

The Mont-Blanc area

Over the last twenty years, the Mont-Blanc area has initiated a number of actions for sustainable development of the territory, a link between the Aosta valley (IT), the Valais (CH) and the Pays de Savoie (FR). In order to move forward in this cooperation the Mont Blanc cross-border conference decided on 18 December 2012 to form a European grouping of territorial cooperation.

Following a first sustainable development plan for the Mont-Blanc area, a decision-making aid produced in 2005, an integrated cross-border plan (PIT) was prepared within the framework of the ALCOTRA programme*. Twelve million euros are currently being invested up to 2013 on six priority cross-border topics: environmental management of the mountain area, renewable energies, public transport, hiking, environmental education and local

products. In order to ensure the continuation of the actions and be recognised as central partner in the cooperation, the Mont-Blanc area now intends to establish its legal status and introduce effective governance instruments. In practical terms, the preparation of a French-Italian-Swiss management plan is one of the major objectives. Another is to provide a legal instrument for the cooperation organisations, in the form of an EGTC, in order to be able to amplify actions and optimise resources in the service of the sustainable development of this "outstanding" area.

** A specific feature of the ALCOTRA programme is the definition of three types of project: simple projects, strategic projects and PITs. On the French-Italian border, seven PITs define multi-topic project packages with the common objective of economic and social development for a territory of a specifically cross-border nature.*



National consultation to prepare 2014-2020

A national consultation was launched by the DATAR¹ on 20 December 2012 in the context of the programming of European funds for 2014-2020 and of the drafting of the national partnership agreement² for France. The objective is to involve the competent public authorities along with economic, social and civil society stakeholders. Three hundred partners have been invited to express their opinions before the end of January through a "consultation document", in order to analyse the strategic issues and the central topics

of the forthcoming partnership agreement. The MOT network has contributed³ actively to this consultation in order to highlight cross-border issues⁴. In this process, a major advance supported by the MOT is that cross-border cooperation now appears as a priority, both in the thematic objectives and in the cross-cutting territorial issues. In April and May 2013, it will be the turn of the general public to express its opinions, on the website www.partenariat20142020.fr. Thematic and territorial working seminars will be

organised, leading up to a final reporting seminar in July.

- 1 And the national partnership agreement preparation body, in which the MOT participates.
- 2 The partnership agreement is a national document which defines the strategic guidelines for the allocation of the funds (for example within the framework of the Interreg programmes).
- 3 Available soon on the MOT website.
- 4 Another major contribution by the MOT on these issues: the publication of a methodological guidebook "Articulate cohesion policy, governance structures and cross-border territorial approaches" (refer to the article on page 3).

EVENTS

MOT AGM and conference

The Assembly General Meeting of the MOT will take place on 25 April 2013 in Strasbourg, at the invitation of the Communauté urbaine de Strasbourg, a member of the MOT network.

On 24 April, as each year on the eve of the GA, a conference will be organised, on the topic: "2014-2020 - towards cross-border cooperation at the service of the citizens".

FEBRUARY-MARCH

Seminar "European cohesion policy 2014-2020", on 8 February in Figueres, round table: "Cross-border territories challenges for 2014-2020"

Annual meeting of the Committee of the Regions EGTC Platform, on 25 February 2013 in Brussels

Annual event of the INTERREG IVA 2 Seas Programme, on 14 and 15 March 2013 in Rotterdam

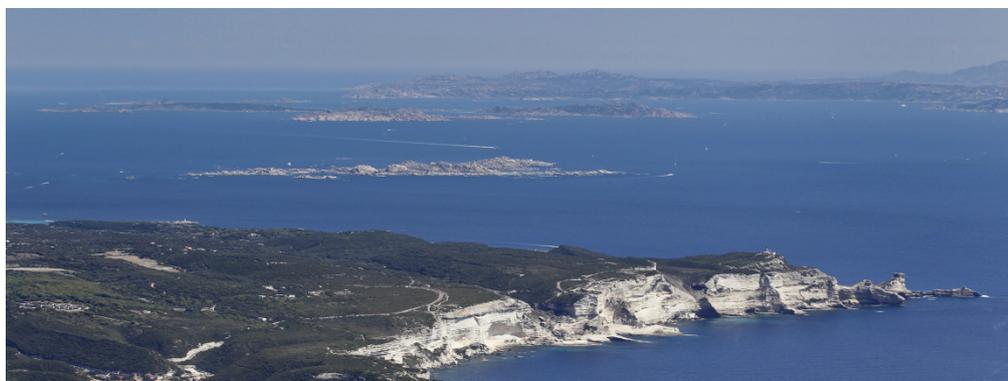
Seminar on the metropolitan poles and cross-border issues, on 19 March in Metz

4th Cross-Channel Forum, on 20 March 2013 in Caen

Conference of the TRION project: "For successful energy performance of buildings: what economic and social solutions in the Upper Rhine?" on 21 March 2013 in Colmar

Further information:
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

First EGTC for a cross-border international marine park



On 7 December 2012, the Bouches de Bonifacio international marine park adopted the form of an EGTC, marking the establishment of the first structure of this type for the implementation of EU environmental policies at cross-border level, with implications for maritime transport and the international law of the sea. The new entity is introduced twenty years after the signing of the French-Italian protocol defining the procedures for implementing this major project.

