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Alzette Belval: an EGTC to facilitate cooperation on a rapidly changing cross-border sector

On the Luxemburg side, the Alzette-Belval project involves the redevelopment of a former abandoned industrial site as a new urban district between Esch-sur-Alzette and Sanem. Some €2bn in public and private investment is funding a development plan providing an urban mix of business activity and housing. The creation of 20,000 jobs and the arrival of 5,000 new inhabitants are forecast. The University of Luxemburg is currently transferring to the site, planning to accommodate 7000 students.

On the French side, an Etablissement Public d'Aménagement (public development corporation) was established in 2012. An effective development body, following the recognition of the Alzette Belval Operation of National Interest (ONI) in 2009, its members include the French state and local and territorial authorities. The development plan provides for the investment of €300m over twenty years, with the construction of 8600 housing units. It will also start up the projects under the Ecocité label obtained in 2009 by the French and Luxemburg municipalities.

Consideration of the two development bodies clearly identifies the devolved role accepted by the EGTC of providing the necessary consistency in the implementation of projects on either side of the France-Luxemburg border.

The EGTC is consequently clearly positioned as a territorial governance body to ensure the consistency of the strategic actions (infrastructure, economic development, health, etc.) initiated, but also as a local development body to support the implementation of local projects (footpaths, cycle trails, promotion of tourism, etc.) which contribute to the quality of life of a population that is already, in practice, cross-border.

An EGTC for Alzette-Belval

The Alzette-Belval European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation was formed on 8 March on the France-Luxemburg border, under the co-presidency of the prefect of the Lorraine region and the Luxemburg minister of sustainable development and infrastructure. The EGTC has recently joined the MOT network.

The territory generally known as Alzette Belval encompasses the eight municipalities of the Communauté de communes du pays haut val d'Alzette (upper Alzette valley community of municipalities), in the Moselle and Meurthe-et-Moselle departments), and the four Luxemburg municipalities of Esch-sur-Alzette, Mondercange, Sanem and Schifflange. It covers 170 sq. km and has about 90,000 inhabitants on both sides of the border.

After living through the rise of the metalworking and steelmaking industry and its more recent decline, the territory has undertaken its restructuring. The various municipalities making up this cross-border facilities and services area share a common past and intend to ensure consistent development.

In this context, the establishment of the EGTC is the result of a process undertaken since 2008, marking the shared determination of the two

governments and the local and regional authorities of the territory to introduce a permanent instrument for strengthening the cross-border partnership.

The first work priorities are the preparation of a cross-border urban mobility plan, the holding of issue-based discussions on spatial planning on the scale of the cross-border territory (housing and services, etc.) and, in the longer term, the drafting of a strategic planning document covering the cross-border conurbation.

Parity is stipulated for the composition of the EGTC assembly, with 16 votes for the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg and 16 votes for the French part. A rotating presidency has been set up.

At present, the statutes of the EGTC do not provide for contracting authority for procuring works or services, except for studies on mobility, the leading issue for this territory and consequently the first priority of the grouping.



The Alzette-Belval site, as seen from France

EVENTS

JULY

20 years of the European Consumer Centre, 1 July, Strasbourg

First French-German conference on energy, 2 July, Paris

European Border Studies Conference: Mapping Conceptual Change in Thinking European Borders, 3 to 5 July, Bergamo (Italy)

50th Regional science conference: Culture, heritage and knowledge, 8 to 11 July, Mons (Belgium) – with a special session on borders: The border and the process of acquiring heritage status: paradoxes and strategies.

MOT AUTUMN EVENTS

Five seminars on cross-border operational arrangements

Between September and December 2013 on the French borders.

OPEN DAYS - Workshop on "Territorial cooperation and the single market – How to generate tangible added value for the citizens", 9 October, Brussels.

Organised by the CECICN, the workshop (Code O9B02) will be followed by a joint networking event with the Committee of the Regions EGTC Platform workshop.

Seminar on Businesses and cross-border economic development, last quarter of 2013.

Further information and other events at www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

The AGAPE is 20 years old



To mark its 20 years, the AGAPE (northern Lorraine urban planning and sustainable development agency) organised a series of events during the spring of 2013 highlighting the Lorraine Pays-Haut area with the aim of getting to know the territories and the population, including a concluding conference on "Cross-border cooperation: From the spirit to the letter - 20 years in retro-prospective".

Established in 1993 as an urban planning and housing monitoring unit, the AGAPE is the product of the initial political determination of the elected representatives of the Longwy conurbation to move beyond industrial pessimism and give themselves the means to build a future. A future that had to be planned in cross-border terms, as illustrated by various examples.

In the mid-1990s, after joining the monitoring unit, the Belgian and Luxembourg

municipalities of the European Development Centre (PED) wanted to form an ad hoc structure, the PED Cross-border Association. As the implementing arm of the association, the AGAPE produced the PED's conurbation plan and the conurbation atlas, and backed substantial projects such as the Point Triple (business park at the confluence of the three borders).

