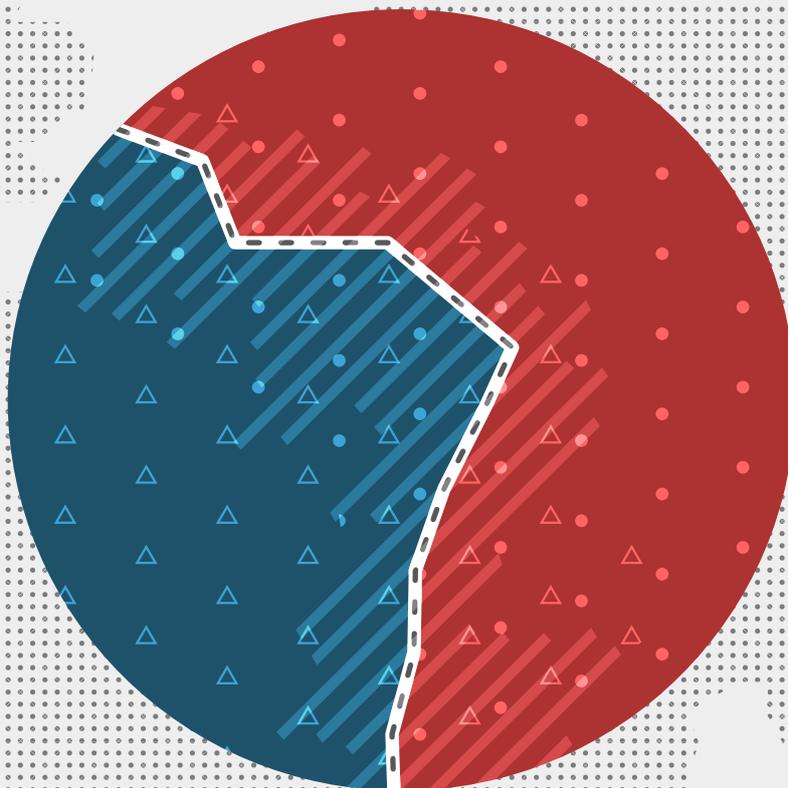


France-Germany cross-border observation at the heart of Europe



Bundesministerium
des Innern, für Bau
und Heimat



Bundesinstitut
für Bau-, Stadt- und
Raumforschung
im Bundesamt für Bauwesen
und Raumordnung





Editorial



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For reinforced cross-border observation

On 22 January 1963, Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer signed the Elysée Treaty, sealing reconciliation between France and Germany. We reaffirm this commitment today. Among many fields of cooperation, cross-border development is one of the priorities of the new Treaty. Far from being peripheral, border regions have proven to be a successful laboratory of European integration and territorial cohesion. In a context of growing Euroscepticism, Germany and France can and will play an essential role in enhancing the potential of border territories.

Efficient public policies for successful cross-border integration require in-depth knowledge of the territory. France and Germany share 450 km of common boundary. Tens of thousands of people cross the border each day, transforming border regions into functional areas.

“Our shared vision for European integration demands further coordination between France and Germany [...]. Let’s unite our efforts!”

However, they still face challenges in terms of access to infrastructure, services and the job market. Detailed and ongoing observation is crucial for the conception and implementation of cross-border projects that improve the daily lives of inhabitants and businesses, and for local authorities to build a common knowledge and vision for the cross-border territory.

France and Germany have undertaken initiatives to this end and are playing a pioneering role on the topic of cross-border monitoring. The launching of the Cross-border Strategic Committee by the CGET¹ and the MOT² on French borders, and the MORO³ project led by the BBSR⁴ in Germany represent significant steps towards harmonisation of cross-border statistics. By providing this impetus and involving their neighbours in the process, both countries are also helping to create the conditions for Europe-wide improvement of cross-border observation, especially since the European Commission itself has taken promising initiatives to boost growth and cohesion in EU border regions.

This is just a beginning. Our shared vision for European integration demands further coordination between France, Germany and all willing countries, to overcome the remaining common challenges and develop cross-border territorial monitoring in the long-run. Let’s unite our efforts!

¹ General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET)

² Transfrontier Operational Mission (MOT)

³ Pilot project in spatial planning

⁴ Federal Institute for Research on Building Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR)

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Introduction

Why cross-border statistical observation?

After having suffered for a long time from a low level of attention from central governments, cross-border territories are increasingly taking their place at the heart of national and European development processes. For a long time considered as margins or dead ends, cross-border territories have been observed from a national perspective, considering a territory that stops at the national boundary, as if nothing existed on the other side.

Cross-border territories still feed into many national mental projections and preconceptions which make the development of genuine cross-border projects complicated. Monitoring these areas is therefore particularly necessary for the implementation of joint sector and spatial planning policies in these territories.

From this operational perspective, the observation of cross-border territories has its background in the need to know and understand the workings of these atypical spaces, located on the edges of national systems and within which the presence of a border generates all sorts of differentials: regulations and laws, taxation, economic and employment processes, cultures, etc.

Cross-border territorial strategies cannot be devised based on intuitions only. They require tangible information which should be built up across the observation processes.

WHY MONITOR CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES?

- As evidence supporting the pertinence to ensure their development and governance.
- To highlight their specific features, their potentials and their needs so as to take more effective action within them at the different territorial levels.
- To compare them with other territories in order to assess the equity of the public policies applied to them (handicaps of cross-border territories compared with others).