On this occasion, the presidents of the Corsica environment office* and the La Maddalena archipelago national park signed the European convention and the founding statutes of the EGTC. The body will be responsible for promoting the protection, the management and the joint development of

the natural and cultural resources of the Bouches de Bonifacio, in order to implement a joint sustainable development strategy for this cooperation area.

The approach is to consider the Bouches de Bonifacio from now on as a "morpho-functional unit" to facilitate the understanding of certain processes and define more appropriate management in order to face up to large-scale issues that are not bound by national borders.

The core task of the EGTC will be to encourage the emergence of joint solutions for management issues that are difficult to resolve at the level of each protected marine area, such as those relating to tourist flows (excessive visitor numbers, impact of pleasure boat anchors, recreational sea fishing, etc.).

In addition, the reinforcement of international cooperation will provide tools with the capacity to deal with issues relating to scientific knowledge, for example with respect to fishery resources.

Lastly, the EGTC will work for international recognition of the ecological specificity of the Bouches de Bonifacio, for example in the context of an application for listing of the Bouches de Bonifacio as a UNESCO world heritage site and of follow-up to the reinforcement of maritime security in this international strait.

** Manager of the Tre Padule de Suartone nature reserve, the Cerbicale islands nature reserve, the Bouches de Bonifacio nature reserve and the land owned by the Conservatoire du littoral (the French coastal conservancy) along its shores.*

Barcelona-Perpignan by HST

On 9 January, the high-speed rail line linking the Catalan capital Barcelona and Perpignan in France started operation. It is a major advance for encouraging trade and mobility within the Catalan cross-border area and more broadly at European level. According to Spanish prime minister Mariano Rajoy, this line "opens the door of Europe to Spain".

Interdisciplinary conference

An interdisciplinary conference on the topic "Do borders still have any meaning?" was held from 24 to 26 January in Marseille, organised by the Institut Catholique de la Méditerranée.

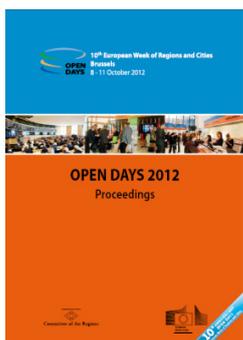
Many cooperation partners, academics and researchers came together to examine the "meaning of the action and of the undertaking of a cooperation process or project" in the context of globalisation: "Why

must common values be shared in order for a cooperation process to be successful and in order to build a common destiny in a cross-border context?" The conference highlighted the importance of intercultural dialogue and of transfers of knowledge and know-how in European territorial cooperation. Jean-Peyrony, MOT director-general, gave a presentation on the topic of "borders and territorial cohesion".



EUROPE NEWS

"Open Days 2012" brochure



The proceedings of the 10th European Week of Regions and Cities have been published. They include a summary of the main workshops organised in Brussels.

The MOT organised workshop 09A15 "Building cross-border territories by using tools for integrated local development: good practices and future developments in the 2014-2020 period", held on 9 October.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2012/doc/cdr_opendays_conclusions_2012.pdf

MOT NEWS

Study on ALCOTRA programme knowledge management

The conference reporting on a MOT study on the European ALCOTRA French-Italian territorial cooperation programme took place on 24 January in Marseille, attended by Joël Giraud, vice-president of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) regional council, and Gilles Barsacq, PACA general secretary for regional affairs.



The PACA regional council and the Alpes de Haute-Provence, Hautes-Alpes and Alpes-Maritimes department councils commissioned from MOT a study on knowledge management for ALCOTRA projects*, conducted between August 2012 and January 2013.

The aim of the work was to draw up a qualitative assessment of the projects and to manage the experience obtained after more than twenty years of the European programme, with a view to the new 2014-2020 programming period.

The study stressed the lessons learned from the projects and the networking of the partners

involved. This approach, original in the context of a European programme, demonstrated its high added value, in particular through the evaluation of real-life cross-border experiences and the importance of the meetings between the partners in the field.

A number of actions were conducted: quantitative analyses of the projects; a survey answered by 36 project stakeholders; interviews with institutional partners of the programme; and the organisation of three knowledge management seminars (9 November 2012 in Digne-les-Bains, 15 November 2012 in Gap

and 20 November 2012 in Nice), attended by a total of more than 100 people.

At the reporting conference on 24 January, Joël Giraud emphasised that the territorial facilitation network of the programme, and the knowledge management as promoted in the context of the study, are very important for supporting the work of the projects.

The summary and the conclusions of the study are available on the MOT website, only for Members.

[The video of the seminar](#)

* In Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur.

The MOT publishes a "methodological guidebook"

In a dynamic context of reform - redefinition of cross-border policy and decentralisation process in France, preparation of the 2014-2020 programmes at European level - the MOT has produced a methodological guidebook aimed at improving articulation between cohesion policy, governance structures and cross-border territorial approaches.

