

Cross-border territories

Europe's laboratory

EXPERIENCES
IN THE TERRITORIES
—
TOOLKIT
OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS
—
ACTING AT
ALL LEVELS





Europe is at a crossroads. It is a time of anniversaries: the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, and the 25th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty and the beginnings of Interreg. And above all it is the time for new visions to invent the post-2020 Europe: a Europe which is facing unprecedented challenges, but regaining the trust of its peoples.

The MOT is celebrating 20 years of existence: an occasion for its network and technical team to take stock and think about the future of its activities, and more broadly of cross-border cooperation in Europe. The brochure published on this occasion presents the achievements of its members and partners by way of 20 experiences aimed at serving the inhabitants of cross-border territories ([Part 1](#)); the obstacles that have been overcome or that still pose a problem, and the toolkit developed to overcome them ([Part 2](#)); and lastly, the current challenges for Europe and its cross-border territories, and the political responses at the different levels of territorial action: local and regional, national, European and beyond ([Part 3](#)).

Most of the examples come from Western Europe, where the MOT and its network act on a daily basis; but the diversity of the borders discussed makes these examples stimulating for other borders in Europe and the rest of the world.

This brochure is the result of a collective work by all members of the MOT network and its technical team, managed by the working group “20 years of the MOT: outcome and perspectives for post-2020”, under the direction of Jean Peyrony, director general and Olivier Denert, secretary general, and coordinated by Silvia Gobert-Keckeis, policy manager European policies and MOT association, Alexandre Martin and Marie Dreffier, interns, and Blandine Lysensoone, policy manager for communication and documentation.

An electronic version of this brochure may be downloaded from the MOT website:

www.cross-border-territories.eu

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Over the past 20 years, there have been significant advances in cross-border cooperation, which have benefited the inhabitants of cross-border territories and enabled Europe to take concrete form there. I can testify to this, having contributed to it as a local elected representative in a border region and as the MOT's President. In the future, we need to aim for cross-border and European integration, and cooperation requires more support in order to overcome the remaining obstacles. A veritable laboratory for Europe, cross-border territories need a toolkit that is designed and implemented at the local, regional, national and European levels. The MOT – both its network of players and the technical team that assists their projects – has built up both sectoral and territorial expertise that has made it a major partner for players on the ground, but also for institutions at national and European levels.

Too many of our fellow citizens are still Eurosceptic, so we need to continue forging harmonious coexistence in cross-border territories and demonstrating that Europe is at work there. The discussions underway about what happens after 2020 should put cross-border integration at the heart of reforms.

Long live cooperation... for a concrete Europe dedicated to serving its citizens!



Michel DELEBARRE
*President of MOT,
Former Minister of State*



Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ
*President of the European
Committee of the Regions*

Since the signature of a declaration of common interest in 2011, the links between the European Committee of the Regions and the MOT have gone from strength to strength. The MOT has affirmed its role as a leading partner on cross-border issues. By fostering European integration at local and regional levels, cross-border cooperation is a crucial component of the European project: it contributes on a daily basis to making Europe more visible in the eyes of its citizens within cross-border territories.

The European Committee of the Regions recognises the value added provided by the MOT through its support to players involved in cooperation and its engagement at all levels – local, regional, national and European – in the search for solutions to obstacles to cross-border cooperation. The European Committee of the Regions supports this engagement and encourages networking between all of the European players working across Europe, thereby creating a genuine European platform in support of cooperation.

CONTENTS

PART 1

20 years of cross-border cooperation, 20 years of experiences in cross-border territories

1.1. What is cross-border cooperation?	8
1.2. Cross-border cooperation and the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière: 1997 – 2017.....	10
1.3. The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and its network.....	12
a. Being part of the network means... ..	12
b. The network have their say	12
1.4. The MOT's network illustrated by 20 experiences	13
HEALTHCARE.....	14
EDUCATION	14
TRAINING & HIGHER EDUCATION	15
EMPLOYMENT	16
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	17
RESEARCH & INNOVATION	18
TRANSPORT & MOBILITY	18
CULTURE & CIVIL SOCIETY	19
TOURISM	20
ENVIRONMENT	21
ENERGY	22
CLIMATE & RISKS	23
SPATIAL PLANNING	24

PART 2

The cross-border toolkit: obstacles and solutions

2.1. Construction of cross-border territories.....	29
a. Observation, strategy and planning.....	30
b. Governance and political action	33
c. Affiliations, identities and commitment to cooperation	36
2.2. Coordinating policies	39
a. Coordination at the border level	39
b. Coordination at national level	40
c. Coordination at European level.....	42
2.3. Support for cross-border territories	44
a. Support at the border level.....	45
b. Support at national level	46
c. Support at European level.....	47

PART 3

Ambitions for the future and political responses

3.1. Cohesion policy post-2020	54
a. General context	54
b. Cohesion: origins, objectives and current policy.....	54
c. A new vision for Europe, redesigning European cohesion	55
3.2. Cross-border territories and the issue of European territorial cooperation (ETC).....	56
a. The general context for border regions.....	56
b. Border regions and ETC: origins and current policies	56
c. The future of cross-border territories and ETC	57
3.3 Political responses: context and roadmaps for the future	58
a. Responses at local / regional level	58
b. Responses at national level	59
c. Responses at intergovernmental / European level.....	61
d. The role of the MOT.....	63
3.4. Exchanges with other borders in the world	64
a. Taking action on other borders.....	64
b. Exchanges with academic networks	65

Conclusion



PART 1

20 years of
cross-border
cooperation,
20 years of
experiences in
cross-border
territories

1.1. What is cross-border cooperation?

Cross-border cooperation is a partnership between private or public players separated by a national border, whose actions have repercussions at regional and local levels on either side of this border. The cooperation discussed here will mainly be that along Europe's internal borders (European Union and third countries linked to it by free movement agreements). The 360° mobility across the border, the projects and policies that accompany this mobility in the territories close to the border, and the gradual cross-border integration that this cooperation allows and that gives birth to **cross-border territories**, characterise the experiences presented here – even if other settings will also be talked about (cooperation on a greater scale such as macroregions, Europe's external borders and borders in other continents).

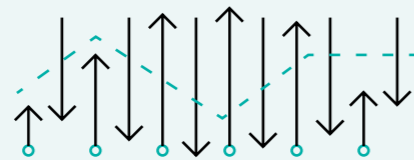


CROSS-BORDER FACTS

CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES REPRESENT

40%
of the territory of the European Union.

More than 1 European in 3 lives in a border region.



2 MILLIONS

cross-border workers in the EU – of which over 20% live in France.*

20,000 KM

OF INTERNAL LAND BORDERS IN THE EU.

37

cross-border conurbations in Europe.

11
of which are on France's borders.

* Source: EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey, 2015

At the local level, these territories constitute areas that go beyond the administrative framework delimited by national borders. These territories possess a **common natural and cultural heritage** that often predates the drawing of the borders, **common markets (jobs, goods and services, etc.)** developed thanks to their being blurred in the European context, and a potential for openness to other ways of life or of functioning. Citizens can **move** freely from one side of the border to the other **in order to work, to consume, for leisure activities, to make use of public facilities and services** (hospitals, transport, schools, etc.), or simply to meet new people.

In terms of public action, cross-border territories require joint management by local, as well as regional and national players, according to their respective competence, which may vary from one country to another. This common approach leads to the implementation of thematic projects relating to the policies concerned (economic and social sectors, public services, the environment, etc.) coordinated within an **integrated territorial development strategy** for the **cross-border territory** concerned.

At the national level, border regions are peripheral and often little account is taken of them by national policy, even though they are places of exchange and openness and a resource for the inhabitants and businesses in these territories. The **coexistence of several political, legal, technical and tax systems and cultures and languages** gives rise to demographic or economic divergences and flows conducive to cross-border integration, but also obstacles to cooperation.

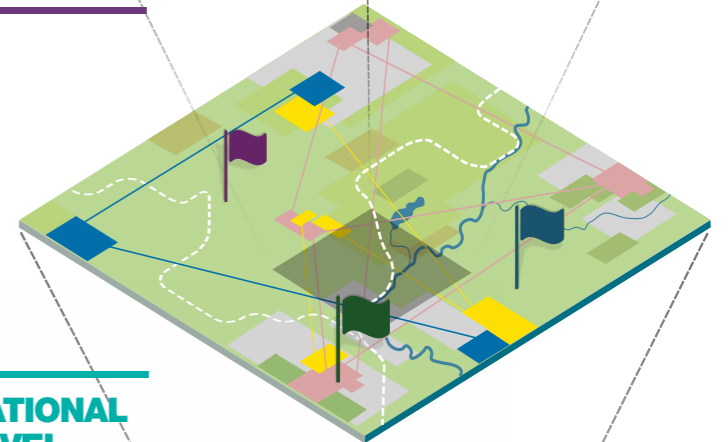
It is important that the governments of neighbouring countries allow cooperation, and also support local and regional players in their cross-border initiatives and adapt their national policy in their own areas of competence accordingly. The aim is to **coordinate legislation, strategies and funding** across borders in order to provide responses to common challenges.

At the European level, cross-border territories constitute **veritable laboratories for European construction**, putting into practice its fundamental aspects such as **freedom of movement, European citizenship, and economic, social and territorial cohesion**. Within the framework of cohesion policy (objective of territorial cooperation), the European institutions promote cross-border integration by creating appropriate **legal tools**, financing projects that meet the needs of cross-border areas, and promoting networks of exchanges on the issue of borders. But in spite of their emblematic position, these territories are always not sufficiently taken into account in European public policy.