In addition, through its prospective analyses, in particular of cross-border flows, the AGAPE has contributed to preparing the northern Lorraine territories for the impact related to the unquestionable dynamism of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. The agency had predicted the growth in cross-border workers observed today, and the issues in terms of mobility, attractiveness, economic balances and governance.

Lastly, through its understanding of Luxembourg's strategy concerning the redevelopment of the abandoned industrial sites in the south of the country, the AGAPE revealed the potential of the Belval project and contributed to the emergence of the Alzette-Belval sector, now organised as an EGTC, through its body of relevant work: Alzette 2015 scheme, land study, Alzette-Belval ONI prefiguration study (refer to the article on page 1).

Now, as demonstrated by the conference, the AGAPE is seeking to broaden the view of cross-border matters at the Greater Region level, gaining an understanding of the future of northern Lorraine with regard to Luxembourg perspectives but also those of Belgium and Germany, in order to meet the challenges facing the Pays-Haut between now and 2035.

<http://www.agape-ped.org>

The MOT network pays homage to Pierre Mauroy

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the death of Pierre Mauroy. He was a major architect of decentralisation, of the construction of Europe and of cross-border cooperation. He was also a great president for the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière from 2001 to

2008, and subsequently continued to provide guidance for it as honorary president. We were honoured to work with him. A major figure has left us.

Pierre Mauroy at the Rencontres européennes de Lille, organised by the MOT in November 2007.



"Renewable Energies" Working Group

On 27 June, the Working Group of the MOT network on cross-border cooperation on renewable energy met in Paris (in the premises of the DATAR) in the presence of DG REGIO and the DATAR. The participants were able to review cross-border cooperation issues in the field, discuss their approaches to programming and territorial planning and determine their priorities in this rapidly developing field.

Coordination between countries on cross-border monitoring

On the initiative of the DATAR, within the framework of the [Observatoire des Territoires](#) (territory monitoring unit) and following a [study conducted by the MOT and the FNAU on the statistical monitoring of cross-border territories](#), a meeting took place on 29 May in Paris to set up a cross-border monitoring strategy committee.

The issue is to meet the need for coordination of monitoring procedures with the countries bordering France. Alongside the DATAR, the meeting was attended by representatives of Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg and Italy. The meeting:

- confirmed the shared interest of the neighbouring states in the approach,
- pre-validated the major topics (employment, cross-border workers, etc.),
- discussed a joint organisation (cross-border strategy committee, technical group and operators, etc.).

European meeting on cross-border natural areas

On 4, 5 and 6 June the [Meuse-Schwalme-Nette cross-border nature park on the German-Dutch border](#) hosted the annual meeting of European cross-border natural areas, co-organised with the [Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe \(EUROPARC\)](#).



One of the priorities for EUROPARC for many years has been cross-border cooperation between protected natural areas in order to encourage joint management of the natural heritage across borders. For this purpose, in 2003 EUROPARC set up the Transboundary Parks programme.

Transboundary Parks is the name of the certificate delivered to natural areas that have reached a high level of cross-border cooperation. The candidate parks undergo a rigorous assessment by European experts based on compliance with cooperation criteria defined by EUROPARC. The criteria cover aspects of cooperation such as the legal

bases, funding, the strategic vision, scientific research, the management of natural sites, ecological corridors, tourism and communication.

Once a year the Transparcnet meeting brings together dozens of representatives of cross-border protected natural areas in Europe, most of them certified under the Transboundary Parks label. This meeting is an opportunity for sharing experiences between the parks. For example, this year workshops ranged from taking cultural differences into account for working on a cross-border basis all the way to the adaptation to climate change.

[The Hainaut cross-border nature park, composed of the](#)

[Scarpe-Escaut regional nature park \(France\) and the Plaines de l'Escaut nature park \(Belgium\)](#), is in the middle of the application process for a Transboundary Park certification. This French-Belgian nature park has been chosen by EUROPARC to host the next Transparcnet meeting in June 2014, a decision based in part on the determination to expand the network of cross-border natural areas, which has developed mainly on the borders of central and northern Europe, on the French and Belgian borders.

www.europarc.org/what-we-do/transboundary-parks

European agreement on the revision of the EGTC regulation

The Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission reached agreement on 27 May in Brussels on the text of the new EGTC regulation. The improvements introduced by the new regulation concern:

• **EGTC formation - tacit approval:** an application to form an EGTC will be considered approved tacitly six months after submission in the absence of

objection by the national authorities. Formal approval will nevertheless be required in the Member State where the EGTC has its registered office. The main document to be approved will be the convention (without the statutes). Transitional arrangements will be introduced for EGTCs in the process of approval before the adoption of the new regulation.