What is or should be observed? Quantitative and qualitative observation

Free movement allowed by European integration leads to the emergence of cross-border functional territories. Their institutionalisation, in the form of cross-border governance structures (such as EGTCs⁵) involving local authorities on both sides of the border, is increasingly perceived as a necessity by political and socioeconomic stakeholders, so as to design appropriate policies to support integration.

The observation of cross-border territories should be first of all quantitative: it is based on statistical systems, collection procedures and national indicators; yet, fixed within their national territories, these systems too often neglect cross-border flows, even though such flows outline new functional spaces.

Three major categories of objects can be measured:

- Population volumes on either side of the border, with the potential to be combined, allowing a critical mass to be reached for markets and cross-border public services, and to achieve the territories' potential, if the obstacles linked with the border are removed.
- Different socio-economic characteristics on either side of the border⁶, and gradients likely to generate cross-border flows.
- Material and countable cross-border flows which irrigate the cross-border territories⁷.

The observation must also be qualitative: analysis of cooperation procedures, multi-criterion analysis of cross-border projects and issues, analysis of political, administrative and cultural systems which meet at the border and which have to be reconciled.

⁵ European grouping of territorial cooperation

⁶ Demographic structure, economy, employment, quality of life and housing, amenities, property prices, fiscal and social conditions, etc.

⁷ Workers, students, residents, patients, tourists, financial flows, etc.

Part 1 – Towards multi-level observation of cross-border territories

1.1 At local level

The purpose of cooperation is to create the conditions for socioeconomic stakeholders to achieve the potential of these territories, reducing the negative impacts of borders, to develop services for the benefit of cross-border populations, and a shared vision of their common future; observation is a prerequisite, as for any type of territory, in order to provide a common understanding of the issues. A rich variety of approaches has been developed to this end over more than twenty years in the cross-border territories.

Conurbations, nature parks, Euroregions, sea basins are among the types of territory which, on the basis of observation, should be able to implement cross-border development strategies within the framework of the integrated approach now promoted by European regulations. The cartographic representation of a cross-border territory is very useful for political decision-makers and enables populations to obtain a better understanding of their territory.

⁸ The purpose of the Geographic Information System of the Upper Rhine (GeoRhena) is to answer requests from the Upper Rhine Conference working groups and expert groups: <http://www.georhena.eu>

⁹ In the Genevan cross-border space, the nesting of cooperation and observation spaces demands a rigorous but flexible organisation, with variable geometry. Public statistics must provide a stable reference framework, integrating various scales. The Greater Geneva links with the Swiss federal “policy of agglomeration”, which is funding investments also on the other side of the border in France or Germany (for Basel cross-border space), on the condition of coordinated planning monitored through cross-border observation. Territorial Information System of Geneva (SITG): <https://ge.ch/sitg/> / Observatoire statistique transfrontalier (OST): <http://www.statregio-francosuisse.net/>

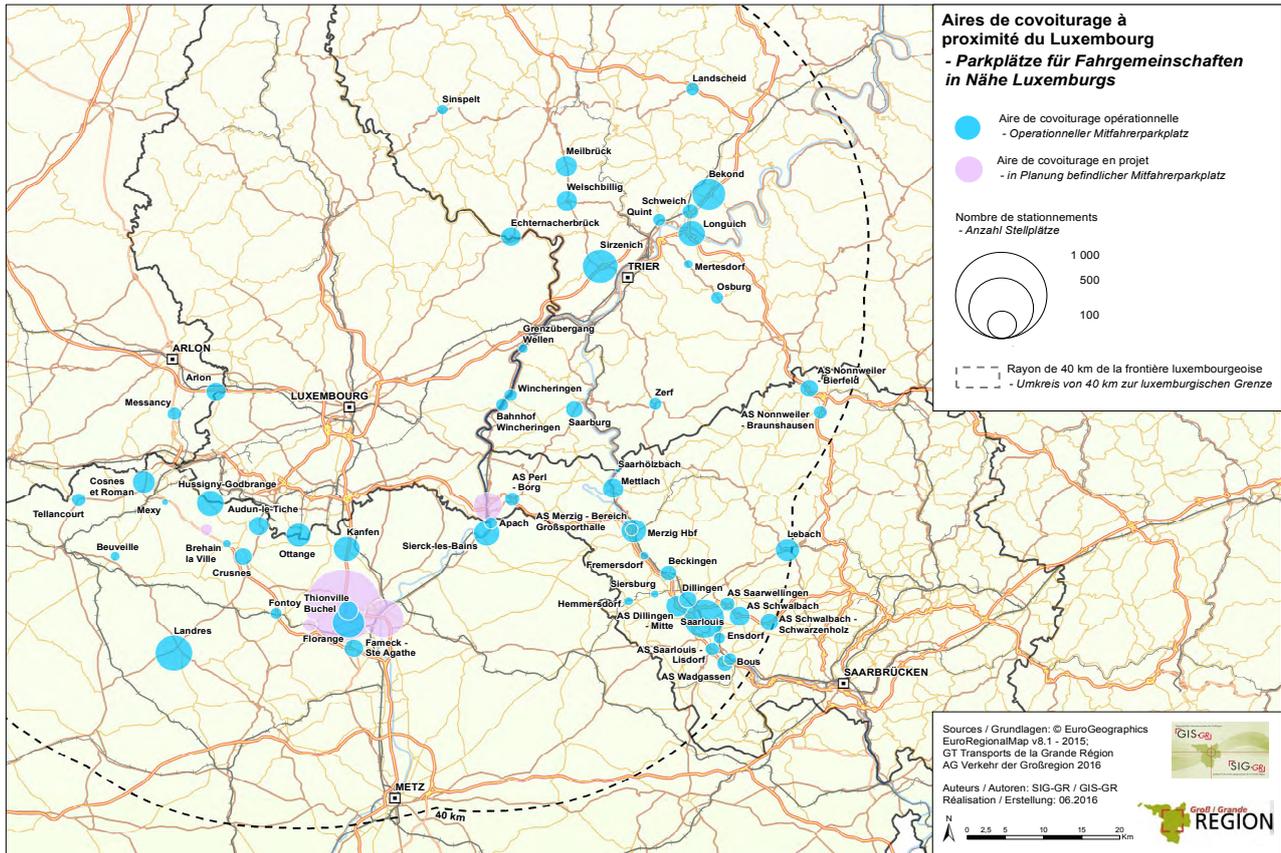
THE EXAMPLE OF TERRITORIAL OBSERVATION TOOLS IN THE “GREATER REGION”

