

Boris Ravignon

Mayor of Charleville-Mézières and President of Ardenne Métropole



“One of the main features of the French department of the Ardennes is without doubt its proximity to Belgium. This proximity is geographical, of course, but also cultural, historical, economic and societal. Having been born here, in Charleville-Mézières, this intimate connection always seemed self-evident to me: what is more natural for an inhabitant of Sedan, Givet or Charleville-Mézières than to cross the border to visit their ‘cousins’ in Dinant, Namur, Bouillon or Libramont? In fact, I had to (briefly...) leave the Ardennes to really grasp how self-evident it is and to fully appreciate this.

I know that we are not the only ones to live in a cross-border territory, but millions of other Europeans, to speak of our continent alone, do not have this good fortune. For we are very fortunate in this, without any doubt! But I have the impression that, with a few rare exceptions, we still find it very difficult to take advantage of this good fortune and to make the most, all together, of the opportunities that it can offer. This is the purpose of the strategic plan for the development of the Franco-Belgian Ardennes cross-border territory that the MOT and Idelux are jointly working on. Tourism, training, healthcare, territorial facilities, culture, commerce, security, higher education, services to the population, and so on: the potential areas for action are huge. Some have already given rise to concrete initiatives, but we must and can do better. Yours cross-borderly...”

A cross-border strategy for the Franco-Belgian Ardennes

In May 2019, Ardenne Métropole and the Belgian association of municipalities Idelux embarked on the drawing-up of a “Strategic plan for the development of the cross-border territory of the Franco-Belgian Ardennes”. This initiative, which comes in the wake of the incorporation of the Ardennes into the Grand Est Region in 2015, and above all the signature of the Ardennes Compact on 15 March 2019, an agreement that intends “to make the Ardennes a department of the future”, demonstrates the desire of local players to place the issue of cross-border co-development at the heart of their concerns. Like other territories in the region that have been part of the cross-border dynamic for several years, this strategic plan seeks to be a tool to assist forward-looking decision-making and a concrete roadmap to identify

more or less long-term cross-border actions. More specifically, the work underway should help to improve Franco-Belgian dialogue with respect to the Ardennes, to raise the territory’s profile within the Grand Est Region and Wallonia, and to jointly prepare for the European funds’ 2021-2027 programming period. At a more operational level, the aim is to put in place a permanent mechanism for cross-border forward-looking reflection, to pinpoint different possible areas for cross-border development, and to thereby help with the development of relevant projects. This exercise, which is being carried out jointly by the MOT and Idelux, notably comprises a series of interviews with the local players and three work-focused workshops. It is due to be completed in early 2020.



The Place Ducale in Charleville-Mézières.

EVENTS

"Metropolitan cross-border cooperation"

Register for the MOT network's next technical day, to be held in Besançon (France) on 25 September 2019, in partnership with the Greater Besançon Conurbation Community. Programme and registration [FR]

Registration is now open for the European Week of Regions and Cities, 7-10 October 2019 in Brussels: focus on the workshops devoted to cross-border cooperation

The MOT is running a workshop on the energy transition: "[No country is an island: cross-border strategies for a clean energy transition](#)", on 8 October 2019.

It is making contributions in a workshop run by DG REGIO "[Better evidence on cross-border regions and INTERREG impacts](#)" and a workshop run by TEIN "[Cross-Border Territories: Crucial places for engaging citizens for the future of Europe](#)".

Other workshops to be noted on:
- [the ECBM tool and "b-solutions" projects](#)
- [qualifications and jobs](#)
- [public services](#).

[The other events](#)

The Ardennes Department – a European and cross-border location



Noël Bourgeois, President of the Ardennes Departmental Council (on the right) and Denis Mathen, Governor of the Province of Namur

Making the most of its European location

With its 150 km-long border with Belgium, the Ardennes territory aims to become a strategic cross-border multimodal platform for the Grand Est Region and the East of Paris thanks to its transport infrastructure:

- the A34/A304 Reims-Charleville-Charleroi motorway, the new shorter and free section of the Rotterdam-Marseille route, as an alternative to the congested A1 and A31 routes.
- the high-speed TGV-Est (Paris-Charleville/Sedan), boosted by the possible reconnection to the Belgian rail network via the reopening of the Givet-Dinant line, and the Calais-Metz-Basel line, one of the main Great Britain-Central Europe rail freight corridors.

