

Why do people cross the border between Flanders and northern France?

As part of the TRANSVISITE* Interreg project, nearly 14,000 French and Flemings households were questioned on their reasons for travelling to the other side of the border. This article presents some results of the survey conducted between November 2010 and February 2011.

The study showed that the reasons for going to the other side of the border were the same overall for the French and the Flemings, but that their order of priority was not the same, with sometimes quite marked differences.

The reasons for travelling to the other side of the border

"Shopping is the main reason for the French to travel to Flanders (46%). This is also the case for 42% of Flemings travelling to France. Among the French who go shopping on the other side of the border, 20% travel there to buy clothes, 17% for food and drink, 13% for plants and 11% for cigarettes.

Meanwhile the Flemings who shop in France are looking for clothes or shoes (29%), food products (14%), perfume or jewellery (9%) and cultural products (5%). Other than shopping, the Flemings have many reasons to travel to France: 20% go there for tourism, 10% for professional reasons or studies and 10% for a

clearly identified event or outing. In contrast, almost one in three of the French go to Belgium to "spend some free time there" without necessarily having identified a particular purpose for the visit."

Knowledge of what is available across the border

"The differences in behaviour are also apparent in the way in which people find out about what is available on the other side of the border. Word of mouth - by far the leading means mentioned - operates well in both countries. Nevertheless, in France it seems to take the place of practically every other means of information. In contrast, the Flemings use many other sources: tourist offices, Internet or tourist brochures."

Towards an increase in cross-border flows?

"No doubt if suitable sources of information are provided. [...] 58% of Flemings and 67% of the French think that they would cross the border more if they had more information on what they might find there. In this context, whether French or Belgian, more than two in three would like information via Internet."

How can persons who do not yet cross the border be better informed?

"In France, 46% of them stated that they were prepared to make the trip if they were motivated by suitable information. As far as the Flemings are concerned, 22% of them were in this situation. Internet is apparently the medium to be preferred. It is mentioned by 70% of the French and almost 95% of the Flemings."

[Source: Transvisite survey, CCI Grand Lille, WES]



*The TRANSVISITE project

This Interreg IV project involves a number of French and Belgian partners*. It concerns the introduction of a strategy aimed at promoting cross-border consumption flows, for the purpose of boosting the commercial activities of the cross-border territory extending from the coast to Kortrijk and the south of Lille.

The work is intended to be conducted in three phases up to 2014. The first phase, aimed at better understanding the current cross-border purchasing behaviour, has resulted in this major survey. The second will listen to what the stakeholders in the territory have to say, in order to prepare a cross-border marketing strategy. The last phase will consist in implementing this strategy.

* CCI Grand Lille, CCI Côte d'Opale, Unizo Westhoek, Unizo Zuid-West-Vlaanderen, WES consultants; with support from the Nord-Pas de Calais regional council, West Flanders provincial council and East Flanders provincial council, and technical assistance from the Lille Métropole development and urban planning agencies (ADULM) and the Flanders-Dunkirk region (AGUR).

EVENTS

DECEMBER 2011 -
JANUARY 2012

Urbact Days – Infodays



From mid-December to end-January, URBACT Infodays are being held in a

number of European countries. The objectives of these meetings are to draw the lessons from the implementation of the URBACT programme and from national participation in URBACT, and to present the terms of reference of the third call for URBACT projects. The Infoday in France will take place on **18 December in Paris-Saint Denis**. www.urbact.eu

APRIL 2012

MOT general assembly

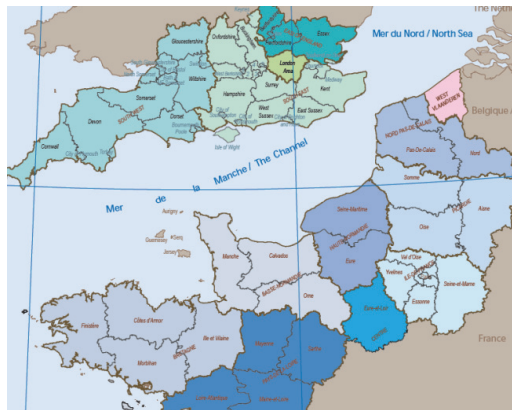


The 2012 general assembly of the MOT will take place on 4 April in Paris.

A meeting of the technicians' platform (restricted to network members) will be organized on this occasion. The platform, which aims to identify the topics of interest of the MOT network, will discuss the working programme for 2012, and particularly the launch of a working group for 2012 on the theme of renewable energies, in liaison with the Eurodistrict Regio Pamina.

www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

Cross-channel projects



The 20 million passengers crossing the Channel by ferry each year make it the busiest sea crossing in the world. It is also an area of economic cooperation, a vector of tourism and cultural exchanges, as well as a vast nature reserve. The cooperation themes are many and supported for example by two Interreg IVA programmes¹, one Interreg IVB programme² and by the “Channel Arc” project³. Focus on two current projects.

