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Memorandum on the Ireland/ Northern Ireland border

Louth County Council in the Republic of Ireland and Newry and Mourne District Council in Northern Ireland signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March, committing the authorities to strengthen and promote the social, cultural and economic links in their cross-border territories.

This new strategic alliance is a continuation of a history of joint cooperation over several decades, supported by European funding programmes. "We are committing ourselves to an entirely new form of regional governance above and beyond traditional local and central government structures", declared the Mayor of Newry and Mourne District Council, Councillor Mick Murphy. The Cathaoirleach (Chairman) of Louth County Council, Councillor Peter Savage, emphasized that "the Memorandum of Understanding will deepen the commitment of our authorities to continue cooperating, but will also establish new precedents which other regions can follow". The Memorandum stresses four themes: tourism and recreation, sustainable development based on renewable energy and

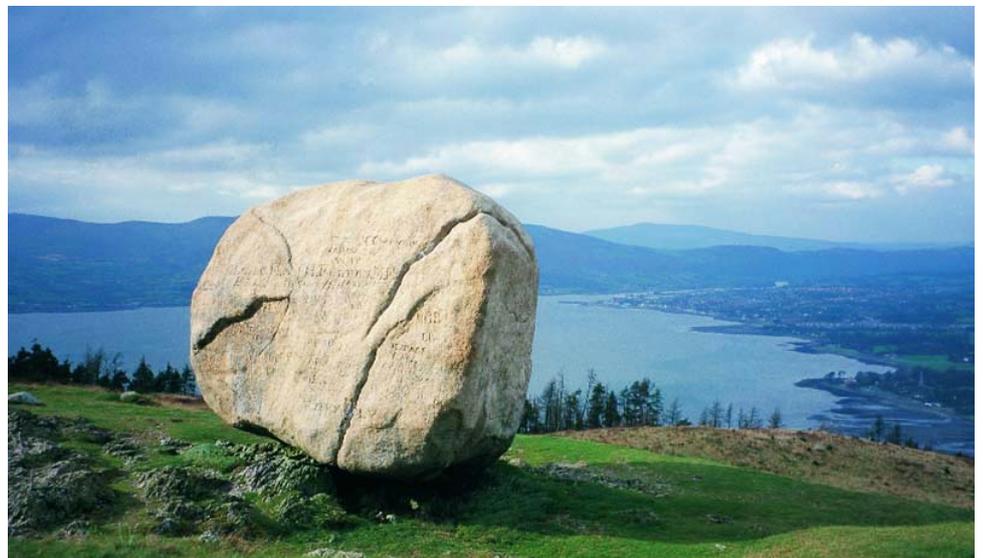
energy efficiency, sustainable economic growth and job creation. The respective authorities also want to improve efficiency and delivery of services. The strategic alliance will be driven by a joint committee of elected members from the region, supported by a joint senior management team comprising the Chief Executive, the County Manager and Directors of the participating authorities. An advisory forum including representatives from local industry, commerce and the voluntary sector of the region will also be established.

A new graphic identity for the MOT!

The MOT is pleased to present the new version of its monthly newsletter!

With an updated format and expanded to four pages, *Cross-Border News* will offer its readers better-organized information with richer content.

This upgrade is introduced as part of the implementation of a new overall graphic identity for the MOT, which includes a new bilingual logo:



Cloughmore stone on the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

EVENTS

MAY 2011

The **1st Eurodistrict Forum** for a cross-border territorial policy, on "Multimodality in the cross-border context", will take place on **5 May 2011** from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg.

JUNE 2011



The **general assembly** of the MOT will take place at **Reims city hall on 16 June 2011** at the invitation of the Champagne-Ardenne Regional Council, a MOT member for several years. Chaired by Michel Delebarre, it will be preceded on the previous day by a conference on the topic of "**cross-border cooperation: from national strategies to territorial projects**". Jean-Paul Bachy, president of the Champagne-Ardenne Region, will be present at the meeting. Laurent Wauquiez, minister with responsibility for European affairs, is also scheduled to attend.

The **annual event of the Interreg IV A France (Channel) – England programme** will take place on **22 and 23 June 2011** at the Haute-Normandie Regional Council building in **Rouen**.

Further information on events:
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

Housing: an issue at the heart of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project



The France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation extends over 2000 sq. km, has a population of 860,694 and provides 403,341 jobs.