• **EGTC personnel:** The new regulation will clarify the legal situation of the personnel of EGTCs. The members will be able to choose between the law of the country where the registered office of the EGTC is located, the law of the country where the personnel works or the national law of the worker's country. The new regulation provides for a specific clause for public-sector workers.

• **The partnership:** The EGTC will be open to all public undertakings providing public services (economic services of general interest), including those governed by private law. Provisions have been added concerning participation by members belonging to third countries.

[Further information](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ The Eurocité wants a tram-train for its 20th anniversary

Le Journal du Pays basque, 14 June

"The studies on a 'tram-train' between Bayonne and Donostia commissioned by the Basque Eurocité were 'completed at least two years ago'. Having neither the competencies nor the funding to go any further, according to Jean Grenet, president of the Basque-Coast-Adour conurbation (Acba), the cross-border body is now urging the competent authorities, i.e. the AOTs (transport organising authorities), to take over the project and at last make some progress on it. This is the purpose of an 'open letter' co-signed by the representatives of its five members* addressed to the Spanish government, the government of the Basque autonomous community (CAB) and the Aquitaine regional council. The formal letter was presented to the press yesterday, in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Basque Eurocité. Which, considering that it has done its share of the work, hopes in a way to get a 'tram-train' for its birthday. In service in 2017

The name has already been chosen: 'Eurocité Express'. The in-service date also: 2017. 'By then there will no longer be the technical obstacle of the different track gauges', pleads Mr Grenet. Just one thing is still lacking: 'political determination'."

* Jean Grenet, president of the Acba; Martin Garitano, diputado general of Gipuzkoa; Michel Hiriart, president of the Agglomération Sud Pays Basque; Jean-Baptiste Sallaberry, president of the consortium Bidasoa-Txingudi; Juan Karlos Izagirre, mayor of Donostia.

▲ The new status of the metropolitan areas voted by the Senate

Acteurs publics, 5 June

"Cities or groupings of municipalities with more than 400,000 inhabitants, located in an urban area with more than 650,000 inhabitants, will be able to choose to become metropolitan areas."

▲ Structural funds: agreement on 90% of the clauses

Europe Information Service, 14 June

"Change of ambience in the negotiations on the European structural funds. [...] A change that 'has improved the atmosphere in which we are working'. [...] According to Lambert Van Nistelrooij, agreement has now been reached on 90% of the clauses. Most of what remains to be settled are financial issues, such as co-funding rates, payment of pre-financing, or capping of aids."

▲ Report on CROSS-BORDER MOBILITIES

Special report - Ville et Transports Magazine, 23 May

With examples from France-Geneva, Strasbourg-Kehl and a technical article by Olivier Denert and Françoise Schneider-Français (MOT): "How are the organising authorities organised on either side of borders?"

▲ Germany is demanding taxes from Alsace retirees

Le Monde, 2 June

"50,000 former cross-border workers are concerned by a change in the rules on the other side of the Rhine. Taxation by the German tax authorities of the pensions paid to French former cross-border workers in Germany is poisoning the life of 50,000 retirees, mainly in Alsace, who are receiving tax demands for arrears over several years, sometimes amounting to several thousand euros."

▲ How far will they go?

La Tribune de Genève, 13 June

"How many kilometres will they go to find a place to live? Forced out by the shortage and by the high rents, increasing numbers of Genevans are moving out of the territory. This exodus is not new, but it is growing, taking new forms, and previously unsuspected consequences are becoming perceptible."

▲ The first European nature park is born between France and Italy

La Provence, 15 June

"The birth certificate was signed in Tende between the Parc national du Mercantour and the Parco naturale delle Alpi marittime. [...] For thirty years the two parks have understood their interest in joining forces to form a single entity [...]. Since 6 June the two parks have been linked by an EGTC."

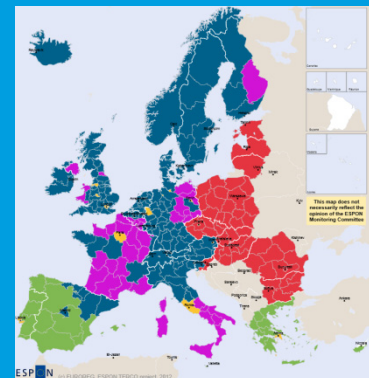
ESPON programme analyses of European territorial cooperation

ESPON has recently published a number of documents and maps highlighting the role of territorial cooperation programmes in Europe, in particular as levers of the development of territorial potential under-exploited at present, but also as vectors for the improvement of competitiveness in both economic and employment terms.

The analyses produced also show the broad variety of territorial cooperation topics, with a large disparity between the "old" and more recent Member States.

Various maps provide a view, region by region, of the strength of the different types of cooperation and the locations of the partners.

Download the documents and maps:
http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Publications



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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