→ **The Greater Region geographical information system (SIG-GR)** produces customised thematic maps that make it possible to steer development and spatial planning policies and to guide players in their decision-making. The maps created are made available to sectoral experts and the general public via the Greater Region’s geoportal server, which posts most of the maps in the form of cross-border overlays on an interactive map: www.sig-gr.eu

→ **The Network of Statistical Offices** brings together the Greater Region’s statistical offices to dispose of harmonised economic and social statistical data for the cross-border territory from the diverse national or regional sources that these offices can draw from. These statistics may be consulted on the Greater Region’s statistics portal: www.grande-region.lu

→ **The Interregional Job Market Observatory (OIE)** is a network of specialised institutes responsible for compiling comparable and interpretable data on the job market for Greater Region policy-makers. The data enables decision-makers to draw pertinent conclusions in the area of structural and employment policy for the Greater Region: www.iba-oie.eu

Other examples exist on the territories of the Upper Rhine⁸, the Greater-Geneva⁹, etc.

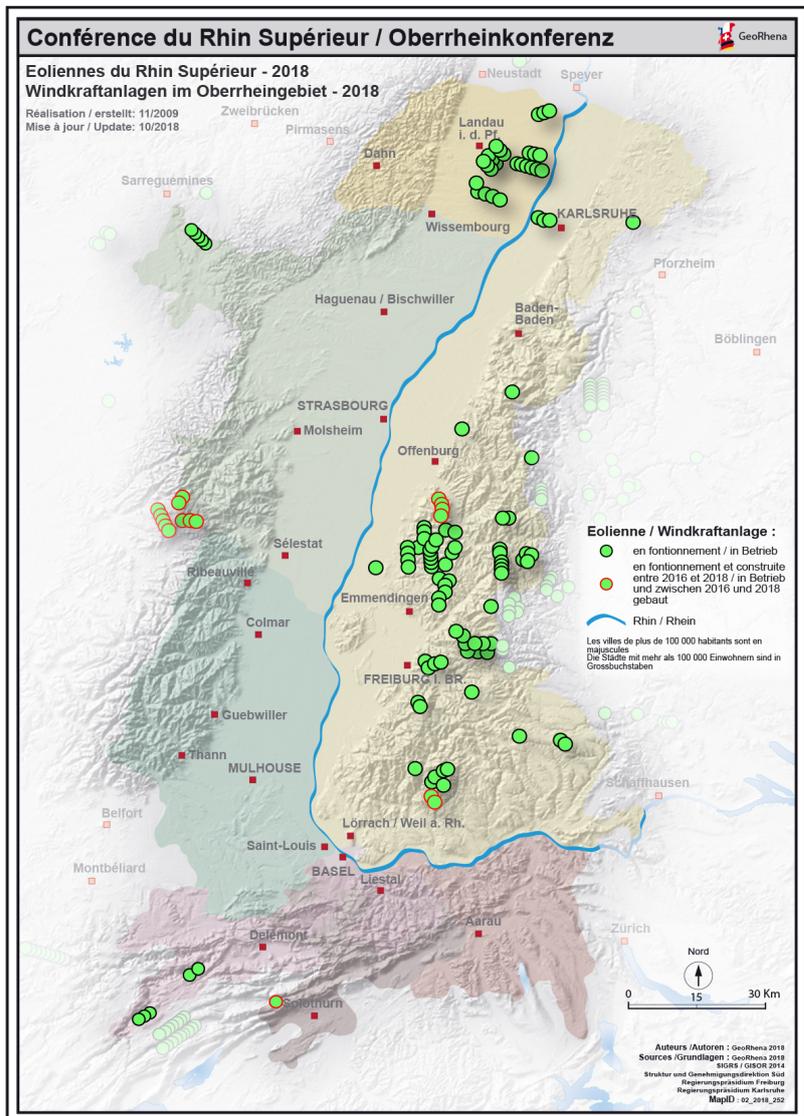


EXAMPLES OF THEMATIC MAPS

→ Greater Region geographical information system (SIG-GR)

