

France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation

Transport at the heart of the territory project

The construction of the Geneva metropolis extends both sides of the border. In Switzerland it involves the territories of the Canton of Geneva and of the District of Nyon, and in France two communities of municipalities in the Ain department and eight in Haute Savoie.

Guy Larmanjat

Ain department council

Vice-president with responsibility for tourism, European and cross-border affairs



Let's remove our borders

"Its geographical location means that, like other French departments, the Ain department is an area of transit between Switzerland and France. But geography alone is not enough to build a common destiny, which first requires shared determination. 'I have a dream'... In this dream, the people of the Ain, Haute-Savoie and the Swiss border cantons are united by joint projects, by removal of borders. A dream? Not that far away from reality, judging by the tireless work of cross-border cooperation bodies such as the Comité Régional Franco-Genevois, the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project or the Lemman Council, which I have been chairing since May 2011. They are today opportunities for French and Swiss elected representatives to meet in order to find joint solutions, whether in spatial planning, transport, housing, the economy, training, health, culture, sport or the environment. The Ain, bordering French-speaking Switzerland and integrated into the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation, is an attractive territory, economically strong and with a growing population. But in reality we are strong together, strong in terms of assets that go across the borders and of which CERN is the most brilliant example. [...]" [Continued on page 3](#)

Cross-border governance has been introduced in order to optimize the planning and operation of this cross-border area.

This construction is manifested in the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project*, whose the charter was signed in 2007 by all the territorial bodies. The strategy of the conurbation plan, which is the spatial strand of the cross-border policies, is based on the close linkage between urban development and public transport systems. Public transport routes must support urban development.

A local cross-border cooperation grouping (LCCG) was established in 2006 to manage the operation of the cross-border transport routes. It brings together all the

authorities concerned by travel issues in the territory: the Rhône-Alpes regional council, the Cantons of Geneva and Vaud, the Ain and Haute Savoie department councils and the border inter-municipal bodies.

In the Ain department, an area extending from Bellegarde-sur-Valserine to Divonneles-Bains is participating in this metropolitan development. To anchor it firmly and permanently in this metropolitan functional perspective, the Ain department council (the inter-urban transport organizing authority) has undertaken the examination of two structuring public transport projects to connect [...] [Continued on page 3.](#)

* Refer to the article at the bottom of page 2.



EVENTS

MARCH-APRIL

- **Interinstitutional conference on the EGTC**
29 March in Brussels
Organized by the Committee of the Regions ; followed by the annual meeting of the EGTC platform.
- **Cross-border workers show**
29, 30 and 31 March 2012 in Annemasse
Organized by the Groupement Transfrontalier Européen (GTE - European cross-border grouping) and the Dauphiné Libéré.
- **MOT general assembly**
4 April in Paris
Chaired by Michel Delebarre, MOT president.

MAY-JUNE

- **MOT working group on "Renewable energies"**
29 and 30 May in Lauterbourg
Coordinated by the Regio Pamina Eurodistrict. Further information in the Members' area of the MOT website.
- **CECICN congress: "Territorial cooperation fostering European integration: Cities and regions linking across borders"**
25 and 26 June 2012 in La Coruña (Spain). The program is online.
Further information and all the other events: <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu>

Questions to **Michel Charrat** Chairman of the Groupement transfrontalier européen (GTE)*

What is the situation of French-Swiss border workers ?

Switzerland is the leading host country for border workers residing in France; according to our estimates, this includes between 170,000 and 200,000 persons, not just French, but also dual nationals, Swiss (more than a quarter of the border workers working in Geneva are Swiss) and international. It is also the leading destination for border workers in Europe (259,000 as of the end of 2011 according to the Swiss federal statistics office, a substantially underestimated number as it does not include international bureaucrats and Swiss citizens, who do not need work permits). The wages and salaries of French-Swiss border workers residing in France total close to 16 billion Swiss francs. The two principal entry corridors from France are in the area of the Basle conurbation and of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation. The reception of these new arrivals raises a number of problems in the

present Swiss political context.

What are the priority issues for the GTE to meet their needs?

The priority issues are:

- **Free choice of health insurance**

At present, all the competencies and the strength of mobilization of the Groupement transfrontalier européen are committed to obtaining a continuation of this freedom of choice within the legislative framework. Specific actions were launched at the congress of our association on 16 March in Archamps.