Signed in December 2007, a Charter of Commitment has given practical form to the "first-generation" France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project thanks to close collaboration between the Swiss and French partners. Meeting in Archamps on 17 March, its steering committee drew up a balance sheet of work in progress. Territorial rebalancing with regard to housing and economic activities either side of the border is one of the principal issues, at a time when the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation is facing a demographic

explosion. The objectives of the "second-generation" conurbation project due in 2012 are clearly defined: settle half of the future inhabitants in the centre of the Geneva conurbation and half in the French and Vaud outskirts. The steering committee is also banking on a 30% increase in jobs in the French territory. On 31 March the *Communauté de Communes du Pays de Gex* (Gex district community of municipalities) launched the Ferney-Grand Saconnex strategic

development project, which is presented as the first cross-border experiment aiming to obtain a better distribution of jobs and housing between France and Switzerland. The regional council, the French government and the European Union are expected to support this project.



In this territory 65,000 new residents have already been counted between 2005 and 2010, while the forecasts predicted an increase of 200,000 by 2030.

IN BRIEF

Innovation clusters

To boost cross-border economic cooperation, the **Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis** has launched a platform of innovation clusters in its area. These cooperation programmes, usually on R&D, between businesses in a given sector are substantial economic launch pads.



Puigcerdà cross-border hospital

Work on the Cerdagne hospital resumed early in April for planned opening in July 2012. It had been suspended in March following an administrative problem which held up the payment of 11 million euros expected from the French government. The situation was officially

www.hcerdanya.eu

resolved in April after the opening of a bank account in the name of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) responsible for financing the project and running the joint facility.

EUROPE NEWS

Euroregional Cooperation Grouping (ECG)

A bill on ECGs* was presented at a meeting of the French cabinet on 6 April 2011. Open for signature by the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, "the protocol provides an instrument with equivalent effect to that of the EGTC for use by local authorities in their cross-border cooperation with countries that are not members of the European Union".

**Authorizing approval of protocol No. 3 to the European outline convention on transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities concerning Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (ECGs).*

Cohesion policy

Within the framework of the structural funds, on 1 April the Committee of the Regions in plenary session voted for the introduction of a new intermediate category of regions whose GDP is between 75% and 90% of the EU average GDP. But it opposed penalizing regions whose national governments do not comply with the stability pact, as proposed by the European Commission.

MOT network working group

The MOT network working group on the **personnel of cross-border cooperation organizations** met on 12 April in Paris. In addition to the representatives of two ministries, it was attended by representatives of EGTCs, LCCGs, EEIGs and associations, either established or in the process of forming. It was an opportunity to discuss the results of the questionnaire issued by the MOT in autumn 2010 in liaison with

the DGCL (French Ministry of the Interior), in order to better grasp the practical aspects concerning the recruitment and management of technical team, beyond straightforward application of the legislation. At this meeting it was agreed to ask the MOT network for its opinion on proposals to amend the present legal framework in order to facilitate the employment of the personnel of such organizations.

MOT NEWS

The MOT present at the cross-border workers show

The Groupement Transfrontalier Européen (GTE, European cross-border grouping) organized its eighth cross-border workers show from 14 to 16 April in Annemasse, in cooperation with Le Dauphiné Libéré.

An unmissable rendezvous for French-Swiss border workers, the show aims to provide practical answers for the nearly 150,000 such workers along the whole of this border. The questions covered mainly concern the Swiss job market and the status of the border worker (banking, health insurance, pension, transport, leisure, etc.). At the invitation of the GTE, the MOT ran a stand at the show, giving a broad public the opportunity to find out about cross-border cooperation and the action of the MOT in liaison with the territorial authorities. Visitors were able to compare

their day-to-day reality with the situations on other borders and gain an awareness of the benefits of a joint territory project for the inhabitants. In parallel, talks and workshops were organized. The MOT, represented by its Secretary-General Olivier Denert, had the privilege of starting the discussions with a talk on the issues of cross-border cooperation before an audience including the Chairman of the Haute Savoie department council, Christian Monteil, guest of honour at the show this year, and Christian Dupessey, Mayor of Annemasse and Vice-president of the MOT.



Backed by its 32,000 members, the GTE is engaged in the defence of the rights of border workers. At the centre of concerns this year, the new second-pillar tax system for border workers.