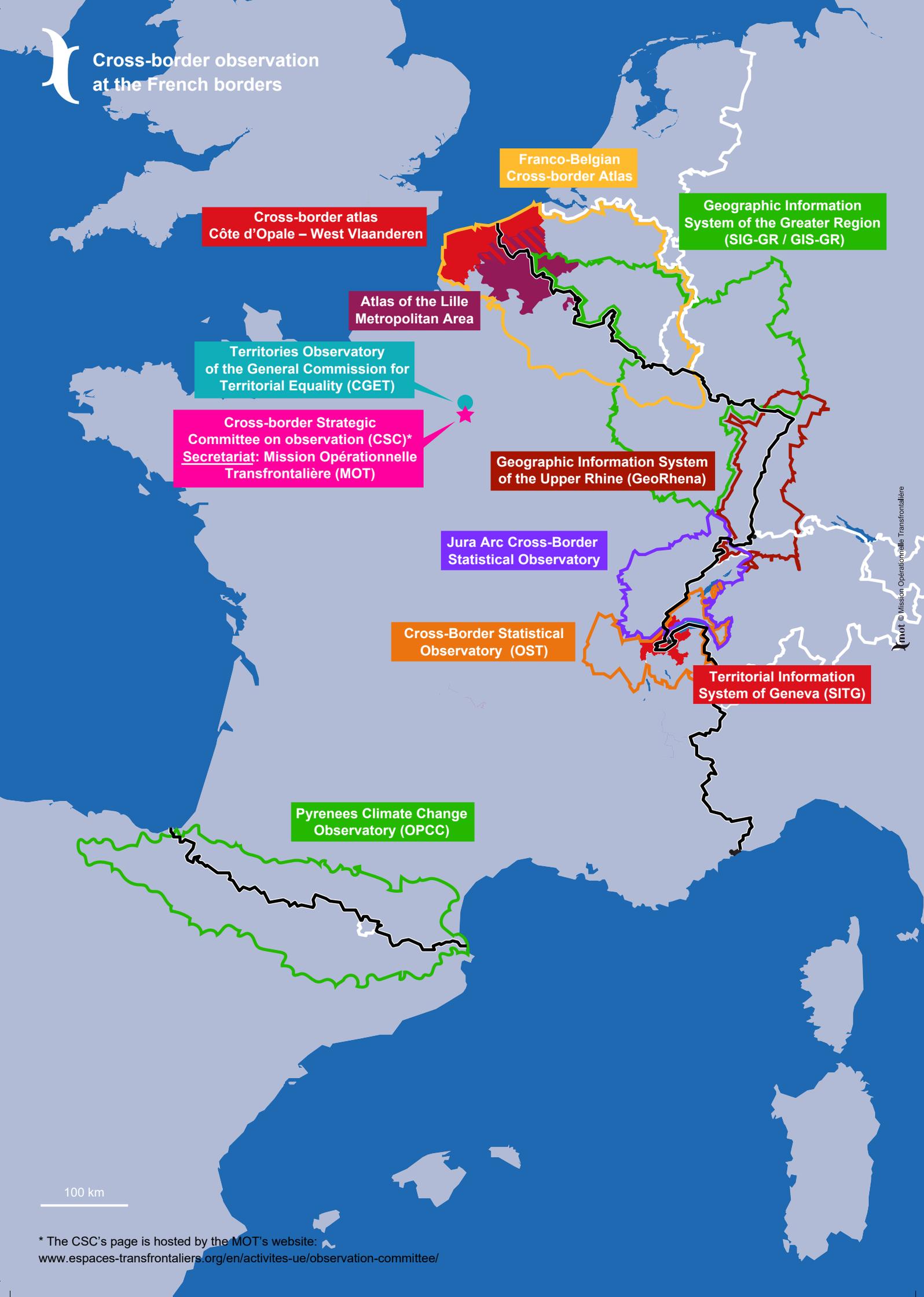
→ Geographic Information System of the Upper Rhine (GeoRhena)

Maps: SIG-GR - <https://www.sig-gr.eu/dam-assets/cartes/transports/pdf/covoiturage-mitfahrerparkplaetze-red.pdf> / GeoRhena - http://www.georhena.eu/sites/default/files/Cartes/02_2018_252.pdf





Cross-border observation at the French borders



Franco-Belgian
Cross-border Atlas

Cross-border atlas
Côte d'Opale – West Vlaanderen

Geographic Information
System of the Greater Region
(SIG-GR / GIS-GR)

Atlas of the Lille
Metropolitan Area

Territories Observatory
of the General Commission for
Territorial Equality (CGET)

Cross-border Strategic
Committee on observation (CSC)*
Secretariat: Mission Opérationnelle
Transfrontalière (MOT)

Geographic Information System
of the Upper Rhine (GeoRhena)

Jura Arc Cross-Border
Statistical Observatory

Cross-Border Statistical
Observatory (OST)

Territorial Information
System of Geneva (SITG)

Pyrenees Climate Change
Observatory (OPCC)

100 km

* The CSC's page is hosted by the MOT's website:
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/activites-ue/observation-committee/

MOT © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

1.2 At national level

The compilation of cross-border databases requires coordinated work by the statistics institutes and other data providers across the border, with political coordination by the spatial planning authorities. An emblematic example is that of worker flows. Recent French and German national policies, conducted with the neighbouring states, provide evidence of this emergence of awareness.

Coordination between States should provide an opportunity to boost cross-border observation on each border, in synergy with regional and local partners, as France and Germany have acknowledged. The declaration of Hambach¹⁰ from 6 April 2017 states concerning observation and spatial planning: "[...] Territorial monitoring, especially on the basis of statistical data, remains an essential tool for the sustainable development of our border area. We want therefore to create a favourable framework for data exchange and provide, open accessible and for free, harmonised data sources in formats suitable for the work in the border region. We wish in particular to develop and to deepen cooperation in the field of geographic information systems (visualisation mapping of statistical and other data, in particular spatial data). [...]"