CAMIS project and Cross-Channel Forum

On 22 November in Rennes, the Bretagne regional council hosted the 2nd meeting of the Cross-Channel Forum, set up within the framework of the Interreg IVA CAMIS project⁴.

Some hundred French and British stakeholders were able to discuss issues concerning the sustainable and coordinated development of the Channel area.

Launched in October 2009, the project brings together 19 British and French partners. By the end of 2013 it plans:

- the development of tools for sustainable maritime governance: integrated maritime strategy, Cross-channel forum, Channel area resource centre and scientific committee;
- the implementation of

practical actions around four topics: vocational training, innovation and maritime clusters, transport, and maritime safety.

Towards a cross-Channel metro

Also on 22 November, another conference took place, organized by the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regional council in Lille as part of the Interreg IVB RoCK (Regions of Connected Knowledge) project. This project concerns the promotion of cross-border rail services to strengthen economic exchanges between French, English, Belgian, Dutch and German towns. Much on the discussion was on the conclusions of a current study⁵ analyzing the options for using the high-speed line between London and Brussels to set up a “cross-Channel

metro”. This would link the two shores via the international stations of Lille and Calais in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, and Ashford and Ebbsfleet in Kent.

¹ Interreg programmes “France (Manche)-England” and “2 Seas”: www.interreg4a-manche.eu

² Interreg programme “North-West Europe”: www.nweurope.eu

³ Political project based on an informal voluntary network of local authorities. Set up in 2003, it led to the formation of the Channel Arc Assembly in 2005. www.arcmanche.com

⁴ Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy. <http://camis.arcmanche.eu>

⁵ Study conducted by consulting firms Ingerop and Halcrow and the MOT. The conclusions will soon be on line on the project site: www.rock-project.eu

IN BRIEF

Aquitaine-Euskadi

The Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion was launched officially on 12 December in Vitoria, Spain, with the signature of the “Aquitaine-Euskadi” cooperation convention and the statutes for the establishment of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).



Patxi Lopez, president of the Basque government, and Alain Rousset, president of the Aquitaine regional council, on 12 December 2011.

Interalpes - a French-Italian project

The “Interalpes” transalpine intermodal transport project was launched on 21 November in Turin. The partners are the *Conférence des Alpes franco-italiennes* (CAFI), *Transalpine* (committee for the Lyon-Turin European link) and its Italian counterpart *Transpadana*, and the employers’ associations *Medef Rhône-Alpes* (France) and *Confindustria* (Italy). Funded

by the Interreg Alcotra programme, its objective is the development of intermodality in the French-Italian territory, in accordance with existing and future infrastructure and services, transport flows and the regulatory, technological and economic context. Its objectives include a proposal for the establishment of a single French-Italian monitoring unit.

Cross-border business takeovers

On 13 December, during a seminar in Saarbrücken (Germany), the MOT, in partnership with the Eurodistrict SaarMoselle, held its first workshop on setting up a platform to support cross-border business takeovers. Backed by the Caisse des Dépôts, this project has selected the Eurodistrict SaarMoselle as a pilot site. Over the coming years, 15,000 SMEs in this territory (7,500 in Saarland and 7,500 in Lorraine) will be looking for a "successor". In Lorraine this accounts for no less than 284,000 jobs. The problem of "lack of successors" when business owners retire is worrying in border areas, and there are many obstacles (legal, administrative, fiscal, linguistic and cultural), even though a cross-border business takeover gives the new owner a substantial opportunity to gain access to the neighbouring market and expand his/her company's own market.

For further information:

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The MOT publishes its position on the 2014-2020 regulations



Following consultation of its members, the MOT has published its position paper on the cohesion policy regulations drafted by the EC for the 2014-2020 programming period. Here are some extracts:

- The MOT is pleased with the "provisions that make it compulsory to take the territorial cooperation objective into consideration in the partnership contracts (PC)." This change is consistent with the coordination of the PCs across borders, which is supported by France.
- The MOT backs "the importance given to compliance with the principle of multi level governance which entails [...] that each Member State set up a partnership with the representatives of the regional, local and urban authorities and other competent public authorities."
- The MOT backs "the introduction of provisions for

linking the territorial and thematic aspects of the cohesion policy". Nevertheless, "one of the key proposals of the new regulations is the choice of a limited number of thematic objectives that can be funded by the operational programmes. [...] The MOT considers that, in the cross-border context, this provision must be interpreted with great precaution in order to avoid interfering with the newly reinforced territorial cohesion and local development objectives."

- The MOT stresses "the importance of coordination between cross-border cooperation programmes and with other cooperation or regional programmes". "In practice, in the previous periods, the lack of coordination between the neighbouring programmes has prevented the necessary synergies being brought into play."