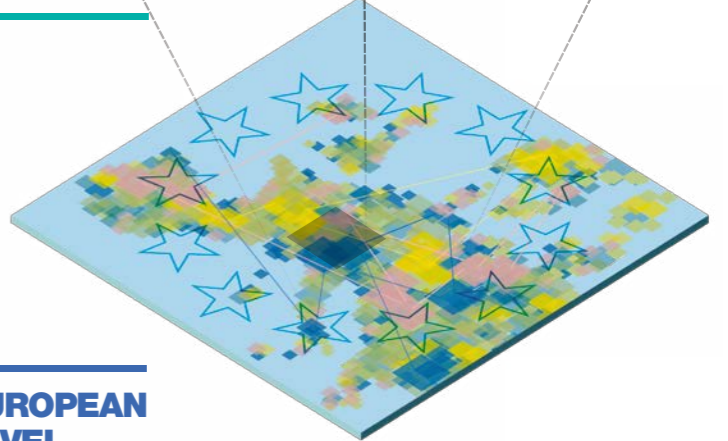
CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES AND THE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM



LOCAL LEVEL



NATIONAL LEVEL



EUROPEAN LEVEL

1.2. Cross-border cooperation and the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière: 1997 – 2017

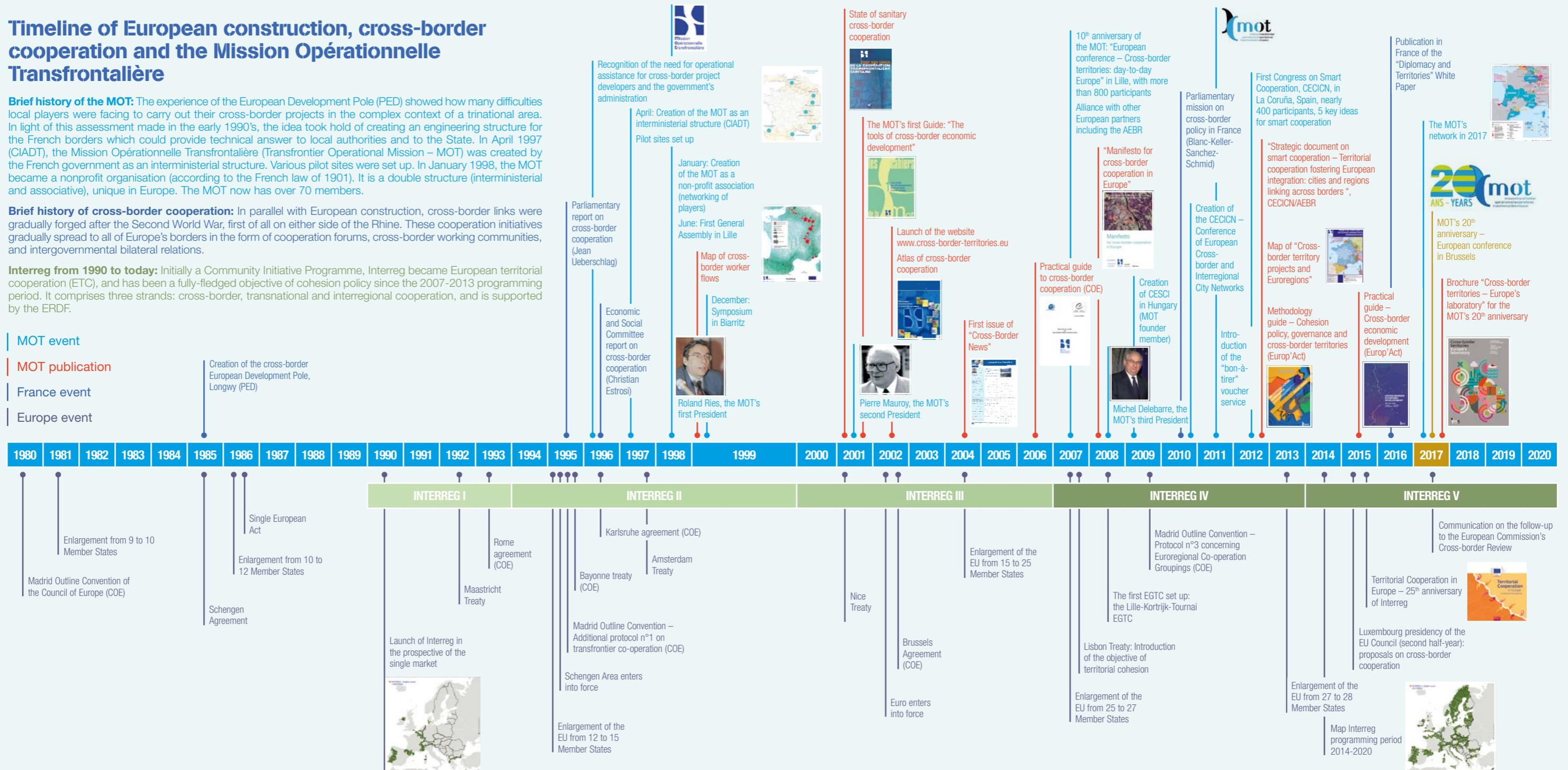
Timeline of European construction, cross-border cooperation and the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

Brief history of the MOT: The experience of the European Development Pole (PED) showed how many difficulties local players were facing to carry out their cross-border projects in the complex context of a trinational area. In light of this assessment made in the early 1990's, the idea took hold of creating an engineering structure for the French borders which could provide technical answer to local authorities and to the State. In April 1997 (CIADT), the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (Transfrontier Operational Mission – MOT) was created by the French government as an interministerial structure. Various pilot sites were set up. In January 1998, the MOT became a nonprofit organisation (according to the French law of 1901). It is a double structure (interministerial and associative), unique in Europe. The MOT now has over 70 members.

Brief history of cross-border cooperation: In parallel with European construction, cross-border links were gradually forged after the Second World War, first of all on either side of the Rhine. These cooperation initiatives gradually spread to all of Europe's borders in the form of cooperation forums, cross-border working communities, and intergovernmental bilateral relations.

Interreg from 1990 to today: Initially a Community Initiative Programme, Interreg became European territorial cooperation (ETC), and has been a fully-fledged objective of cohesion policy since the 2007-2013 programming period. It comprises three strands: cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, and is supported by the ERDF.

- | MOT event
- | MOT publication
- | France event
- | Europe event



1.3. The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and its network

a. BEING PART OF THE NETWORK MEANS...

The MOT's role is to assist cross-border project developers, look after the interests of the cross-border territories and facilitate networking between players and the sharing of experiences. It acts as the interface between the different stakeholders in order to find cross-border solutions at the right levels.

In short, being part of the MOT's network means:

- ensuring that better account is taken of the needs of the network's members in national and European policy,
- exchanging with players in other cross-border territories along France's borders, but also elsewhere in Europe and worldwide,
- having access to a unique resource centre devoted to cross-border cooperation,
- benefiting from high-level expertise.

The MOT's network is representative of the different players involved in cross-border cooperation along France's borders. Its members represent both the different territorial levels and the different French borders and the neighbouring areas. The MOT's network currently comprises more than 70 members¹ from 10 European countries.

In addition, the MOT's network includes institutional partners at the French national level, notably the Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (CGET – General Commission for Territorial Equality), the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Overseas France and the Caisse des Dépôts, as well as other States (Luxembourg, Andorra and Monaco). The organisation also has very close links with the European institutions. All of the players needed are brought together in order to facilitate the design and implementation of cross-border projects.

¹ Including 13 cross-border joint local authorities, 4 municipalities, 12 groupings of municipalities and local authorities, 7 French departments, 10 regions, counties etc., 1 company, 2 chambers of commerce and industry, 2 national agencies, 5 federations and other networks, 2 urban planning agencies, 5 associations of legal entities and 2 associations of natural persons, as well as a number of natural persons (national and European parliamentarians).
² Responses from the network to a questionnaire sent out in the spring of 2017 (verbatim).

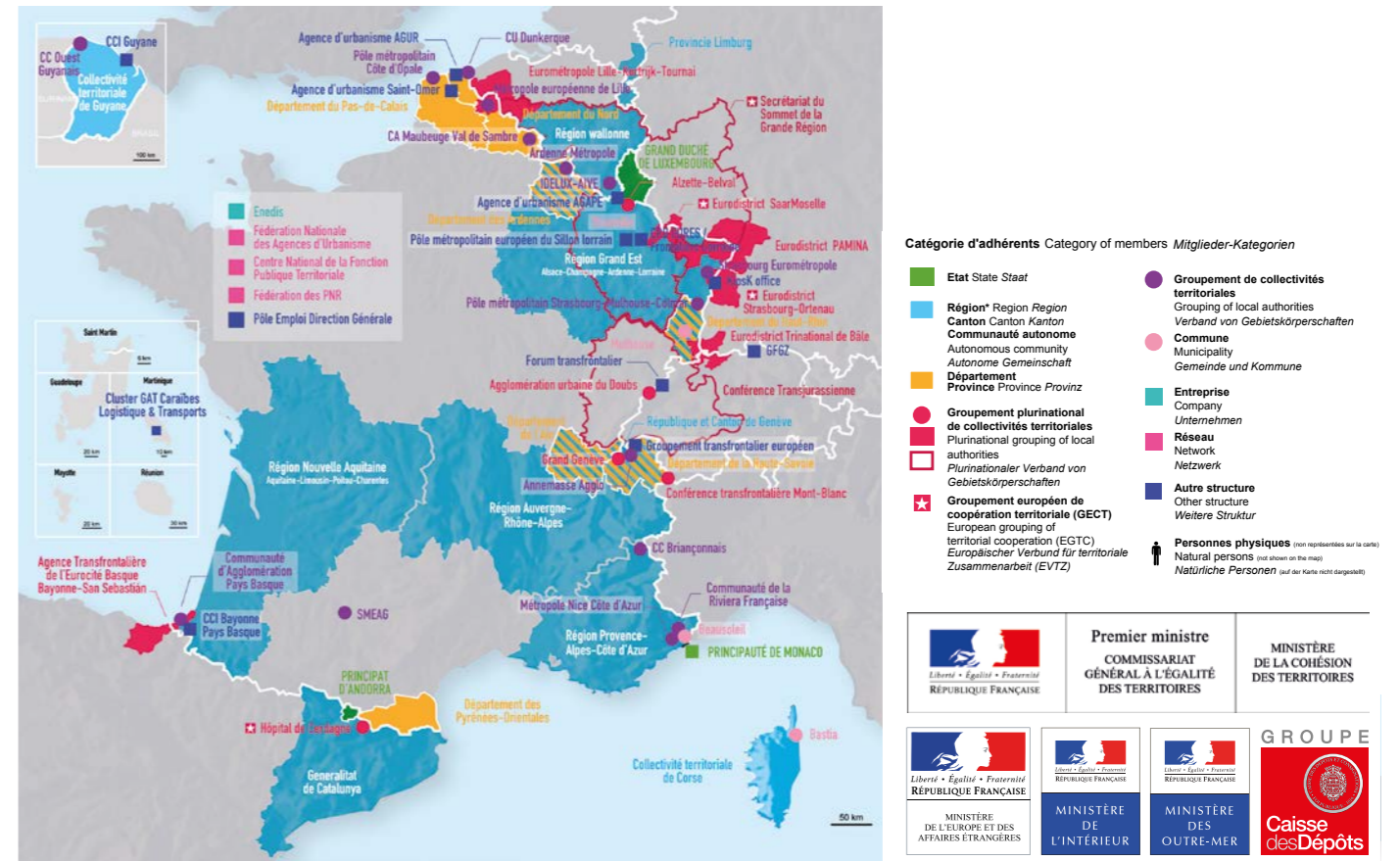


b. THE NETWORK HAVE THEIR SAY²

The MOT is for the members of its network:

- “an indispensable tool”, “a facilitator of local [action]”,
- “a unique structure for dialogue and expertise on cross-border cooperation that helps to provide project developers with solutions to concrete problems and facilitate networking between different players”,
- “a tremendous springboard, a genuine technical, even political platform for cross-border and European networks, whether in terms of advice, assistance, representation or the sharing of experiences”.