- **Taxation of the 2nd pillar: condition of application of the law passed in 2011**

We ask for the removal of the condition of indivisibility of capital for a minimum tax rate set at 7.5%.

- **Optional AVS****

For a number of years the GTE has been asking for border workers to have the option of making voluntary contributions to the AVS in the case of early retirement, invalidity, unemployment, etc.



- **Retrocession of unemployment contributions**

Since 1 June 2009 Switzerland no longer retrocedes the debited unemployment contributions in accordance with the bilateral agreements and the application of European law. We ask that a new bilateral agreement now be introduced to allow cross-border workers to fund their benefit scheme in France.

Established in 1963, the GTE is a non-profit association working on the French-Swiss border. Its objective is to achieve better integration of border workers on both sides of the border and to represent and defend their interests. It has 34,000 members and employs 30 persons (reception, legal, social, fiscal, employment and administrative services). The GTE has been a MOT member since 2008.
<http://www.frontalier.org>

* European cross-border grouping

** Assurance Vieillesse et Survivants - Retirement and survivors insurance

Progress for the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project

On 28 June the second-generation conurbation project and the statutes of a new legal and administrative entity, in the form of a Local Cross-border Cooperation Grouping (LCCG), will be signed. The French-Swiss partners have taken a large step forward by giving a legal status to the conurbation project steering committee, which thus becomes a permanent entity in its own right. **Towards the Conurbation Forum: first cross-border consultative body**
From now on the project will be

based on this new legal structure. In particular, the LCCG will be the instrument of the governance which has been at the heart of the discussions and the decisions from the start. To this end, it will be associated with a new cross-border consultative body, the Conurbation Forum, which will give civil society its full place in the construction of the conurbation, for example by issuing opinions and proposals to the LCCG. A call for applications has been issued to form a civil society working group, tasked with drafting a working charter for the

Forum. With the formation of the LCCG and the Conurbation Forum, the Conurbation Project becomes permanent. These two new complementing entities will be inaugurated on 1 January 2013.

Name change for the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project

From 24 March to 27 April, the 915,000 French and Swiss inhabitants of the Geneva region are invited to choose the name of their conurbation at <http://www.choisirnotrenom.com>



A new president for the CECICN

"Cooperation is the key to achieving the objectives of Europe2020",

declared Per Bødker Andersen on 8 March at the meeting of the CECICN* policy bureau in Paris. Deputy mayor of Kolding (Denmark), president of the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) and member of the Committee of the Regions, he was elected president of the CECICN for a two-year term. He succeeds the founding president Xosé Antonio Sanchez Bugallo, former mayor of Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

[Download the press release \(EN\):](#) click here.

[Download the programme \(EN\) of the European Congress of the CECICN on 25 and 26 June:](#) click here.

* *Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks, bringing together the MOT, the RIET, UBC, MedCities, the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns, and Atlantic Arc Cities.*

Committee of the Regions opinion on the EGTC

On 15 February the members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) unanimously adopted the Committee's opinion on the proposal for amendment of regulation 1082/2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) published by the European Commission (EC) in October 2011.

Through its rapporteur, Michel Delebarre, president of the COTER Commission and president of the MOT, the CoR praised the very constructive EC proposal. It takes account of feedback from practical experience with the EGTCs (27 EGTCs in 15 Member States as of 1 January) and the previous opinions of the CoR. For the CoR, this revision of the EGTC regulation should increase



the potential of this European tool. The intention is not to make it a compulsory instrument of cooperation, but rather to enable authorities, who so wish, to get involved in European construction and to do so at all levels through the establishment of a cross-border service of general economic interest (SGEI) or the implementation of EU sector policies.

The recommendations of the CoR contained in this opinion are aimed at encouraging greater use of the EGTC in the

implementation of European policies, clarifying the provisions of the draft regulation to avoid any divergent interpretation by the member States, and affirming the role of the CoR in EGTC follow-up and promotion. The EC proposal on the EGTC is currently being examined by the European Parliament.

<http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc>
[The MOT has published a technical analysis of this opinion, available for its members.](#)

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"[...] CERN, located on the French-Swiss border, which brings together thousands of international researchers, is the source of scientific advances recognised worldwide. That is why the Ain department has set up partnerships with the centre, for example on tourism.

Together, let us remove the borders in order to invent a new development model based on friendship between the peoples around Lake Geneva!"