 The eighth cross-border workers show in figures:

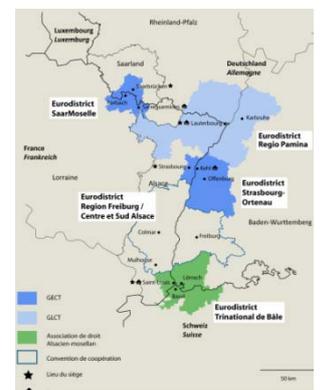
1700 visitors
32 exhibitors
6 French and Swiss institutions
9 talks
2 workshops on research and employment

The French-German Eurodistricts in the place of honour

As part of a French-German seminar organized by the MIOMCTI* and the Prefecture of the Alsace Region, the MOT presented its operation and the issues common to the five French-German Eurodistricts to the delegation of senior officers of the German central and territorial administration.

** Ministry of the interior, overseas departments and territories, territorial authorities and immigration*

The map of the French-German Eurodistricts is available to network members in the Members' space of the MOT website: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu



PRESS REVIEW

▲ Cohesion policy: REGI wants more money for territorial cooperation

Europe Information, 31 March
"According to the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development (REGI), the budget allocated to territorial cooperation (Objective 3 of the structural funds) should be increased in the future to 7% of the EU cohesion policy budget. At present this target is only 2.5% of the budget [...]"

▲ Michel Delebarre against the idea of a performance reserve for the regions

Euractiv, 1 April
"Meeting in Brussels today (1 April), regional leaders are expected to adopt a report that directly contradicts many of the European Commission's ideas for reforming the EU structural funds in the coming years". [...] Michel Delebarre: "Any region must be able to obtain funding in the context of the cohesion policy, as long as it implements projects, development strategies that conform to what is wanted for the future of the EU, which will not be accomplished without the collaboration of the territorial authorities".

www.euractiv.com/fr/politique-regionale/michel-delebarre-contre-lid-de-rve-de-performance-pour-les-gions-interview-50373

▲ All projects are welcome

DNA, 4 April
"From 2010 to 2020, the Basle trinational urban region is organizing the IBA Basel 2020 international architecture exhibition (*Internationale Bauausstellung*). A call for projects has been issued to all the German, French and Swiss participants ready to prepare the common future of the Basle international conurbation together".

▲ Andorra, 28th State of the European Union?

La Clau, 6 April
"The incoming [head of government] Antoni Martí wants to join the European Economic Area. [...] After two years of political crisis and four years of financial difficulties, the country, long enriched by its isolation, now sees the European Union as a life-line".

▲ Pays de Gex: the cross-border road to be replaced by a nature reserve

Le Progrès, 9 April
"On Thursday, Swiss and French authorities celebrated the end of the Mategnin road. Ripped up, then rehabilitated, it will establish a biological corridor between two reserves".

▲ Changes in the 2nd pillar for border workers

La Tribune de Genève, 9 April
"The president of the National Assembly has assured border workers of his support and announced a meeting at the Ministry of Finance. [...] Voted on 29 December 2010, the finance act introduces a completely new tax system for the 2nd and 3rd pillars for cross-border workers. Exempt from tax until now if withdrawn as capital, their occupational pension schemes will now be taxed by France".

▲ Briançon and Suse hospitals now linked by an agreement

Le Dauphiné Libéré, 12 April
"Yesterday morning the representatives of the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur and Piedmont regional health agencies signed a cross-border cooperation agreement. [...] The objective is to improve the accessibility of health care for patients and harmonize the quality of practices for health professionals [...]"

▲ The treatment plant planned for 2013

DNA, 14 April
"In the late afternoon (11.04.11), the principal partners in the construction of a cross-border treatment plant located in Wissembourg signed an agreement there on the river Lauter water quality improvement project [...]"

New publication

The Luxembourg-based foundation Forum EUROPA has just published the results of a multiyear research study conducted by CEPS/INSTEAD on **cross-border residential mobility between Luxembourg and the neighbouring regions**. In recent years, thousands of workers - French, Belgian, German, but also Luxemburger and Portuguese - have left the country to take up residence on the other side of the border, while continuing to work in the Grand-Duchy. The phenomenon may have marked repercussions on day-to-day life (housing, transport, living space).

Information: claudengengler@forum-europa.lu
www.editions.lu/editions-book-462.html

Samuel Carpentier (dir.) **CEPS**
La mobilité résidentielle transfrontalière entre le Luxembourg et ses régions voisines
Préface: Claude Gengler



Collection «FORUM EUROPA»

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éditions SAINT PAUL

CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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38, rue des Bourdonnais
75001 Paris - France
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www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu
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Production: Domitille Ayral, Sophie Valette

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Photos: DR, France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project