“IN A NUTSHELL, THE IMAGE WHICH SUMS IT UP BEST IS THAT OF A SWISS KNIFE, REFLECTING THE VARIETY OF ITS COMPETENCIES AND ITS ABILITY TO ADJUST TO THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT TERRITORIES.”



Network of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

1.4. The MOT's network illustrated by 20 experiences

The MOT's contribution is above all that of its network, with the wealth of practice each of its members brings. In order to illustrate the achievements of more than 20 years of cooperation, we spotlight here 20 unique experiences of the MOT's members aimed at serving the inhabitants of the cross-border territories. They are set out in order of the life cycle of a border region inhabitant and of the services that are provided in cross-border territories, starting with the topic of healthcare (and notably birth). This is followed by education and training, then employment, economic development and research and innovation, which underpin the activity of the inhabitants of a cross-border territory.

Transport services are provided to help people move around the region; the social and cultural life of the border region resident is also the subject of policies in the areas of culture and tourism; and his or her living environment is taken into account by policies relating to the environment, energy, climate and risks, in the framework of the development of the cross-border territory. Selecting these 20 projects has been difficult – many other exemplary and instructive projects deserve to feature in this brochure too. The reader can however find all of the leading projects that were proposed by members of the network in a dedicated section on the website www.cross-border-territories.eu.

HEALTHCARE

Cross-border cooperation in healthcare mobilises healthcare players from two or more countries near to their borders. It is extremely useful for citizens in that it makes up for the lack of medical provision in these regions or takes advantage of complementarities regarding specialisms and equipment on either side of the border. The essentially national nature of healthcare systems due to limited European competence in this area, and the cumbersome administrative procedures involved in receiving medical treatment abroad remain obstacles to its implementation.

CERDANYA CROSS-BORDER HOSPITAL

Cerdanya Hospital EGTC



Cerdanya cross-border hospital, Puigcerdà, Catalonia © Cerdanya Hospital EGTC

EDUCATION

Cross-border cooperation in the area of education and training is organised differently depending on the level of education concerned. At **nursery and primary levels**, it is often possible for pupils to learn the language of the neighbouring country or the language common to the cross-border community in the case of regional languages. There are bilingual schools that enable school and cultural exchanges to take place. At **secondary level**, some schools offer streams known as “European streams” or bilingual courses (AbiBac in the Franco-German context). There are also examples of completely binational schools such as the Schengen High School in Perl, on the German-Luxembourg border.

THE SCHENGEN HIGH SCHOOL IN PERL

Agreement between the Government of Luxembourg and the government of the Land of Saarland



The German-Luxembourg Schengen High School in Perl (in Germany) is a cross-border school that aims to jointly teach pupils from Germany and Luxembourg (agreement between the Land of Saarland and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg). It combines elements from the two school systems in an innovative teaching approach, and provides high-school students with courses and qualifications that enable them to continue their studies or enter the labour market on either side of the border. Languages play a crucial role. The medium of instruction for most subjects is German, with some subjects being taught in French. Opened in 2007, the high school currently has 835 Luxembourg and German students (as well as 34 French students). It faces particular challenges in terms of teaching methods linked to the diversity of its students of different nationalities; the aim is thus to apply principles both of integration and differentiation.

- > Franco-German border – ZOAST³ (SaarMoselle Eurodistrict; Strasbourg Ortenau)
- > Franco-Belgian border – ZOAST (MRTW – URSA; Ardennes; ARLWY; TOURVAL; MOMAU; Thiérache)
- > Haute-Savoie Departement (lead partner France) / La Source Institute and High School of Health (lead partner Switzerland) – “Autonomie 2020” Interreg V (France-Switzerland) project see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS

³ Zone organisée d'accès aux soins transfrontaliers – organised zone of access to cross-border healthcare.



Teambuilding of pupils in the Schengen High School, Perl, Germany / © Schengen High School

TRAINING & HIGHER EDUCATION

In **higher education**, several networks of universities have been set up in cross-border territories. They aim to pool investments and to take advantage of the complementarities in different fields of expertise, by increasing the academic reach. As for **vocational training**, it is determined by the policies implemented in cross-border regions and labour markets (see the topic “Employment”). Its programming is primarily national, which hampers projects aimed at disseminating knowledge and know-how with a view to meeting the need for cross-border labour.

RÉUSSIR SANS FRONTIÈRE (SUCCEEDING WITHOUT BORDER)

Grand Est Region (lead partner)



The 33 partners participating in the project “Réussir sans frontière” (Interreg VA Upper Rhine) collaborate to provide solutions that facilitate access to cross-border training and entry into the cross-border labour market in the Upper Rhine. The project supports, for example, the creation of Azubi-BacPro, which brings together German and French apprentices. It is part of a more general approach, the **framework agreement on cross-border apprenticeships** in the Upper Rhine, signed on 12 September 2013 by 28 French and German institutions, which aims to encourage and facilitate the cross-border mobility of apprentices. The agreement, an initiative of the Upper Rhine Conference, sets out the precise framework and conditions for cross-border apprenticeships, which are open to young people at all levels of training in the Grand Est Region, Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate.

- > Greater Region – Framework agreement on professional training
- > The LELA+ network of towns (now Tonicités) – the iot@ project see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS



The University of the Greater Region gathers six universities from four bordering countries / © UniGR – Uwe Bellhäuser

EMPLOYMENT

The differences between labour markets in different European countries can be an opportunity for people in border areas, enabling them to find a better-paid job or one which does not exist in their own country. In March 2016, the European Commission recorded 2 million people who cross the border every day to go to their place of work. It is vital to support them in order to encourage them to seize these opportunities.

JOB SERVICES

Groupement Transfrontalier Européen (European Cross-Border Grouping)



In the heart of the cross-border Franco-Swiss region, the Groupement Transfrontalier Européen (GTE – European Cross-Border Grouping) set up a “job service” for people seeking work. As part of this service, and thanks to funding from the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Region, the GTE offers one-to-one personalised appointments. In these meetings, jobseekers are informed about the state of the job market, methods for seeking work, the work culture in Switzerland and the status of cross-border workers. The job service also organises information sessions on the cross-border job market. Its website also lists job vacancies and allows candidates to submit their CV. A “job pack” is also provided. The GTE’s more general goal is to inform and support cross-border worker between Switzerland and France in the legal, fiscal and social fields. Thanks to an Interreg project, the GTE created European cross-border centres in 2003 (cross-border information points opened to the larger public).

> Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis – Cross-Border Jobs Forum see www.cross-border-territories.eu



FRANCO-GERMAN JOBSEEKER PLACEMENT SERVICES

Pôle Emploi (FR) – Bundesagentur für Arbeit (DE)



Nearly 50,000 French people cross the Franco-German border every day to go to work in Germany, where the demand for labour is high and set to grow over the coming decades. Unemployment figures point to a contrasting situation: in the Grand Est Region, unemployment stands at 9.8%,⁴ whereas it stands at only 4.9% in Rhineland-Palatinate, 6.8% in Saarland, and Baden-Württemberg enjoys a situation of near full employment, with an unemployment rate of only 3.4%.⁵ France’s public employment agency, Pôle Emploi, and Germany’s Federal Employment Agency are working to improve cross-border jobseeker placement, with the exchanging of job vacancies and profiles, dissemination by press and radio, the organisation of recruitment-meetings, joint participation in trade fairs, workshops at Pôle Emploi and in vocational schools, and mailing campaigns to employers, etc. This partnership led to a framework cooperation agreement,⁶ signed in February 2013, which has taken concrete form in the setting-up of five cross-border jobseeker placement services⁷ along the Franco-German border.

4 Insee Conjoncture Grand Est, No. 8, published: 23/05/2017.
 5 Source: Arbeitsmarkt 2016, Bundesagentur für Arbeit, <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistikdaten/Detail/201612/ama/heft-arbeitsmarkt/arbeitsmarkt-d-0-201612-pdf.pdf>
 6 Between Pôle Emploi Alsace and the regional directorate of the Baden-Württemberg Federal Employment Agency on the one hand, and between Pôle Emploi Lorraine and the regional directorate of the Saarland-Rhineland-Palatinate Federal Employment Agency on the other.
 7 - Strasbourg-Ortenau service, set up between the Strasbourg et Offenbourg agencies,
 - Service set up between the Haguenau, Wissembourg, Landau and Karlsruhe-Rastatt agencies,
 - Service set up between the Haut-Rhin Department agencies and those of Freiburg and Lörrach,
 - Jobseeker placement service set up between the Saarbrücken and Sarreguemines agencies,
 - Jobseeker placement service set up between the Sélestat and Freiburg agencies.



Strasbourg-Ortenau cross-border placement service for employment / © Christian Creutz

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The border induces disparities regarding taxes, wages, unemployment rates, prices, languages, administrative procedures, working methods and labour laws. These disparities may be seen as obstacles or opportunities, depending on the point of view taken. The disparities create situations of competition which households and businesses can take advantage of when deciding where to set up, and which markets (especially the labour market) to tap on the other side of the border. Public and private players find themselves in a complex interplay of competition and cooperation. The aim is to move from pure competition to “co-opetition”, which is a fusion of cooperation and competition.