The final version of this document is available on the MOT website*. The guide is intended primarily for local authorities, government departments, European

institutions and programmes and, more widely, all stakeholders in cross-border cooperation. It provides a diagnosis of cooperation on all French borders, a general cross-cutting diagnosis, and a series of recommendations aimed at improving the implementation framework for cross-border cooperation. This work was carried out by the MOT as part of a study co-funded by the Europ'Act programme. It is the product of eighteen months of investigations and fieldwork, based on nearly 75 interviews

with the major stakeholders in cross-border cooperation.

* www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

The complete guide in French can be obtained by [clicking here](#).

You can also obtain:

- in English: [short version](#) - [summary](#)

- in Italian: [summary](#)

- in French: [short version](#) - [summary](#)



Study co-funded by the European Union. Europe is committed in France with the European Regional Development Fund.



PRESS REVIEW

▲ Cohesion policy: the EP reiterates its determination to maintain funding "at its current level"

Europe Information Service, 16 January

"In an own-initiative report adopted during the European Parliament's plenary session in Strasbourg on 15 January, MEPs reiterated that the current financing levels for the cohesion policy budget after 2013 must at the very least be maintained. They have held this position for over two years now, but have so far failed to convince the Council of Ministers. For MEPs, this level of support is needed to be able to assist the regions throughout the Union. In the same report, they stressed the importance of multilevel governance, i.e. the involvement of the different levels of government in cohesion policy."

▲ A border ran through it

Le Monde Magazine, 29 December

"1993-2013. On January 1st, free movement in Europe [was] 20 years old. How has this opening-up changed life on French borders? From Nord-Pas-de-Calais to Hendaye, via Doubs and the Alps, 2,889 kilometres of a road movie meeting those who live at the edges."

▲ Foot on the accelerator in Esch-Belval

Le Républicain lorrain, 19 January

"The Alzette-Belval Eco-Cité project is entering an operational phase with the awarding of a grant to launch the engineering studies. 'This will be no ordinary eco-conurbation. It is a high-level project. We are speeding things up in order to get to the heart of the matter by positioning it within the financial framework of the "Grand Emprunt" national investment loan.'"

▲ Quattropole is looking towards 2030

Le Moniteur, 11 January

"Greater Region - The mayors and representatives of Saarbrücken, Trier and Luxembourg, invited by Metz city council at the end of November, have plotted the guidelines of the Quattropole cross-border network. The four cities share a determination to boost the attractiveness of their centres and are adapting their forecasting tools to different situations."

▲ New border

Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 17 January

"What will the banks of the Rhine be like in ten years? Kehl and Strasbourg have launched an urban planning competition in order to consider together the redevelopment of their former customs areas. The jury meets today. Redevelopment of the banks, approaches to the future bridge for trams, pedestrians and cyclists, areas alongside the future tram line D to Kehl, housing, major cultural facilities, etc."

▲ Celebrating 50 years of the Élysée Treaty

L'Alsace, 20 January

"Mulhouse city council and the Université Populaire have built a programme around the founding act of French-German friendship. For councillor Christiane Eckert, the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Élysée Treaty - setting the seal on French-German reconciliation on 22 January 1963 - was considered evident by the council..."

▲ A French-Genevan cross-border agreement on water management

Journal des Communes, 1 January

"Water is a shared resource at the level of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation. For day-to-day management of this common asset, fourteen representatives of the Swiss and French authorities have signed a cross-border memorandum of understanding on the management of the water and the aquatic environments of Greater Geneva."

▲ A national park in Chukotka, a Russian-American project around the Bering Strait

AFP, 17 January

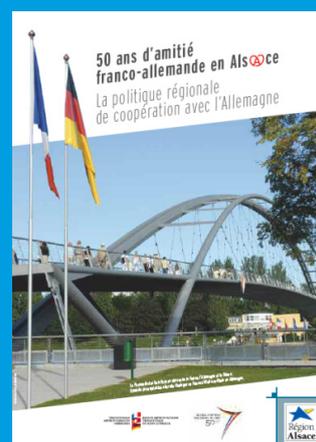
"On Thursday, Russia established a new national park in the Chukotka region (extreme North-East) which will be part of a Russian-American protected area either side of the Bering Strait, a project conceived twenty years ago by Mikhail Gorbachev."

50 years of French-German friendship in Alsace

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty and the French-German year 2012-2013, the Alsace Region has published a brochure illustrating the major aspects of its cooperation policy with Germany and the many French-German projects in a number of fields.

"Because of its geographical situation, Alsace is a natural partner in cross-border cooperation with the neighbouring Länder, Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate. Within the favoured area formed by the Upper Rhine—in association with north-western Switzerland—the Alsace Region is working with its partners towards the integration of this border area. The Alsace Region invites you to discover its ambitions, its undertakings and its projects in favour of cross-border cooperation in a French-German regional brochure," declared Philippe Richert, president of the Alsace Regional Council and former minister, on the occasion of this publication.

<http://www.region-alsace.eu/actualite/la-region-alsace-celebre-le-50eme-anniversaire-du-traite-de-leysee>



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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