10 https://www.france-allemande.fr/IMG/pdf/declaration_de_hambach_final-2.pdf
11 <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/activites-ue/observation-committee/>

THE EXPERIENCE OF CROSS-BORDER OBSERVATION IN FRANCE

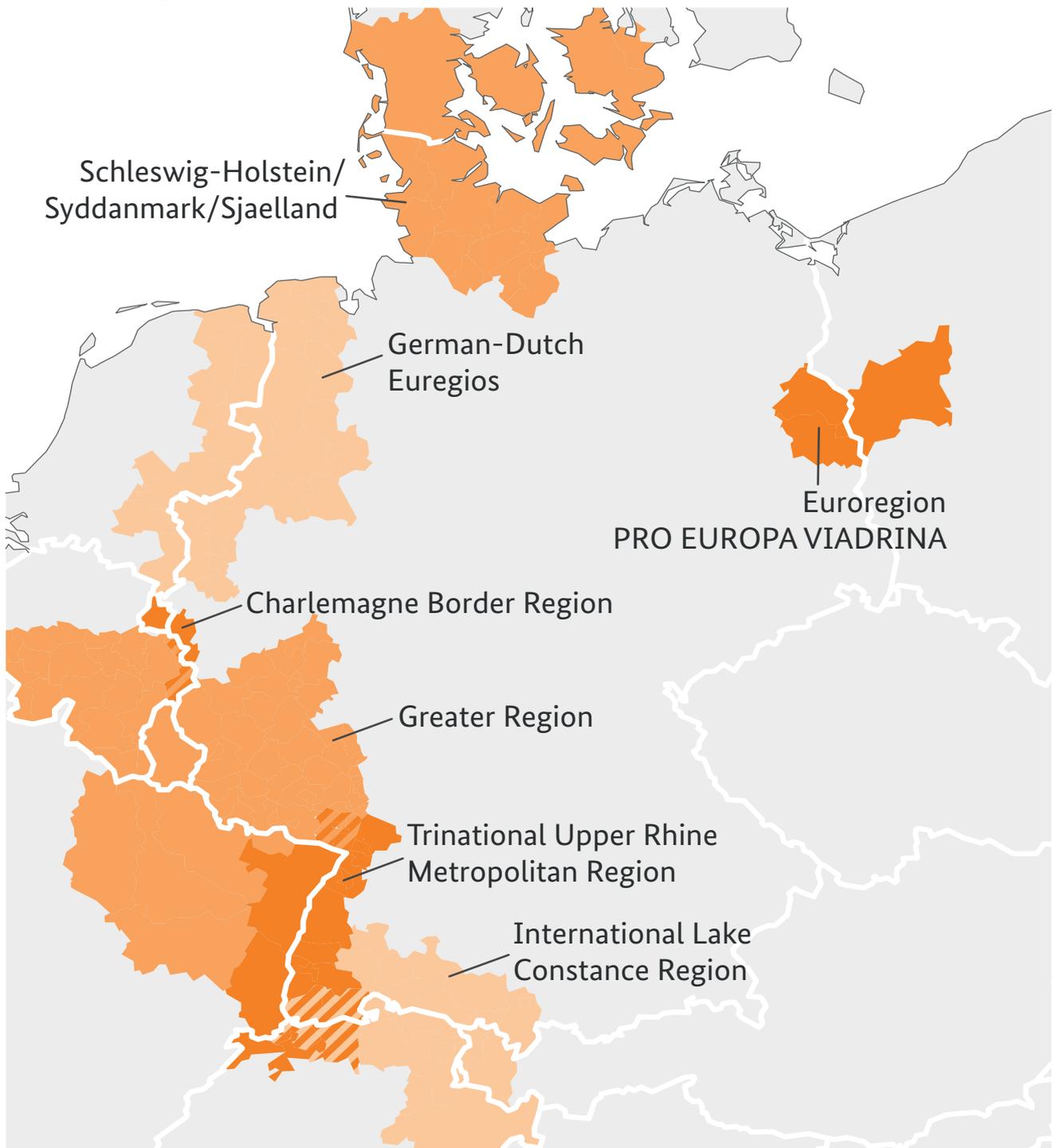
The first observation and mapping exercise covering all of France's borders at the national level (a map showing flows of cross-border workers) was conducted in 1999 by the MOT. This exercise was carried out as part of the gradual compilation of a cartographic collection, leading in 2002 to the publication of the first "Cross-border Cooperation Atlas", which was updated in 2005.

Following several exploratory studies on the subject, the Territories Observatory of the CGET, the MOT and the French Network of Urban Planning Agencies (FNAU) organised the first European seminar on the observation of cross-border territories in Nancy in 2012. The objective was to present the work carried out and to highlight the role of observation in spatial planning policies of cross-border territories. It concluded with an agreement between the countries represented, affirming the need to coordinate border territories' statistical observation processes.

Following these exchanges, 8 countries concerned (France and neighbouring countries) agreed to commit to a gradual and pragmatic approach to expanding the data repository and indicators, which will eventually provide more precise knowledge of the cross-border context. These countries set up a **Cross-border Strategic Committee (CSC)** made up of representatives of ministries in charge of spatial planning in France and the neighbouring countries to lay the foundations for real cross-border observation at the European level. The MOT provides the secretariat of the CSC¹¹. It is supported by a **Technical Working Group (TWG)** which brings together representatives of national and regional statistical institutes, ministerial departments and experts. The CSC meeting on 18 September 2018 has decided to reactivate the process and define a working programme on the basis of the present document, including networking of regional and local cross-border observatories. INSEE, who has established a centre specialised on cross-border monitoring will play an active role in the process, together with other national institutes.