- The MOT backs the reinforcement of the role of the EGTCs. "These provisions are an important step forward, because they will enable better linkage of European programmes with cross-border territory projects and cooperation strategies."
- Lastly, the MOT stresses "the importance of networking between cooperation programmes and projects. In the previous periods, the lack of networking between the programmes and the projects has prevented comparison of the results obtained and capitalization of good practices. For example, the MOT would like to see the production of guides to good practices and the dissemination of know-how within cross-border cooperation and beyond. For further information: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

Open Days in regions

As part of the Open Days, the Greater Dunkirk council organized a local event on 10 November, on the topic "Building the future of our territories. Stakes and perspectives for the Europe of tomorrow". Jean Peyrony, MOT director-general, spoke at the event. The presentations are on line at: <http://www.communaute-urbaine-dunkerque.fr/fr/domaines-dintervention/construire-lavenir-de-nos-territoires/index.html>

Interview with Michel Delebarre on the EGTC

"The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation concept is no longer experimental. It is now consolidated, irreversible and the dynamic is clearly going upwards" declared Michel Delebarre*, responsible for the preparation of the Committee of the Regions position on the revision of the EGTC regulation. The draft CoR opinion was discussed at the COTER commission meeting on 5

December and its adoption in plenary session is scheduled in February. On this occasion, the CoR published the point of view of Michel Delebarre on these issues. <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DecentralizedDetailTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=61732b71-d91e-4418-957d-d947c78d47ec>

* Former French minister of State, senator and mayor of Dunkirk, president of the CoR COTER commission, president of the MOT.



At a conference on cross-border relations, on 28 November in Budapest, Michel Delebarre received

Hungary's István Pálfi prize for his contribution to regional cooperation, in the presence of Hungarian president Pal Schmitt. <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DecentralizedDetailTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=a07a3ebb-b537-4c55-884a-5800efeeb965>

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Hainaut cross-border park: towards a single mechanism for running it?

La Voix du Nord, 1 December
"The Hainaut cross-border natural park will hold its first meeting tomorrow, with a view to establishing joint governance associating the French and the Walloons."

▲ First political committee meeting yesterday in Strasbourg

Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 29 November
"The first meeting of the Upper Rhine trinational metropolitan region political committee took place yesterday in Strasbourg, chaired by Philippe Richert, president of the regional council. This political committee is 'a new coordination body for political activities in the Upper Rhine, in order to boost the action of the metropolitan region,' stated Philippe Richert."

▲ 'The 240 million euros for the Ceva have been found, it's decided'

Le Messenger, 1 December
"At the heart of a cross-border conurbation that remains to be built, Annemasse is promoting its assets and its projects for a common future. Review of the details with its mayor, Christian Dupessey."

▲ Additional European grants for water

Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 6 December
"Additional European grants have been awarded for the South Palatinate/North Alsace cross-border potable water supply project."

▲ Border workers - In Alsace, one in twelve workers works in Germany or Switzerland

L'Alsace, 3 December
"According to an INSEE survey, more than 63,000 persons domiciled in Alsace are border workers: 34,400 have jobs in Switzerland, where the number of Alsatian border workers is stagnating, and 29,000 work in Germany, where border employment has fallen."

▲ Organizing cross-border cooperation to develop the Cross-border Polycentric Metropolitan Region

Newspress, 5 December
"Lorraine regional council - Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxemburg, and Jean-Pierre Masseret, president of the Lorraine region and current president of the Greater Region, agreed after their meeting today to pursue the approach decided and undertaken in Berlin on 7 July 2011 which gives the Greater Region a higher level of visibility and European competitiveness by organizing it as a Cross-border Polycentric Metropolitan Region."

▲ PACA HSL: general mobilization demanded

L'Avenir Côte d'Azur, 2 Dec.
"[...] Just as fundamental for the Côte d'Azur economic heavyweights: the extension of the HSL towards Italy. 'The Côte d'Azur must not remain a cul de sac', according to D. Estève."

▲ Television: part of the P.-O. deprived of the Catalan channels

L'Indépendant, 7 December
"[...] The time seems long gone now when the inhabitants of the Pyrénées-Orientales could receive the French, southern Catalan and Spanish channels by conventional broadcasting. Since the final switchover to digital terrestrial television (DTT), during the night of 29 to 30 November, there has been a complete shake-up of available channels."

Building bridges between people

Published in September 2011 by the Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Union, this brochure gives an overview of current European territorial cooperation programmes, including the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and the macro-regional strategies. The brochure also covers the history of citizens in Europe who have benefited from this type of cooperation.

To download the brochure from the DG Regio website:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/pdf/brochures/etc_book_lr.pdf

To order a hard copy of the brochure (in French, English or German): regio-info@ec.europa.eu



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