THE BIHARTEAN CROSS-BORDER CCI

Bayonne-Basque Country CCI – Gipuzkoa Chamber of Commerce



The BIHARTEAN cross-border chamber of commerce and industry (CCI) is the first example in Europe of a cross-border structure set up by two chambers of commerce. It is a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) founded jointly in 2010⁸ by the Bayonne-Basque Country CCI and the Gipuzkoa Chamber of Commerce. BIHARTEAN serves companies located in Basque Country territory on both sides of the Franco-Spanish border (French Basque Country and Gipuzkoa province in the Spanish Basque Country). Over seven years, it has supported 1,100 businesses in all economic sectors, enabled cross-border economic projects to be carried out and strengthened business networks using digital technologies (see the “Cross-border business opportunities” page). At the European level, this action has been recognised through its integration in the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). The projects funded as part of the Interreg programme POCTEFA, the strategic collaboration with the Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra Euroregion and the signing of an agreement in principle in July 2017 on the integration of the Navarra CCI into BIHARTEAN are all proof of the vitality of this cooperation.

8 With the MOT's support.

CARIB-INTER.COM FREIGHT MARKETPLACE

Cluster GAT Caraïbes



The French Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe, St Martin etc.) and French Guiana are a part of the European Union, but are also located in the Caribbean geographical area. In 2015, the Cluster GAT Caraïbes, a key player in the fields of transport and logistics in the Caribbean, set up a multimodal Freight Marketplace (<http://www.carib-inter.com/>) to coordinate the transportation of goods in the Greater Caribbean. This marketplace aims to facilitate intra-Caribbean links for the exchange of goods by centralising supply and demand for transport, and thus contribute to the development of Caribbean cross-border trade.

- > Principality of Andorra – Promotion of economic development through the prevention of risks linked to avalanches and upgrade of the RN20 highway
- > Syndicat Mixte de la Côte d’Opale⁹ (lead partner) – PROTER, Interreg IVA project (France-Wallonia-Flanders) see www.cross-border-territories.eu

9 Pôle Métropolitain de la Côte d’Opale since 2012.



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

In the area of **research** and **innovation**, existing strategies are mostly defined nationally, which limits cross-border cooperation initiatives. However, at the regional and local levels, cross-border territories can give rise to complementarities between research systems and the economic fabric on either side of the border (pooling equipment, mutually enhancing different scientific cultures, and complementarities in research laboratory specialisation, etc.).

CROSS-BORDER RIS3

Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra Euroregion



The Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra Euroregion has drawn up a Strategic Plan for the 2014-2020 period, which analyses the state of cooperation in the Euroregion between 2007 and 2013. The plan identifies four areas of cooperation (Euroregional citizenship; knowledge-based economy, innovation and business competitiveness; sustainable territory; open governance) and highlights a certain lack of awareness of possible synergies in the area of innovation. This led to seeking focal points between the respective Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) of Nouvelle Aquitaine, Euskadi and Navarra in order to put in place a joint Euroregional economic development strategy. The strategy identified the following sectors around which cooperation can be organised: aeronautics and transport; health/biohealth; agriculture and the agri-food industry; sustainable construction, wood; renewable energy; and marine and coastal resources.

- > Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis – Eurometropolitan Smart Cities Forum on the building of networks among players in the digital community
- > Interreg Upper Rhine / Regional partners (Alsace Region now Grand Est, Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland Palatinate) – Offensive Sciences see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS



Extension of the Strasbourg tram line D to Kehl, on the Beatus-Rhenanus bridge / © Eurometropolis of Strasbourg

TRANSPORT & MOBILITY

Cross-border public transport systems support European and territorial integration by directly enabling freedom of movement. Mobility is at the heart of how cross-border territories function, with residents' daily travel contributing to the construction of these territories. Cross-border public transport systems are drivers of sustainable development. They facilitate the movement of workers, pupils and consumers, and ease the saturation of road infrastructures along many borders. In addition to infrastructure, other actions such as car-sharing, fare integration and joint ticketing systems help to sustainably ensure more fluid movement in cross-border regions.

STRASBOURG-KEHL CROSS-BORDER TRAM

Eurometropolis / City of Strasbourg / City of Kehl



The extension of the tram network from the Strasbourg Eurometropolis to Kehl which became operational on 29 April 2017 is a symbolic undertaking born of the political will of the mayors of Strasbourg and Kehl, who adopted a shared cross-border vision for the construction of a 360° conurbation. This cross-border tramline, which required the building of a new bridge over the Rhine, connects to Kehl railway station, and then on to Kehl city hall in 2018. Regulatory and technical obstacles (mainly linked to the approval of trains from one national network in another country) needed to be overcome in order to define an operating framework that is balanced and fully integrates public transport networks.

CROSS-BORDER CAR-SHARING IN THE JURA ARC

Jura Arc – Haut Jura Regional Nature Park



The Jura Arc car-sharing project is a response to the worsening traffic and heavy congestion in the region. It is funded by the Interreg programme and implements a series of actions aimed at creating awareness of and incentives for car-sharing among co-workers. A website (<http://covoiturage-arcjurassien.com>) and call centre help users to connect with car-sharing partners. The project also includes infrastructure such as clearly-marked reserved parking spaces for car-sharers, in agreement with Swiss and French municipalities. The project partners also organise "car-sharing challenges" to award prizes to the companies that have the largest number of car-sharers and to car-share groups selected at random.

- > Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis – Cross-border "Trampoline" train passes / Mouscron-Wattrelos-Roubaix integrated cross-border bus service
- > Alzette-Belval EGTC – Study on the interoperability of transport systems
- > Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict – Dedicated bus service between Erstein and Lahr
- > Basel Trinalton Eurodistrict – Extension of the tram, line 8 to Weil am Rhein (Germany) and line 3 to Saint-Louis (France)
- > Annemasse Agglo – Extension of the Geneva tramline to Annemasse
- > Geneva Canton / CFF / Réseau Ferré de France – CEVA
- > Corsica Territorial Authority / OTC – Preparation of an EGTC to manage sea and air links for the islands in the western Mediterranean
- > Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion (lead partner) – Transfermuga (Interreg IVA POCTEFA)
- > Province of Limburg (NL) / Province of North Brabant (BE) / Ministry infrastructure and environment (NL): Triple-border railway connection Liège – Maastricht – Aachen¹⁰ see www.cross-border-territories.eu

¹⁰ In cooperation with Belgian and German partners; co-financed by the EU.

FOR OTHER PROJECTS

CULTURE & CIVIL SOCIETY

The border is also a place for encounters and dialogue that sometimes brings together people who share the same language or **culture**, or conversely, people from different worlds. Cross-border cooperation bridges divides and creates areas of development and citizenship through cultural initiatives promoted by public policy or **civil society**. Promoting a shared historical and cultural heritage can bring populations together beyond borders. Civil society plays an important role in this.¹¹

A SAUTE-FRONTIÈRE (JUMPING BORDERS)

Jura Arc Cross-Border Forum



Since 2007, the Cross-Border Forum has organised a series of conferences and discussions for the general public to promote broad reflections on the shared future of the Jura Arc cross-border region and its population. The 2015-2016 series entitled "A Saute-Frontière" (Jumping Borders) showcased 70 local cooperation projects through a survey presented and discussed in five public conferences. These regular thematic meetings enable players and decision-makers to compare their experiences and difficulties regarding territorial issues and also to carry out real field analysis. Smaller local cooperation initiatives, be they citizen-led, private or institutional, are often little known and ad hoc. Highlighting them and having a greater understanding of them makes it possible to better identify and propagate them.

- > Alzette Belval EGTC – "Alzette Belval, Vivons ensemble"
- > Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis – Heartbeats Eurometropolis Festival
- > Fondation Circolo dei Lettori (lead partner) – "Lieux-vivants" see www.cross-border-territories.eu

¹¹ Other projects involving civil society are presented in Part 2.

FOR OTHER PROJECTS





Bastia, one of the three main harbours of the Canal of Corsica, a strait partner of the PASSAGE project / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière



PASSAGE

Pas-de-Calais
Departmental Council
(lead partner)

The PASSAGE project (Public Authorities Supporting low-carbon Growth in European maritime border regions), launched in May 2016 and cofinanced by the Interreg Europe programme, focuses on low-carbon economies in the area of straits. The premise of the project is that European straits, at the heart of maritime border regions, are busy intersections where there is a concentration of flows and activities that generate a large carbon footprint. The project's objective is to improve how this challenge is addressed on five maritime borders. It is part of the European Straits Initiative, a cooperation project that works for greater recognition of the issues specific to European straits. The initiative was launched in 2010 by the Pas-de-Calais Department, now lead partner of the PASSAGE project. The aim of the six partner straits is to produce cross-border action plans based on the exchange of experiences in the course of thematic seminars and an analysis of the current situation. The action plans will focus on implementing their transition to low-carbon economies and strengthening cross-border cooperation in each partner territory.

TOURISM

Tourism is a dynamic sector of the European economy and a key focus of cross-border cooperation. The development of tourist infrastructures and services fosters local economies by creating short- and long-term employment. That is why using tourism to promote border territories, which make up 40% of the area of Europe, is an important issue. By shining a light on shared historical and geographical heritage, tourism also helps to strengthen citizens' sense of belonging to and identification with a cross-border territory.

working group of the Upper Rhine Conference, to launch and steer the project. The project was funded by the German Länder of Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg, the Swiss cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau and Jura, the French government, the Alsace Region and the European Union through the Interreg II Upper Rhine and PAMINA programmes. Its success has led to its geographical expansion, a constant increase in the number of partner structures, in museum visits using the annual pass, and in financial payments to member venues.

UPPER RHINE MUSEUM PASS

Museums-PASS-
Musée Association



Launched officially on 1 July 1999, the Museum PASS is the first trinational cultural passport in Europe. The pass provides unlimited access to around 320 cultural sites for one year following purchase, encouraging people to cross borders in order to discover museums, castles, gardens and other sites. An association under Swiss law, Museums-PASS-Musée, was set up on the initiative of the "culture"

- > Lille-Kortijk-Tournai Eurometropolis – "Lonely Planet" travel guide / Tourist map
- > AGUR (lead partner) – "Tendances", Interreg V project (France-Wallonia-Flanders)
- > Pays Horloger Joint Association, Doubs Regional Nature Park – "Les chemins de la contrebande franco-suisse" (Tracks of the French-Swiss smuggling), Interreg IV project (France-Switzerland)
- > Idelux-Aive Groupe (lead partner) – "Land of Memory: on the conflict's steps at the origin of Europe", Interreg V (Greater Region) project see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS

ENVIRONMENT

Cross-border actions in the area of the environment complement national policies and local initiatives, and have real value added. Cross-border territories are, or should become, areas of shared responsibility and management of the environment and the pooling of resources. The focus may be on various aspects such as protecting natural areas, the transition to a low-carbon economy and incorporating environmental concerns into sectoral policies.