The European Commission, which is involved in this process, has since launched a European pilot project on cross-border observation (see below).

Model regions the MORO project “Spatial monitoring in Germany and neighbouring regions”



Model regions

- Individual model regions
- Individual model regions
- Individual model regions
- Overlapping areas

0 100 200 km



Raumbeobachtung
Deutschland und
angrenzende Regionen

MORO



© EuroGeographics for administrative boundaries

THE EXPERIENCE OF CROSS-BORDER OBSERVATION IN GERMANY

Territorial monitoring in Germany and beyond its borders has formed part of the missions of the BBSR since the mid-1990s. The institute informs the federal and state governments about territorial developments in Germany and in Europe. An explicit reference to territorial monitoring in border areas was added in the federal spatial planning law of 2008 (§ 25 Raumordnungsgesetz). Since then, cross-border monitoring is considered a full aspect of territorial monitoring, alongside the national and European dimensions.

This mission was given new impetus in 2015 with the launch of the **MORO project “spatial monitoring in Germany and neighbouring regions”**. The purpose is to prepare the implementation of a unified, on-going cross-border monitoring system at the federal level. Seven model-regions participated in the first phase of the project (see map). This phase was completed in 2017 and resulted in the identification of common obstacles and needs. In the second phase, going from 2018 to 2020, the BBSR is working with states and statistical offices in Germany and neighbouring regions to find ways towards harmonisation of cross-border statistics and to improve or to develop indicators that meet the specific needs of border regions.

Simultaneously, the BBSR is initiating a network with representatives of statistical offices and of institutions in charge of spatial monitoring at the national or regional level in Germany and its neighbouring countries. This new European Network for Cross-border Monitoring, formalised in 2018 by the signature of a **Memorandum**, is meant to facilitate exchanges between all stakeholders, including at the national and European levels. This new platform should go beyond the MORO project and support long-term cooperation for reinforced cross-border monitoring in Europe.

1.3 At European level

As a consequence of certain national initiatives (such as the Nancy conference in 2012; and the Luxembourg presidency of 2015), the European Commission has focussed its attention on the untapped potential of border areas and obstacles to cooperation; the Cross-border Review of 2015-2016 led to a Communication adopted in 2017¹², identifying, among other things, the necessity of observing border areas. Actions to be taken at European level include pilot projects, coordination and recording the initiatives of observation, policy impact assessment in the cross-border territories.

The European Commission will also encourage European Territorial Cooperation programmes (Interreg) to continue their support for cross-border observation.

The networking of cross-border territories undertaking shared knowledge initiatives must be supported by the interregional programmes, with ESPON in the front line. Finally, European Commission departments such as Eurostat and the Joint Research Centre will join further efforts on cross-border observation within the limits of their remits and resources.

Following the European Commission's communication “Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions”, the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy launched a pilot project to test new ways of collecting data for cross-border areas on flows of daily commuters. Eight statistical institutes participated in this project coordinated by Statistics Netherlands. The final report “**Border Region Data collection**”¹³ presents the findings of the project, which focused on the cross-border labour market. Three types of data have been reviewed: the labour force survey (LFS) data, data extracted from national administrative sources and mobile phone data.

The cross-border territories, laboratories of European integration, are at the heart of European community policies: the EU 2020 strategy, the single market, territorial cohesion. The European Union must consequently pay greater attention to them!

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/communications/2017/boosting-growth-and-cohesion-in-eu-border-regions
¹³ Border Region Data collection, final report, published in September 2018: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/studies/2018/border-region-data-collection

Part 2 – A common French-German and European ambition: obstacles to overcome and action plan

2.1 The obstacles

Many obstacles remain to the implementation of an observation process. Although many observation tools have been funded by European programmes, their funding is too often questioned on the grounds that financing investments would be preferable. Many efforts in terms of cross-border monitoring are also directly linked to a specific project, and are therefore limited in time.

The obstacles are also technical. Access to data on either side of the border and comparability of the existing data are stumbling blocks.

Monitoring at the cross-border level requires specific information at a local scale, which is often not available.

Even the data harmonised for international comparison purposes are often not sufficient to respond to cross-border problematics. This is the case in particular for unemployment statistics. The Labour Force Survey provides harmonised data at the NUTS 2 level, but each country has a different method to calculate unemployment at the NUTS 3 level, making comparison difficult if not impossible at this scale.

Harmonised data also face the challenge of a lack of correspondence between statistical units. While NUTS-1 level corresponds to the federated state level in Germany and approximates the region in France, it refers to the country level in some of their neighbours like the Czech Republic. Between France and Germany, some differences are also worth noting. NUTS-3 regions are significantly larger in France than in Germany for instance, requiring the use of an intermediate scale for most accurate comparisons.

These discrepancies, added to a lack of equivalence of census periods and differences in definitions of certain indicators are all difficulties that have to be overcome in the observation process.