- the large-capacity river port at Givet on the Meuse, which is linked to the ports of Liège and the North Sea.

- the Ardennes-Étienne Riché Aerodrome, which is a partner of the Brussels South/Charleroi airport.

Institutional partnerships

A member of the France-Wallonia-Vlaanderen Interreg programme and an observer member of the Greater Region, the Ardennes Department is also a member of the MOT and of the Grand Est Europe Bureau. In addition to its cooperation with the Walloon regional and provincial authorities, it participates in the task force of the "Essaimage" ("Spin-Off") project of the Namur Province Economic Bureau and has been part of the "Destination Ardenne" EEIG since it was set up. It also supports the

"Albatros" EEIG, the only cross-border structure devoted to disabled people.

An "Ardennes Compact"

Signed in March 2019 by the Government and the main stakeholders in the Ardennes, including the Department, the Ardennes Compact aims to "make the Ardennes a department of the future". Among its 71 action points, 4 are cross-border in nature:

- Developing a rail public transport offer between Namur and Reims via Givet and Dinant;
- Improving public transport links from the Ardennes to Belgium and Luxembourg;
- Hosting Belgian junior hospital doctors in the Ardennes;
- Setting up a cross-border information point.

[More info](#)

"Competitiv'Eko" – stimulating innovation

The results of this project were presented on 16 May 2019 in Biarritz. Launched in 2016, it has built a network of economic players to stimulate businesses' innovation and competitiveness across three neighbouring territories: Euskadi, Navarra and Aquitaine. Three cross-border innovation hubs have been created, bringing together 87 businesses, as well as clusters and technology and training centres. An innovation platform linking six healthcare institutions spread across the three territories has also been set up.

[More info](#)

Healthcare cooperation: concrete progress

Framework agreement with Switzerland and Luxembourg

On 20 June 2019, the Senate adopted the bill enabling the framework agreement on cross-border healthcare cooperation with Switzerland and Luxembourg to be approved. This legislation extends to Switzerland and Luxembourg the framework agreement already in place with Belgium, Germany and Spain. It has been keenly awaited, particularly in the Greater Geneva area, which is experiencing medical workforce problems, a shortage of doctors and high turnover of healthcare staff. For Virginie Duby-Muller, MP for Haute-Savoie, "This agreement

opens up many possibilities. It will facilitate access for French patients to Swiss hospitals and healthcare professionals, and vice versa. It is a major step forward for healthcare cooperation that will benefit all the inhabitants of border areas."

[More info](#)

SaarMoselle: signature of the "Mosar" agreement

On 12 June 2019, sixteen French and German partners signed the "Mosar" agreement, a cross-border healthcare agreement that officialises the cooperation between five hospitals in the Moselle and Saarland: a step that has been awaited for over four

years in this territory.

The agreement provides easier access to the nearest and most appropriate medical and technical facilities, in order to ensure patients receive optimum treatment. It covers three areas of healthcare (cardiological emergencies, emergencies involving cases of multiple trauma, and neurosurgical treatment), and is the first step towards the creation of a "cross-border healthcare access area", which was proposed by the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict in 2015, but which has proved difficult to put in place in all areas of treatment. [More info](#)

The Commission has circulated orientation papers by border

In the context of the preparation of its 2021-2027 programmes, DG REGIO has drawn up 38 Border Orientation Papers (BOPs) for all of the EU's land borders. Six of these BOPs relate to France's borders.

[This is a major innovation: for the first time, the Commission has taken the steps to propose strategic orientations for each border ahead of the programming process.](#)

This new approach, which corresponds to what the MOT promotes in terms of strategies and governance, should serve as a basis for constructive discussions between cross-border regions and the Commission. The BOPs set out the main features of and major issues for each cross-border region.

The resulting assessment is formulated with the aim of opening up dialogue with all of the stakeholders in order to adopt the new Interreg programmes, by the end of 2020 at the latest.