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[...] this territory effectively with the heart of the conurbation:

- extension of the tramway from the border to the centre of Saint-Genis-Pouilly;
- introduction of a bus rapid transit service on the route serving Ferney-Voltaire.

In parallel with these projects, the department council has initiated a route contract procedure, in partnership with the impacted local authorities. This is intended to set up a mechanism negotiated between

the transport organizing authority (TOA) and the local authorities of the territory served by these transport services, each making commitments within its own areas of responsibility:

- the TOA on the transport project,
- the municipalities and communities of municipalities on the means of encouraging urban density around public transport and station accessibility.

The contract thus enables action on mobility through coordination of urban development and

transport, so that the demand for travel is oriented towards modes of transport which represent an alternative to the private car. By launching a positive and partnership-based drive to optimize the economic and social effectiveness of the investment, the route contract is an operational tool ensuring consistency with public policies, while contributing to the goal of structuring the cross-border metropolitan area.

PRESS REVIEW

▲ The Commission opens the way to better combination of EU funds for the 2014-2020 period

Inforegio News, 14 March

"Following the cohesion policy proposals of 6th October, and to help Member States prepare for the next programming period, the Commission presented on 14 March 2012 the Common Strategic Framework (CSF). It is intended to help set the strategic direction for the next financial planning period (from 2014 to 2020) in Member States and their regions."

▲ A cross-border centre

La Semaine dans le Boulonnais, 14 March

"Opale Link and the association Côte d'Opale Synergie are working to set up a cross-border centre. The idea: establish a single place to help persons who choose to go to the other side of the border they come from."

▲ ETB - How do people move from one country to another?

L'Alsace, 10 March

"Yesterday morning, the ETB (Basle Trinational Eurodistrict) published the results of the 'mobility' project started two years ago. It is a response to a need: better knowledge of the population flows from one country to another, France-Switzerland, Germany-Switzerland, so that it will be possible one day to provide more suitable public transport services. The first practical proposals should follow this autumn."

▲ Cross-Rhine prevention

DNA, 14 March

"For better assessment of the impact of atmospheric emissions from new industrial plants or road infrastructure in the Upper Rhine, the Atmo-IDEE project was launched yesterday in the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict."

▲ The public establishment formed at last!

Le Républicain lorrain, 9 March

"It is another step towards the emergence of a France-Luxemburg cross-border conurbation. Yesterday the decree announcing the formation of the Alzette-Belval Établissement public d'aménagement (EPA - public development establishment) was published in the Journal Officiel."

▲ Employment: should residents be preferred to border workers?

La Tribune de Genève, 24 February

"By declaring that, given equal skills and qualifications, he wants to give preference to the recruitment of Geneva residents, the director of the Geneva university hospitals [HUG] has revived the tensions between Geneva and France."

▲ The slow hatching of borderless management of European river basins

Euractiv, 6 March

"Geographical constraints do not leave them any choice: regions must cooperate. But where water is concerned, territorial rivalries soon interfere with the day-to-day management of this resource."

▲ French mayors try to control housing sprawl

Le Temps, 6 March

"The low level of housing construction in Geneva is alarming Haute-Savoie elected representatives. They want to limit areas zoned for building. When Gabriel Doublet, mayor of Saint-Cergues in Haute-Savoie (30 km from Geneva), learned of the latest housing figures in Geneva, he was dumbfounded. '1020 new units were put on the market in 2011 for 450,000 inhabitants, while my municipality of 3200 souls built 200 in the same year [...]'"

▲ Alpméd

Le Journal des Entreprises, 2 March

"Since 2009 the Chambers of commerce and industry of the Alpes Méditerranée Euroregion have reinforced cooperation between their seven regional consular networks."

Latest publications from DG Regio



Following the adoption by the European Commission of the legislative proposals that will define the EU cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period, the DG Regio website has made a large number of information documents available on line, including:

- General presentation of the proposals (PowerPoint)
- Brochure: "Cohesion policy 2014-2020: Investing in growth and jobs"
- Factsheets (Measuring performance: country factsheets; Simplifying Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020; Integrated Sustainable Urban Development; Community-led Local Development, etc.)

For further information and to download these documents:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/proposals_2014_2020_en.cfm

Further information on the common strategic framework, a draft of which has just been presented:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

Note: EU institutions are invited to submit their positions on the main priorities of this common strategic framework. The framework will be finalized within three months following the adoption of the proposed legislative package on 6 October 2011.

CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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