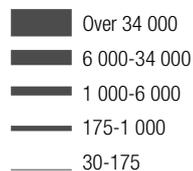
Map: <http://www.observatoire-des-territoires.gouv.fr/observatoire-des-territoires/en/dynamiques-de-lemploi-transfrontalier-en-europe-et-en-france>

Cross-border flows spread over the north-eastern borders of France, strongly polarized by Luxembourg, Basel and Geneva

The main flows of cross-border commuters from the French border territories

Workers residing in an employment area within 60 km of a land border, declaring to work abroad

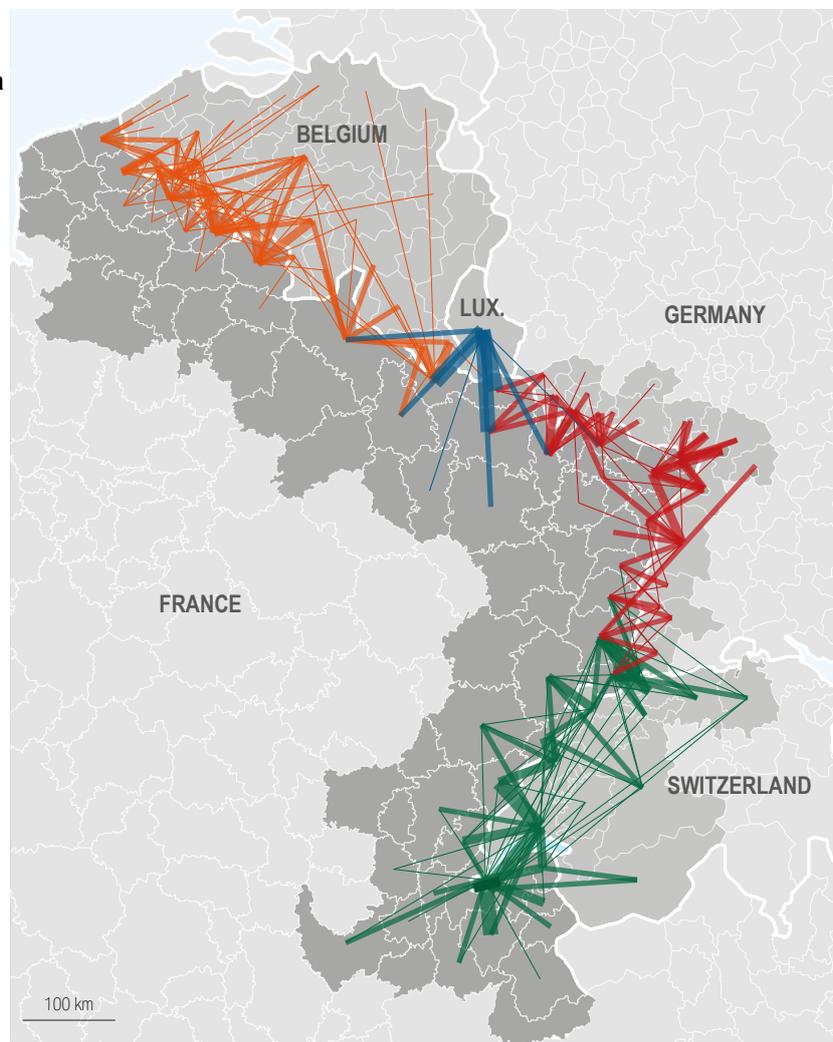
In number by employment area



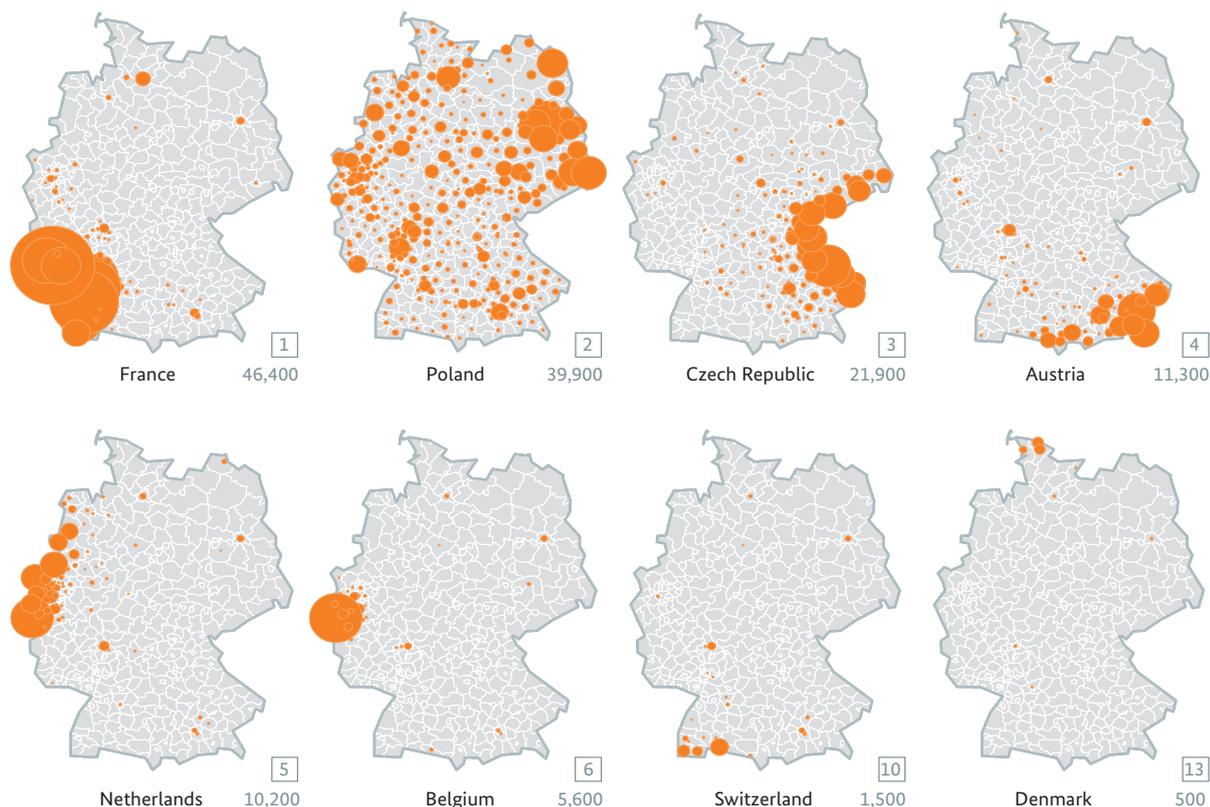
Cross-border area



SOURCES: INSEE, RP 2013 • RÉALISATION : CGET - DST - CELLULE CARTO, KH, AD, 2017



Inbound commuters into Germany by country of origin in 2016



Inbound commuters by country of origin in 2016



Origin of data: Bundesagentur für Arbeit, only workers subject to social insurance contribution, only values > 9
 © GeoBasis-DE/BKG 2017 for territorial boundaries



Map: BMVI, MORO Praxis Heft 11, Berlin, Dezember 2017, page 27
https://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/ministerien/MOROPraxis/2017/moro-praxis-11-17-kurz-de-di.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

THE EXAMPLE OF CROSS-BORDER COMMUTERS

Cross-border commuting is a recurring topic when talking about cross-border cooperation. In order to develop appropriate transportation or infrastructure policies, authorities in border regions need to know when and where workers come from and go to. So far on the German side, data from social security are available, and provide information about the number of employees in a given place having their main residence abroad. The data is limited to the country of residence, there is no further detailed information at a lower scale (municipality level for instance). Furthermore, it doesn't include independent workers and all those who are not required to contribute to social security.

2.2 Common action plan to advance cross-border observation

As the Aachen Treaty, signed on 22 January 2019, states¹⁴, "The two States institute a **cross-border cooperation committee**, including stakeholders such as the State and the regional and local authorities, parliaments and cross-border bodies, such as Eurodistricts, and, if necessary, the Euroregions concerned. This committee shall **coordinate all aspects of cross-border observation** between the French Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, establish a **common strategy identifying priority projects**, monitor difficulties encountered in border territories and produce proposals to address them, as well as analyse the impact of new legislation on border territories."

France and Germany commit to coordinate a **common identification of needs** among data users and to **facilitate cooperation with data providers**, in order to **foster cross-border monitoring at the French-German border, at their other borders, in other European countries and at the European level.**

¹⁴ Translation based on the French version of the Treaty

The two countries will encourage cross-border observation **at the local/regional level** with the support of national and European programs (Interreg 2021/2027, particularly the new Interreg-specific objective “better Interreg governance”). **At the national level**, they support the development of an on-going, unified cross-border monitoring system and the launch of pilot projects supporting local actions (such as MORO projects). **At the European level**, they encourage the development of border monitoring with the support of Eurostat, Joint Research Centre (JRC), ESPON, and in coordination with States (national statistical institutes in particular).

To this end, France and Germany commit to support following actions:

