives of the Grand Est Region. [...] At least the question, which until now was taboo, has been put, [...] opines André Rossinot."

Double registration: the law finds in favour of cross-border workers

Le Dauphiné libéré, 17 March

"The law finds in favour of cross-border workers. [...] The highest jurisdiction in France deems that 'a person who is resident in France and who is registered with the compulsory health insurance scheme in Switzerland, in respect of their professional activity in that country, may not be registered with the French social security system or, in any case, should be removed from it as soon as they request it, regardless of whether they have been registered with the French system for longer.'"

Inauguration of the first cross-border training site

Léman Bleu, 28 March - "Today Annemasse inaugurated its new site dedicated to higher education. This is in addition to the five other training centres that already exist in the French Geneva area."

"National preference is a Swiss-style Brexit"

Swissinfo.ch, 3 April

"Attacks from the populist parties, the normalisation of anti-cross-border worker views, national preference: cross-border workers have had enough of being in the firing line. At a time when the campaign for the cantonal elections is in full swing, the President of the European Cross-Border Grouping, Michel Charrat, thinks that the climate must change if the Swiss economy doesn't want to pay the price."

Blunder on the Italian border: Darmanin regrets an 'unfortunate incident'

20 Minutes, 4 April

"BORDER – The public prosecutor in Turin has opened an enquiry into the presence of French customs officers in premises used by an NGO in the station of Bardonecchia, an Italian border municipality..."

The Aquitaine Euskadi Navarra Euroregion is launching a new call for projects

Sud Ouest, 5 April - "The Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarra Euroregion is launching a new call for projects around Euroregional citizenship. [...] This first session of the year is taking place within the framework of the Euroregional Strategic Plan for 2014-2020, and focuses on the areas of culture, sport, education and multilingualism."

In Ireland, the great fear of Brexit

L'Express, 29 March - "One year before the United Kingdom is due to leave the European Union, the prospect of the separation is worrying the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle. In the North, the peace is still fragile."

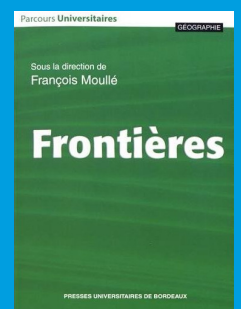
[Consult all of the press articles*](#).
Reserved for members – in French.
* Each month, the MOT posts online around 100 articles about cross-border cooperation.

"Frontières" ("Borders")

An academic publication edited by François Moullé, lecturer and agrégé in geography. In the collection "Parcours Universitaires", Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2017

"Borders are the result of the constant interplay between openness and closure; between international dynamics and local and regional cooperation; and between openness to the flow of exchanges and the control necessary for domestic security. The way borders are dealt with changes over time depending on the general geopolitical context, but also on the political choices as to whether or not to use the border as a resource. This publication thus proposes to help you understand the complexity of the phenomenon of borders, where the interplay of levels and actors enables them to play ambivalent and complementary roles."

[More info](#)



This publication is available in the MOT's document portal [FR].

Specialising in cross-border cooperation, the portal provides more than 4,000 document references. [More info](#)

CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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