REDVERT

Basque Eurocity
Cross-Border Agency



The aim of the Agency for the Development of the Bayonne-San Sebastian Basque Eurocity is to develop a network of environmental corridors with green and blue components. The creation of green infrastructures is the key tool for protecting and promoting biodiversity in relation to human activities. In 2011, the Basque Eurocity cross-border agency launched the Green and Blue Network project (Réseau Vert et Bleu – REDVERT) with the support of the Interreg POCTEFA programme. The project consisted of three phases:

- conducting a mapping study on Basque Eurocity green corridors (2012-2014),
- defining a strategy and action plan to preserve and promote these green corridors (2014-2015),
- steering and dissemination of the study on green corridors, the strategy and action plan (2014-2015).



CROSS-BORDER WASTE WATER TREATMENT

European Metropolis of Lille (MEL), Flemish Region, AQUAFIN / MEL, Walloon Region, IPALLE



A cross-border water quality improvement system is one of the founding achievements that preceded the creation of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, which has received the support of the France-Wallonia-Flanders Interreg programme. The system was developed to overcome the difficulties related to the treatment of waste water. It was underpinned by two agreements signed in 2002 and 2003 by the French and Flemish sides, and the French and Walloon sides. These agreements made possible the joint use of two existing water treatment plants as well as the construction of two cross-border water treatment plants: one on French territory and the other on Belgian territory. A third water treatment plant was subsequently constructed on the Belgian side following an amendment to the agreement signed with the Walloon Region. Construction of these infrastructures posed challenges due to the need to harmonise technical and legal standards in Belgian and French law in order to ensure smooth functioning of the plants.

- > Pas-de-Calais Departmental Council (lead partner) – I3VT (Cross-Border Cycle Routes and Greenways), Interreg IV (France-Wallonia-Flanders) project
- > Lille Metropolis natural area, City of Lille – Green and blue belt
- > SaarMoselle Eurodistrict (lead partner) – The Blue Strip of the Saar, Interreg IV project (Greater Region)
- > Alpes-de-Haute-Provence Departmental Council (lead partner) – L'@venture géologique, Interreg V (ALCOTRA) project
- > Generalitat de Catalunya (lead partner), 3 French partners including the Pyrénées-Orientales Departmental Council – PRINCALB, Interreg IV POCTEFA project for the protection of the Albère mountain range against forest fires
- > Joint association of studies and planning of the Garonne (SMEAG) – Cross-border approach of the Garonne
- > South Basque Country Conurbation (lead partner)¹² – AQNIV (Improvement of the Quality of the Nivelle), Interreg IV (POCTEFA) project see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS

¹² Merged within the Basque Conurbation Community since 1 January 2017.



Wind farm on the Danish coastline / © Martin Freire, World Future Council

ENERGY

Other than technical, environmental and economic issues, rich in energy matters, one has to add in a cross-border context difficulties linked to disparities in regulatory, tax and legal regimes. Cooperation in this field is nonetheless crucial to ensuring supply security on both sides of national borders and the complete integration of the European energy market. While the development of renewable energies and the promotion of energy efficiency may yield economic and financial benefits in the medium and long term, in the short term, they require costly investment, which can be pooled across borders.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY OF THE GREATER GENEVA PROJECT

Greater Geneva LGCC



In 2010, players in the Greater Geneva conurbation met to include an energy-climate plan in the France-Vaud-Geneva Conurbation project. The third generation of the conurbation project published in 2016 set new objectives and developed new tangible applications such as:

- G²AME (Greater Geneva Air Model Emissions), a tool for tracking pollution levels across the territory,
- Launch of a climate-energy plan,
- The organisation, for the first time in a cross-border territory, of a European conference on energy transition in January 2018. This event involves other members of the MOT network: ENEDIS is one of the main partners and the CNFPT will offer training sessions during the event.

The territory offers a wealth of opportunities and resources – a lake, agricultural and green waste, geothermal, solar and wood energy – and the population is expecting the public authorities to provide concrete solutions regarding sustainable public transport, and access to low-energy housing, training, advice, and funding.

CLIMATE & RISKS

Cross-border actions in this area display high value added and complement national policies and local initiatives, because climate change and the natural and technological risks it entails are transnational if not global. It is crucial for cross-border territories to pool knowledge and mechanisms to respond to these challenges, and to develop common strategies to manage risks and build territories' resilience to climate change.

PROTERINA ÉVOLUTION 3

CIMA Foundation (lead partner)¹³



Launched in February 2017, the “PROTERINA EVOLUTION 3” project, selected for funding under the Interreg V Italy-France Marittimo programme, is aimed at flood risk prevention. The City of Nice, a project partner, has developed a two-tiered technical and communication initiative. Firstly, the testing of a monitoring platform for the Magnan river, which cross-references topographical, hydrological, meteorological data and real-time video, using smart cameras, in order to develop rain-water flow models that make it possible to trigger an alert one hour before the impact of the surge of water. Secondly, the installation of a series of interactive information/communication stations along the Magnan, to raise citizens' awareness and get them involved in the prevention and alert system by enhancing their understanding of risk and appropriate preventive measures. In a global context of escalating risk and the increase in human challenges stemming from urbanisation, the project aims to develop replicable joint pilot initiatives at the cross-border level with a view to increasing the resilience of this Mediterranean territory to flood risk.

- > Principality of Andorra – Improving avalanche risk see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS

¹³ Cross-border territory – 5 regions: Liguria, Tuscany, Sardinia, Corsica, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur – of which Alpes-Maritimes and Var.

SPATIAL PLANNING¹⁴

Conducting cross-border spatial planning and facility projects requires cross-border territories to first establish the main elements of their shared vision. While many cross-border regions share a degree of geographical continuity (cross-border conurbations, adjoining natural areas, etc.), each territory is governed by different regulations, often defined at national level. The integrated development of cross-border territories requires the authorities designing these projects to cross the demarcation line formed by the border.

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CROSS-BORDER JACQUES DELORS SQUARE

Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis



The redevelopment of the cross-border Jacques Delors Square, two-thirds of which is located in France and one-third in Belgium, between the municipalities of Menin and Halluin, has improved residents' urban surroundings and living environment. Funded by Interreg IV France-Wallonia-Flanders, a first phase of this multi-sectoral project involved joint and integrated urban planning (street furniture, green spaces, lighting, etc.). A second phase consisted in conducting a study on mobility, leading to the creation of bus stops and car parks. The refurbishment of the square was accompanied by a legal study on the collective management of the area and the publishing of a bilingual guide for the local players in charge of this management. The square is of particular interest to the police force and customs authorities due to its strategic location straddling both countries. This pioneering project aspires to serve as an "everyday user's guide" in the fields of maintenance, parking, cooperation between the relevant departments.

14 Other cross-border spatial planning projects are discussed in Part 2.

3LAND

Agreement between Basel (Switzerland), Huningue (France) and Weil am Rhein (Germany)



Initiated in 2012, the 3Land spatial planning project agreement brings together the municipalities of Huningue, Weil am Rhein, Basel, the Saint-Louis conurbation and the Upper Rhine Department. This agreement enabled the development of a joint planning strategy for an 82-hectar trinational port and industrial district. The project aims to accommodate 10,000 new residents and create 13,000 new jobs. The agreement focused on the joint planning of a "new urban district at the heart of the Basel trinational conurbation (3Land)". A second agreement was signed in 2016 for the 2016-2020 period. It focuses on expanding the project particularly in the areas of transport, landscaping and pioneering approaches for a cross-border conurbation. The objective of the project developers is to make the Rhine a focal point of the district, by making its banks accessible and creating new recreational areas by the river. The Basel Trinational Eurodistrict steered the project in its first phase. Plans include the creation of three landscaped areas and the construction of three new bridges across the Rhine to revitalise the district. The 3Land project was nominated in the context of the IBA Basel 2020 International Architecture Exhibition, an instrument for developing visions for strategic and urban planning over a 10-year period (2009–2020).

HAINAUT CROSS-BORDER NATURE PARK

PNR Scarpe-Escaut – Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut



The Hainaut Cross-Border Nature Park was created in 2004 by the signing of a partnership agreement. It is made up of two nature parks on the Franco-Belgian border: the Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park on the French side (created in 1968 and the oldest French regional nature park) and the Plaines de l'Escaut Nature Park on the Belgian side (created in 1996), which jointly coordinate its management. The territory, which encompasses 75,000 hectares, 255,000 residents and 97 villages and towns, is located between Lille, Valenciennes, Tournai and Mons. The two parks carry out many joint initiatives (supported by several generations of Interreg programmes), are jointly managed and have a cross-border charter. In 2013, the Hainaut Cross-Border Nature Park was certified as a "Transboundary Park", a designation awarded by EUROPARC, the Federation of European Nature Parks, which recognises high-level cross-border cooperation between protected natural areas.



3Land project gathering Switzerland, Germany and France, the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict / © ETB

- > City of Mulhouse – Redevelopment of the DMC district in a European Laboratory of social innovation, a project which has been labeled IBA Basel 2020
- > Ain Departmental Council (lead partner) – LIDAR project, Interreg IV (France-Switzerland), on the digital terrain and elevation model (French Greater Geneva) using airborne remote sensing
see www.cross-border-territories.eu

FOR OTHER PROJECTS



The European Union was built on the rubble of the conflicts of the twentieth century. Cross-border cooperation sprang from the same source, and combined two distinct narratives.

The first narrative is inseparable from the European project itself. From 1957, the objective of European construction was to achieve an integrated area and free movement within the entire European territory. Logically, this integration was to be attained most particularly in border regions. However, it was not until 1990 and the prospect of the Maastricht Treaty that the European Commission launched its Interreg initiative to support cross-border cooperation within the framework of cohesion policy. This demonstrated the awareness that obstacles remained and that the construction of the single market, while a prerequisite, was not in itself sufficient for the development of border regions.

The second narrative is the result of a grassroots reconciliation process initiated after the war by local public and private players, which led to the gradual development of concrete cross-border projects serving the development of border regions and their inhabitants, and the governance of emerging cross-border territories. Examples of these projects were presented in Part 1. The Council of Europe was the first, notably with the Madrid Convention of 1980, to identify the need to develop a European policy, taken on in national policies, to encourage cooperation among border local authorities.