[More info](#)

MOT NEWS

Towards the creation of a network of cross-border observatories

On 26 June 2019, the General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET) hosted, with support from the MOT, another meeting of the Cross-Border Strategic Committee on observation (CSC).¹ Several institutions attended the meeting: the European Commission, the ESPON programme, the German Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, the BBSR (Germany), INSEE,² representatives from Luxembourg, Switzerland and Italy, and several local cross-border observatories³ and border region urban-planning agencies.⁴

The meeting was an opportunity to present the brochure "[France-Germany: cross-border observation at the heart of Europe](#)" that was

published following the signature of the Aachen Treaty by the CGET and the German ministry, in order to report on the Franco-German experience and to extend its scope to Europe as a whole. The German ministry presented its priorities in the perspective of Germany's presidency of the EU in the second half of 2020, and the pilot projects in the area of cross-border observation. The CGET presented its "Crossroads of Observatories" project, which aims to create a network of local observatories in France and along France's borders. The cross-border observatories in North Lorraine and Greater Geneva presented their experiences and underscored their needs with respect to cross-border observation.

DG REGIO, for its part, recalled its aim of bringing European programmes closer in line with individual territories' development strategies,⁵ and announced the launch of an initiative to draw up an inventory of cross-border observatories in Europe.⁶

¹ Set up on the initiative of the CGET, the CSC brings together representatives of the ministries in charge of spatial planning for the territory of France and its neighbours, as well as their statistical institutes. [More info](#)

² NB: INSEE's 2018 annual report contains two pages devoted to cross-border territories.

³ The Greater Region Geographical Information System, the Interregional Employment Observatory, GéoRhena, the OSTAJ (Jura Arc Cross-Border Statistical Observatory), the Greater Geneva Cross-Border Observatory and the Pyrenees Climate Change Observatory.

⁴ Strasbourg, Pau-Bayonne, Longwy and Mulhouse.

⁵ See article opposite.

⁶ [More info](#)



"Fair distribution of taxes in trans-frontier areas"

On 13 June 2019, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Vice-President of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, presented a report entitled "Fair distribution of taxes in trans-frontier areas". It will be submitted for adoption at the 37th Congress session in October.

The report recalls that a third of European citizens live in border regions and that, "while many obstacles to cooperation have been removed, the issue of the fair distribution of tax

revenues coming from cross-border workers between the two sides of the borders concerned has yet to be resolved. [...] In the absence of a common approach, the response to this problem [...] has given rise to numerous bilateral agreements, [...] and in some cases, systems of fiscal transfers [...] have been adopted. [...] In other cases, no agreement has been concluded, with the result that the local and regional authorities of the places of residence bear much higher costs than the places of

employment."

Faced with the "risk of seeing this imbalance in cross-border development deteriorate further", the report notably encourages the local and regional authorities of cross-border workers' places of employment "to promote co-development as a common goal" and "to contribute to the financing of public services in the workers' places of residence".

[More info](#)

The National Territorial Cohesion Agency is taking shape

The bill providing for the creation of the National Territorial Cohesion Agency was adopted on 9 July in its final reading in the Assemblée Nationale. The Agency will be operational from 1 January 2020. "Its action will primarily target, on the one hand, territories characterised by geographical constraints, demographic, economic, social or environmental difficulties, or difficulties regarding access to public services, with special attention focused on the areas mentioned in article 174¹ of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and, on the other hand, innovative projects."

[More info](#)

¹ This article specifically cites "island, cross-border and mountain regions". [See the Treaty](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Green light from the Assemblée to bring Alsace back to life

Les Echos, 27 June

"The legislation gives the future 'European territorial authority of Alsace' prerogatives notably in the areas of cross-border cooperation and bilingualism. There is no special status as for Corsica, but a re-found identity within the Grand Est Region: on Wednesday the Assemblée Nationale approved on its first reading a compromise bill on the new 'European territorial authority of Alsace'."

Cross-border workers: why they live in France but work abroad

Les Echos, 14 June

"More and more French people are becoming cross-border workers. They live in France and work in another country for salaries that are sometimes twice as high."

French trains soon risk being blocked at the Luxembourg border

Le Monde, 13 June

"TER regional trains are not all equipped with the European security system ERTMS that will be compulsory in the Grand Duchy from 1 January 2020."

Fiscal transfers: "I'm asking for fairness"

Républicain lorrain, 26 June

"The Mayor of Metz, Dominique Gros, has decided to take the lead in asking Luxembourg to redistribute part of cross-border workers' income tax. [...] French local elected representatives [...] are betting on dialogue at government level. This is the purpose of the letter co-signed by Dominique Gros and the Mayor of Trier that was sent last month to Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel. They are asking for a joint diplomatic initiative to get things moving. 'This letter has caused a real stir,' confirms the Mayor of Metz. For the first time, the Luxembourgers have understood that the Germans are asking themselves the same questions as we are."