Action 1 – Identification of thematic priorities: more multi-level cooperation

Policy-makers and planning stakeholders are the first recipients of cross-border data. It is also they who can define their needs and express the necessity for improved data collection. **An adequate formulation of needs requires the involvement and the cooperation of all data users, from field stakeholders to national and European authorities.** This means intensifying cooperation between territorial and administrative scales (from local to national level), and between institutions (government authorities, planning agencies, statistical institutes) within one country and from one country to another.

The purpose of this cooperation is the identification of thematic priorities. Cross-border issues cover a wide variety of topics: employment, public services, health, property prices, economic development, taxation etc. Priority topics have to be clearly identified in order to address them. France and Germany will support the development of specific geographical partnerships between stakeholders interested in these topics.

France and Germany have recently undertaken initiatives in that regard: the Cross-border Strategic Committee in France and signature of a Memorandum for a European Network for Cross-border Monitoring in Germany both have in common to bring around the table experts on

cross-border monitoring from different countries and institutions. These exchanges have to take place on a regular basis, and lead to a common definition of needs based on the priorities identified. By delivering a common message, data users can improve cross-border monitoring at the European level.

Action 2 – For more data harmonisation and adapted data collection: coordination with statistical institutes

The European project “Border Region Data collection” marked a significant step towards the development of a methodology to produce cross-border information (see above). The results are very promising and invite further research, and expanding the collaboration to other statistical institutes.

In order to further adapt their methodology to the needs of cross-border monitoring, statistical institutes have to be provided with their concrete needs from national authorities. To this end, France and Germany will support coordination efforts with statistical offices, and make sure the needs, identified thanks to an intensified multilevel cooperation, are transmitted to the European Statistical System.

Action 3 – Towards European cross-border monitoring: coordination with other European countries and with European institutions

Following these two recent initiatives to improve cross-border monitoring, France and Germany have the potential to mobilise their neighbours to give impetus for more cooperation in Europe with regards to cross-border monitoring. They will facilitate networking between local and national observatories, with the help of interregional programs (Interact, ESPON), under the umbrella of the intergovernmental cooperation (Directors-General in charge of territorial cohesion). The network made up of national “cross-border coordination points” planned by the ECBM¹⁵ regulation, and with the European border focal point set up in DG REGIO, should contribute to such coordination.

¹⁵ Proposal of the European Commission for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context, called ECBM, published on May 2018.

**Editor:**

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An electronic version of the brochure may be downloaded here:

http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/EN_crossborder_fr_de_observation_2019.pdf

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