The Council of Europe also spearheaded the identification of obstacles to cooperation following a survey conducted in 2011 among Member States, the systematic analysis of these obstacles according to a classification developed to better understand them, and proposals for actions to overcome them.¹⁵

The European Union belatedly recognised what practitioners of cross-border cooperation had known for a long time. Several complementary rationales underpin the obstacles to cooperation and their resolution. Firstly, a **political and societal rationale** that is aimed at the opening-up of networks of private and public local players across borders, and the setting-up of cross-border territory governance, which encounters institutional, cultural, and even cognitive obstacles. Secondly, a **functional rationale** for coordination in the face of legal, administrative and technical obstacles involving Member States, which must be resolved on a border-by-border basis and at the national level, as top-down convergence through European legislation (sectoral policies) is not sufficient. And lastly, an **economic rationale**: while opening up borders benefits border regions in the long term, an impetus, an activating energy is required to open up borders – this is the **Interreg rationale** found in cohesion policy funding programmes.

The different categories of obstacles form a system and the cross-border projects that come up against them require the use of a **toolkit**. Part 2, will present this toolkit, reviewing each of these three rationales: first, the **construction of cross-border territories** and their governance; second, **cross-border coordination of national policies**; and third, **funding of and support for cooperation**.

For each of these rationales, we will present the **central issue**, the **obstacles** and the **solutions implemented**, illustrated by best practices – presented as tools – by the MOT's network and its partners. These tools are indispensable to achieve the development potential of cross-border territories, create economic activity and jobs, and improve the living conditions of citizens in cross-border territories, thus contributing to the European objectives of completion of the internal market and territorial cohesion.

2.1. Construction of cross-border territories

The harmonious development of cross-border territories remains the *raison d'être* of all levels of reflection and of the sectoral, institutional and political domains of cross-border cooperation. Knowledge of the functioning and great diversity of these territories is essential. They are places where different systems intersect. They are on the fringes, but also frontier zones – areas of transition and cultural interpenetration.

It is vital to understand cross-border territories, by observing them in order to assess their particularities, disparities and weaknesses, and also the potential they possess by virtue of their critical mass, especially in cross-border urban areas. It is important to understand them to take action and conduct the most effective public policies there.

For a long time, the lack of knowledge of these territories made them all but invisible to national authorities. Today, greater knowledge has led to raising authorities' awareness and understanding, thereby enabling public action.

It is also essential to understand the people on both sides of the border in order to understand these territories. Moreover, **interpersonal knowledge** among decision-makers and mutual willingness to cooperate make it possible to define **common** local and sometimes broader **objectives** resulting in a **real cross-border strategy** for the shared territory.

A more or less clearly-defined framework for joint **territorial governance** that is commensurate with jointly-held ambitions must then be developed on the basis of the increased exchanges and the desire to move ahead in the same direction for the benefit of a shared cross-border territory. This governance may mean setting up policy-making bodies on each side whose actions can be supported by technical expertise. This technical support **often functions in a network** and may be pooled within a joint team in the most advanced cases. The quality of this technical assistance is crucial because it provides technical input to projects and to the resolution of the obstacles they face. The quality of the relationship between technical expertise and political action is also decisive.

As territories are made up of their inhabitants, cooperation also affects the population, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the policies conducted on either side of the border, or jointly. Cooperation should also engage the population as **citizens** by involving them in ongoing discussions. Efforts should be made to communicate on cross-border projects and on the significance of opening up borders in different domains, starting with knowledge of the **neighbouring country's language**. Cooperation that focuses solely on the management of governance tools and funding would be meaningless.



This part will cover the following three aspects:

- observing and understanding the territory in order to conduct joint territorial development policies;
- initiating political dialogue, and creating a framework for specific and sectoral cooperation prior to structuring a more ambitious political cooperation based on effective technical assistance;
- knowing and understanding one's neighbours, developing harmonious coexistence through education, culture and shared services; feeling involved in the construction of the cross-border territory.

These three aspects do not occur in a set chronological order and may be deemed the three sides of the triangle of the cross-border territory project. At the very least, a first **political impetus** is required to engage in dialogue with border neighbours. This dialogue may provide the basis for more in-depth cross-border **observation** and **analysis**. That said, the **functional integration** of residents' practices often largely precedes a formal **cross-border political project**, which in turn enables border citizens to reap the fruits of the cooperation projects it helped to launch. The constant dialogue between these three aspects creates a virtuous cycle of cooperation which, by the concrete nature of the results it engenders, progressively overcomes the obstacles of lack of knowledge and the legal and administrative disparities inherent in the cross-border setting.

¹⁵ EDEN database on obstacles and solutions compiled by the Council of Europe and the Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia (ISIG).

a. OBSERVATION, STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Mutual knowledge of both sides of a cross-border territory and of the functioning of this territory is crucial to developing cooperation that is based, not on prejudices and financial expediency as regards the use of funds, but on the identification of the needs, complementarities and obstacles that hamper the daily lives of border residents and the performance of cross-border territories.

This knowledge may be acquired through the pooling of information during regular technical meetings, or by conducting a cross-border **territorial assessment**. This mutual knowledge may also be developed by publishing joint maps, and in more advanced cases, by setting up **cross-border observatories** with a **statistical** and/or **qualitative** dimension.

This basis is essential to launching effective public action in the area of cross-border cooperation, either on an ad hoc basis through local sectoral projects, or by embarking on more ambitious **cross-border spatial planning** underpinned by **joint cross-border development programmes and strategies**.

In this regard, it is essential to adapt technical assistance to the demands of knowledge and understanding of the functioning of these unique territories. It requires training staff in the language of the neighbouring country and the functioning of its institutions. Intellectually overcoming the technical and cognitive barriers of the border is a precondition for implementing effective technical assistance.

OBSTACLES RELATED TO LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND A SHARED VISION

Two difficulties that are frequently cited are **lack of knowledge** of the neighbouring country and of a **shared vision**.



Inadequate proficiency in the neighbouring country's language generally goes hand-in-hand with poor knowledge of the different types of institutional and administrative organisations in place on the other side of the border. This **lack of knowledge** has been accentuated following recent territorial reforms in France and several neighbouring countries, which have led to changes in areas of competence. It is thus increasingly difficult to identify the right contact points.

There are also difficulties related to the objective lack of knowledge of the cross-border territory, particularly due to the **absence of harmonised cross-border data**, notably on cross-border flows.

Each Member State has developed its own laws and practices in the areas of spatial and **urban planning** that give the different levels of territorial authorities more or less leeway to manage and organise the development of their territories. The **absence of harmonisation** in legal and technical regulations and the **lack of coordination** of planning initiatives are too frequent and make it **even more difficult to draw up joint territorial development strategies**.

The overall consequence of the lack of knowledge obstacle is the disconnect between sectoral policies (on transport, for example). One consequence is the lower visibility and awareness of cross-border territory issues within national and European organisations. A clear illustration of this is the large number of maps that still end at national borders with respect to various topics and in high-quality publications.



Observation of cross-border territories

The observation of cross-border territories is based on the need to know and understand how these atypical areas located on the fringes of national systems function. The presence of a border within these territories generates many types of disparities: in demographic and socio-economic characteristics and changes, employment growth, spatial development, etc.



TRANSVERSAL OBSERVATION TOOLS

Territorial observation tools in the "Greater Region"

A number of tools have been developed at the level of the Greater Region to offset the lack of harmonised cross-border information and data on the cooperation territory. Close cooperation and the convergence of action programmes lay the foundation for harmonised cross-border territorial observation.

- 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 compile 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



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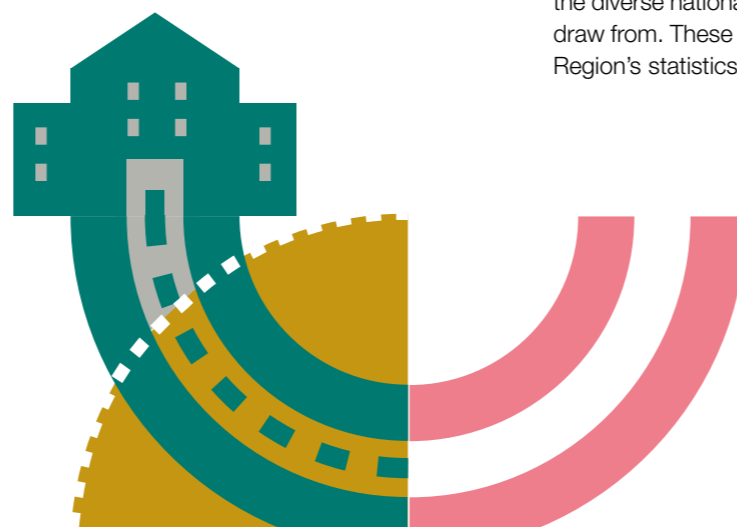
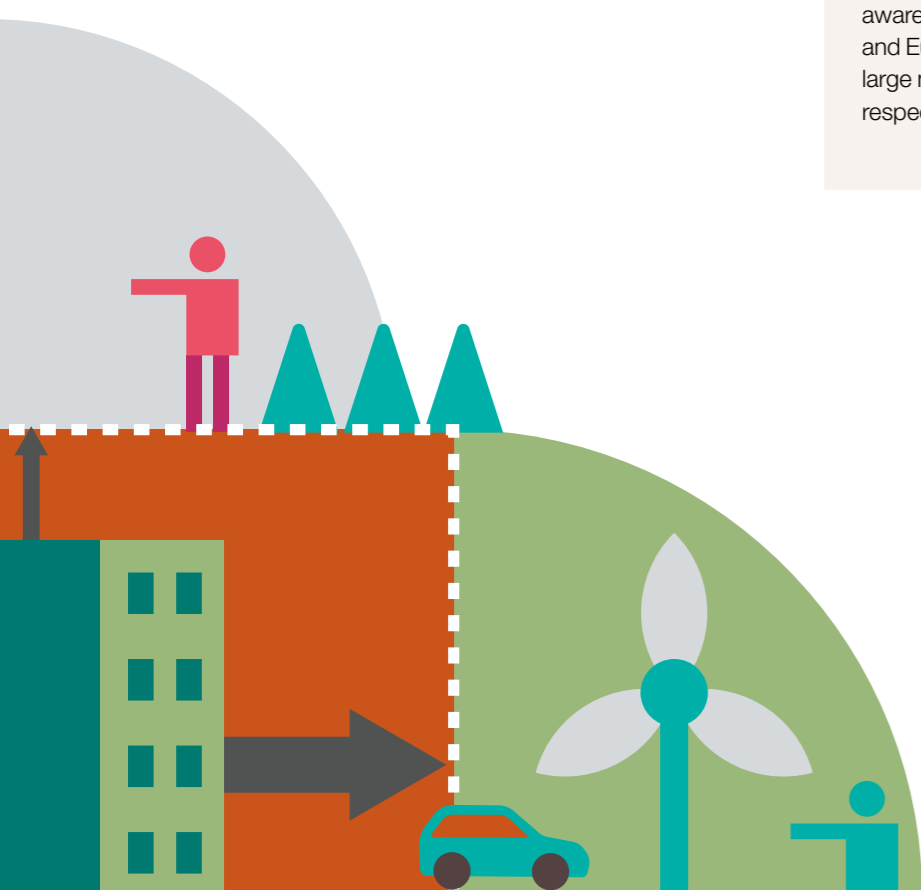
- The **Interregional Job Market Observatory (OIE)** is a network of specialised institutes responsible for compiling comparable and interpretable data on the job market for Greater Region policy-makers. The data enables decision-makers to draw pertinent conclusions in the area of structural and employment policy for the Greater Region. In particular, it publishes a socio-economic report in connection with the Greater Region Summit: www.iba-oie.eu