Greater Geneva wants to accelerate its energy transition

Dauphiné Libéré, 28 June

"Arnaud Leroy, Chairman of the ADEME [France's environment and energy agency] was in Greater Geneva. The objective: to come up with solutions to halve energy consumption by 2050."

The children of cross-border workers can no longer go to school in Geneva

Le Messenger, 27 June

"The administrative tribunal of the Geneva Court of Justice has rejected the appeal regarding the schooling of the children of cross-border workers. With a few exceptions, they will therefore no longer be able to go to school in Geneva."

Nice-Tende: "We will continue to run trains"

Nice Matin, 5 June

"Philippe Tabarot, the regional councillor [South Region] in charge of transport, affirms: 'We want to save this line.' This is in spite of the fact that the regional chamber of auditors has recommended its closure."

Second cross-border 'cooperation and health-care' days in Cerdanya

La Semaine, 12 juin

"On 14-15 June, the Cerdà Museum in Puigcerdà (Catalonia) is hosting the second cross-border days devoted to cooperation in the area of healthcare. An initiative of the European project Prospective Transfrontalière Sanitaire et Sociale (ProspectSASO – Cross-Border Healthcare and Social Forward Planning), these days are aimed at healthcare professionals [...]."

Large increase in cross-border workers working in Switzerland and Luxembourg

INSEE Première, No. 1755, June 2019.

In 2015, more than 360,000 inhabitants of border areas in France worked in a neighbouring country, near to the border. The economic dynamism of neighbouring countries such as Luxembourg, Switzerland and Monaco, together with the salaries offered, have encouraged working-age people living in France's border areas to go and work there. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4164642>

The following study has also just been published:

"Les travailleurs frontaliers au Luxembourg et en Suisse : Emploi, Quotidien et Perceptions" ("Cross-border workers in Luxembourg and Switzerland: Jobs, Daily Life and Perceptions"), Pigeron-Piroth, I. / Wille, C. (publisher), 2019. <http://www.uni-gr.eu/fr/chercheurs-et-enseignants/border-studies/unigr-cbs/recherche>

These publications are available in [the MOT's documentary portal](#).

Insee Première



Forte croissance du nombre de travailleurs frontaliers vers la Suisse et le Luxembourg

En 2015, plus de 360 000 habitants des zones frontalières françaises travaillent dans un pays étranger, à proximité de la frontière. — entre 2010 et 2015, dans les zones frontalières de l'Alsace, l'emploi a vu de façon globale plus favorable à l'étranger qu'en France, sauf en Espagne et en Italie. Le dynamisme économique des pays voisins tels que le Luxembourg, la Suisse et Monaco, ainsi que les salaires offerts, ont encouragé les habitants de France près des frontières à aller travailler. Dans ces pays, le coût de la vie est souvent inférieur à celui de la France. Malgré une croissance de l'emploi en Allemagne et en Belgique, les flux de travailleurs frontaliers vers ces pays, ainsi qu'en Italie vers les centres industriels, sont moins nombreux. Certaines zones frontalières françaises attirent des migrants, grâce au possible travail frontalier. Mais elles subissent également de nombreuses pertes de talents, hormis celles situées autour du lac Léman.

La France entretient une part importante de ses habitants dans les zones frontalières avec ses voisins (Belgique, Luxembourg, Allemagne, Suisse, Italie, Monaco, Espagne et Andorre). Plus de 360 000 personnes résident en France et travaillent à l'étranger qu'en France, sauf en Espagne et en Italie. Le dynamisme économique des pays voisins tels que le Luxembourg, la Suisse et Monaco, ainsi que les salaires offerts, ont encouragé les habitants de France près des frontières à aller travailler. Dans ces pays, le coût de la vie est souvent inférieur à celui de la France. Malgré une croissance de l'emploi en Allemagne et en Belgique, les flux de travailleurs frontaliers vers ces pays, ainsi qu'en Italie vers les centres industriels, sont moins nombreux. Certaines zones frontalières françaises attirent des migrants, grâce au possible travail frontalier. Mais elles subissent également de nombreuses pertes de talents, hormis celles situées autour du lac Léman.



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière
38 rue des Bourdonnais
75001 Paris France
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80

Director of publication:
Jean Peyrony
Production: Domitille Ayral

Photos: All rights reserved.

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