MMUST PROJECT FOR THE SIMULATION OF MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PEOPLE

AGAPE (lead partner)



The MMUST project (Multimodal model and scenarios for cross-border mobility), application process ongoing, involves the construction of a cross-border (France-Belgium-Luxembourg) multimodal model that simulates the movement of goods and people, and supports public decision-making on investments to be made in the areas of mobility and cross-border transport infrastructures. The project is supported by the main authorities responsible for transport in the trinational region (Luxembourg Ministry, French government, Grand Est Region and Walloon Region) and is a first in the Greater Region.





Joint strategies and planning

Another way for cross-border players to overcome the lack of a shared vision is to implement cross-border strategies based on a **preliminary cross-border analysis**. These strategies help to create a shared vision that is broken down into different sectoral core areas. This may lead to the implementation of projects which are part of an overall cross-border strategy that interlinks the different levels, such as the Jura Arc Strategy (see below).

Territorial strategies may include a dimension that focuses more specifically on a shared spatial project with an emphasis on cooperation in the areas of planning and urban development. Certain regions are especially advanced in this regard: cross-border conurbations, such as those of Geneva and Basel on the Franco-Swiss and Franco-German-Swiss borders. These conurbations' actions may also encompass thematic approaches.

GREATER GENEVA CONURBATION PROJECT

Greater Geneva
LGCC



The France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation, which became Greater Geneva in 2012, is a cross-border territory that brings together 212 municipalities with a population of roughly 953,000 inhabitants (more than half of whom live in the canton of Geneva), and numbers some 451,000 jobs. The conurbation is the fruit of cross-border actions initiated over 40 years ago, with a first “charter of development” signed in December 2007. The charter founded a **conurbation project** that included a joint analysis of the territory, the targeted development and a commitment to implement corresponding measures. It determined co-funding by the Swiss Confederation for investments in Switzerland and France, within the framework of the federal conurbations policy. The second generation of the conurbation project added a dimension of “cross-border public services policies” including territorial and social cohesion, the economy, housing, the environment, healthcare and culture. The conurbation project of the Greater Geneva has been coordinated by an LGCC since 2013. With the signing of the third phase at the end of 2016, the third generation of the project aims to further develop the initiatives already implemented. It is now a **territorial project** built on a shared vision and single cross-border governance, divided into 550 urbanisation, transport and environmental protection measures.

JURA ARC STRATEGY

Trans-Jura
Conference (CTJ)



From 2013 to 2015, the Trans-Jura Conference drew up an assessment of cooperation in the Jura Arc and formulated a strategy developing a new mode of governance along with cooperation priorities for the 2014-2020 period.¹⁶ The governance structure comprises a core committee, an extended committee, a general secretariat and thematic working groups that meet to develop projects to be implemented in the territory. The strategic orientations for the 2014-2020 period are economic development, harmonious coexistence, transport and exchanges, spatial management and managing natural resources. The definition of priorities does not seek to limit the scope of what is possible, but rather to provide elected representatives and cross-border players with a framework within which to better structure cross-border cooperation. This is an example of the elaboration of an overall cross-border strategy that spotlights cooperation. It is an approach that is transferable to other borders.

¹⁶ This work was carried out with the support of the MOT.



Greater Geneva agglomeration / © CERN

b. GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL ACTION

While cross-border territories are a functioning reality as a result of the permeability of borders and inhabitants' need to cross these borders, only a **shared political will** on both sides of the border can create a system of more structured exchanges and diversified cooperation.

From informal exchanges to more ambitious structures, national regulations on the law governing territorial authorities, the framework for bilateral relations and the instruments of European territorial cohesion now offer territories a vast range of possibilities for developing legally structured cross-border institutional partnerships.

The legal structuring of cross-border governance, which may be more or less sophisticated, is both the culmination of political exchanges over the years and a tool to facilitate and deepen cooperation. The sole purpose of its technical complexity is to facilitate concrete projects for border citizens. Legally-structured cross-border governance enables cross-border initiatives that are sustainable over the long term because they bridge political transitions and transcend particular personal relationships between elected representatives, as well as the strength of individual will.

INSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLES

Many of the obstacles to cross-border cooperation are **legal or institutional** in nature. They result from national borders that embody the separation between different national systems, and the asymmetry between political and administrative organisations on either side of the border.



Electoral timetables and different institutional frameworks and schedules slow down cooperation. For instance, recent French and Belgian territorial and institutional reforms have focused on different institutional goals with mismatched timelines. Diverging electoral cycles, and referendum periods in Switzerland, which suspend public action for varying lengths of time, sometimes lead to impasses and hamper some projects.

Cross-border territories often identify **political changes** in territorial authorities as risks to the continuity of local public action. Only a strong political leadership provides an **enduring framework** for cross-border actions. The engagement of elected representatives and policy-makers goes through training initiatives which may take the form an “**Erasmus for elected representatives**”.

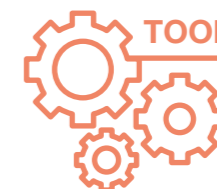
Differences in institutional levels and in partners' competences are also a source of delay to the implementation of projects.

In addition, **sectoral segregation** within territorial authorities and government departments, and **structural segregation**, impede the cross-sectoral approach that is required to properly manage cross-border issues.

There is often **no body** within the territorial authority that **centralises** all projects and fosters cross-sectoral synergies. Existing European affairs departments do not necessarily do this and are sometimes confined to a structural fund management role.

Organising cross-border cooperation players into a single local legal structure could make it possible to more effectively fund and steer joint activities, ensure a sustainable framework for dialogue and enhance visibility and awareness of the territory at the national and European levels.

A legal tool such as EGTC enables cross-border governance, which for the most part, is part of a dialogue between the different institutional levels. However, an EGTC is not a sufficient condition for the effective governance of the cross-border territory, if this governance does not involve citizens, overlooks them in its actions and fails to communicate on projects. This type of indifference, lack of understanding or abstract vision is liable to lead to a rejection by inhabitants of governance structures that they deem technocratic.



Governance (cross-border structures)

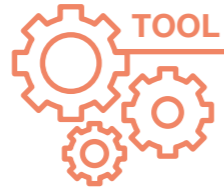
Cross-border governance frameworks may take many more or less structured institutional forms: cooperation protocols, conventions, agreements, consortia, LGCCs, EGTCs, ECGs, EEIGs, etc., depending on the legal personality (public or private) of the partners, the objectives of the various initiatives, cultures of public action, resources invested, etc.



View on the Maroni river at the border French Guiana / Suriname / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

MARONI RIVER COUNCIL

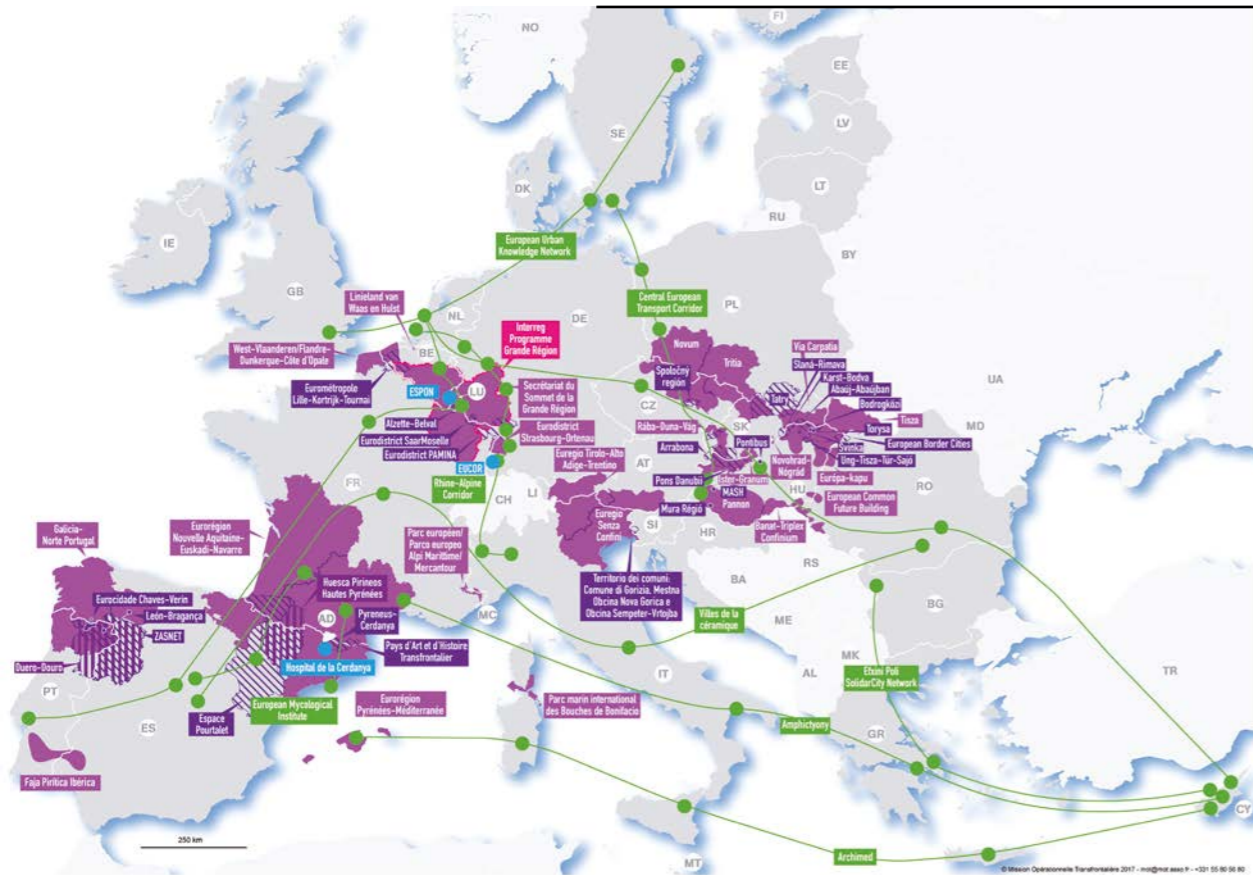
Created at the first joint France-Suriname Commission, this council brings together the French and Surinamese authorities with the aim of facilitating discussions on cross-border issues in the Maroni region. The 11th meeting of the Maroni River Council in Albina (Suriname) on 18 July 2017 reaffirmed the dialogue with the Surinamese authorities on all topics concerning the riverside populations. Discussions focused on issues such as Maroni river crossings: the planned building of the large ferryboat which will link France and Suriname, and the redevelopment of the Saint-Laurent and Albina ports, flood monitoring, waste management and the movement of the citizens of Suriname and French Guiana on both sides of the Maroni River.



European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) tool is a standard of reference, because it may be used in the entire European Union as well as on its external borders, which gives it high visibility in Europe. Established by an EU regulation in 2006, which was amended in 2013, the EGTC is a legal entity that has the ability to manage cross-border projects on behalf of its members. Using the EGTC requires choosing the national law that will govern it (the law of the country where the registered office is located). It can manage intangible (including cross-border governance) or tangible (equipment, infrastructures or joint services) cooperation projects in its members' common areas of competence. It can also take on the role of managing authority for European territorial cooperation programmes or be the vehicle for tools for integrated territorial development (2014-2020 period).

European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière



LILLE-KORTRIJK-TOURNAI EUROMETROPOLIS EGTC



Set up in 2008, the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis EGTC was the first European EGTC to come out of the 2006 regulation (EC). It brings together all French and Belgian institutional levels, from government departments to municipalities (through the mayors' and *bourgmestres*' conference), as well as civil society (through its Forum) and spreads over a large territory covering the European Metropolis of Lille, southern West Flanders and Wallonia Picarde. The objective of the partners is to strengthen all aspects of cooperation within the territory. Joint management and governance are achieved by carrying out projects of common interest in various areas such as transport and spatial planning, tourism, culture, the environment, employment, training, etc.

WEST FLANDERS / FLANDERS-DUNKIRK-CÔTE D'OPALE EGTC



The West Flanders / Flanders-Dunkirk-Côte d'Opale EGTC was set up¹⁷ in April 2009. This Franco-Belgian European structure aims to pursue, strengthen, structure and ensure the sustainability of the cross-border cooperation that has progressively developed within the territory, supported by Interreg programmes. The EGTC seeks to develop and promote consistent cross-border cooperation in the Franco-Belgian territory. To do so, it ensures the coordination and networking of the players involved, representation and political dialogue in the territory. It defines common strategies and action programmes that address the needs of citizens, conducts joint actions and projects, and represents the cross-border territory vis-à-vis external bodies. The EGTC is a laboratory for multi-level cross-border governance.

17 With the support of the MOT.



Bouches de Bonifacio International Marine Park / © Olivier Bonnenfant

BOUCHES DE BONIFACIO INTERNATIONAL MARINE PARK (PMIBB) EGTC



In 2010, the Italian and French governments decided to set up a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation to jointly manage the protected natural areas located between Corsica and Sardinia. The project seeks notably to enable the integrated management of two cross-border protected areas, the Bouches de Bonifacio Natural Reserve, managed by the Corsican Office for the Environment, and La Maddalena Archipelago National Park on the Italian side. The PMIBB-EGTC agreement and statutes were signed in 2012. Its aim is to promote the protection, management and exploitation of natural and cultural resources, in order to implement a joint strategy with regard to the sustainable development of the cooperation area and harmonised administrative principles. A joint action plan was drawn up by the teams in both of these protected areas, with the support of Italian and French experts and scientists.

> Other territorial governance EGTCs that are members of the MOT¹⁸: Alzette-Belval / Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict / Greater Region Summit Secretariat / PAMINA Eurodistrict / SaarMoselle Eurodistrict.

18 This is a non-exhaustive list – these EGTCs are concerned with territorial governance.

OTHER EGTCs

C. AFFILIATIONS, IDENTITIES AND COMMITMENT TO COOPERATION

One of the components of cross-border territory projects is the willingness to work with others, to open up, to understand and be understood, and to project oneself into the other's world. Cross-border territories facilitate this process because they share a cultural or natural heritage that predates the existing administrative framework, and thus creates a natural context for cooperation. The growing technical complexity of cross-border cooperation, proportional to the increase in exchanges and integration, is more and more making it the preserve of experts. This tends to lose sight of the ultimate objective of this cooperation, which is to serve border citizens-users, and thus breeds misunderstanding and even rejection of the European project. The political cross-border communication to inhabitants remains insufficient. Only the building images of one another founded on a deepening of shared realities may favour the coming up of mutual trust, increasing the desire to know one another and coexist. These common representations are at the very foundation of the process of cooperation, and go beyond the strict necessity of common needs and interests.

CULTURAL OR LINGUISTIC OBSTACLES

A number of obstacles to cross-border integration relate to cultural aspects. Borders may mark the separation between different languages, traditions, ways of life, collective imaginations and worldviews. Or conversely, they may run through a shared cultural area that predates the border, but that is little recognised on either side of the border. Cross-border players often cite language barriers and lack of proficiency in the language of the neighbouring country¹⁹ as obstacles in the various thematic areas for cooperation, such as economic activities. Decreasing bilingualism in cross-border territories is a problem that is particularly prevalent among young people, who often prefer to learn English rather than the **language of the neighbouring country**. Persistent stereotypes and national prejudices, and the absence of cross-border media or shared information sources are also obstacles to cooperation.

¹⁹ This obstacle ranked second in the results of the survey conducted in 2015 as part of the Cross-border Review launched by the European Commission.

LACK OF WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE

Cooperative relationships are intimately linked to exchanges between people, but are hampered by factors such as differences in political and administrative cultures. Different national narratives, views and perspectives come up against one another in cross-border territories, leading to mistrust or difficulties in opening up to the other. As for every cooperation project, a period of getting to know one another is a prerequisite: cross-border players report that **changes in contact persons** often entail fresh periods of adjustment. Cooperation is rarely spontaneous – it needs to be encouraged and facilitated. Even more problematic is the fact that players on some borders that have been the focus of cooperation efforts for many years appear to display indifference, or even “fatigue” towards cooperation. This demonstrates the need for ongoing support. Structured governance helps to resolve the problem of reluctance to cooperate.



LACK OF INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS

Too often, decision-makers and governance structures do not communicate sufficiently about the achievements and usefulness of cooperation, or that it embodies a Europe that is real and close to its citizens. Nor do they formally involve citizens in this cooperation. For citizens to take ownership of cross-border territories, they must first be fully informed about these territories that extend across the border, as well as about the possibilities that cross-border territories offer citizens. However, this information is not always available or easily accessible due to the lack of cross-border media, or information portals such as INFOBEST. There is also a lack of involvement of citizens in the cross-border setting. Meeting places either do not exist (lack of cross-border citizens' forums), or are difficult to identify. To this may be added a lack of facilities provided to carry out “citizen-led” projects: lack of micro-project (“people-to-people”) funds, and obstacles to conducting such projects (cumbersome procedures).



“LEARNING THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY STARTS AT A VERY YOUNG AGE.”



Culture / Language

European and cross-border cultural and linguistic initiatives, such as the development of cross-border media, the creation of cross-border narratives, for example in shared history books like the book developed by Germany and France,²⁰ and increasing proficiency in the neighbouring country's language can help to overcome these cultural obstacles. The “culture, language” tool is therefore closely linked to the subject of education and training (see Part 1). Within border territories that are closely interconnected historically and culturally, cross-border cooperation focusing on **learning the language and culture of the neighbouring country** should be ambitious and cross-sectoral, and start at a very young age.



CROSS-BORDER EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

The “Maison de la petite enfance transfrontalière” (Cross-border Early Childhood Centre) opened in April 2014 in Strasbourg-Kehl (France-Germany). The centre is run by the cities of Kehl and Strasbourg and offers places to 60 children (30 from each city). It enables children aged three months to four years to flourish in a bilingual and multicultural setting from a very early age. The initiative was born of the two cities' shared need to have additional child care centres, and a strong political desire to set up a cross-border crèche in the heart of this conurbation. This shared facility is cross-border not only in its geographical location, but also in its educational and architectural characteristics, which combine French and German approaches to early childhood care. The staff of the centre come from both countries. This facility helps to promote bilingualism and the development of intercultural exchanges between children, families and professionals on both sides



Early-childhood center, Strasbourg-Kehl / © Eurometropolis of Strasbourg

of the Rhine. It is a pilot project that is highly symbolic of the construction of European citizenship, and aspires to foster the exchange of experiences with other European borders.

²⁰ See the Franco-German history book, Volume 1 (2011) / Volume 2 (2008) / Volume 3 (2006), Nathan/Klett.



Informing citizens/ Forum/ Citizen-led projects

Keeping citizens informed is a crucial element in territories' cross-border integration efforts. The involvement of citizens may take place through the organisation of a forum and also the implementation of concrete projects for the inhabitants of cross-border territories. These may be popular sporting or cultural events, projects involving the youth of the cross-border territory, or more generally “people-to-people” citizen-led projects (see micro-project funds). These initiatives contribute to building cross-border civil society, based on understanding and trusting one's neighbours.

- > European Cross-Border Grouping (GTE) – Maisons transfrontalières européennes (European cross-border centres)
- > West Flanders Province (lead partner) – Partons, Interreg V (France-Wallonia-Flanders) project for the development of services in rural areas
- > GFGZ (German-Swiss association for cross-border cooperation)

OTHER PROJECTS

INFOBEST – PAMINA



INFOBEST PAMINA, which was set up in 1991, contributes to this objective, and over the past 25 years has responded to about 2,500 queries from citizens every year. INFOBEST PAMINA is part of the network of four Upper Rhine INFOBEST structures. Its mission is to advise, guide and inform citizens on issues relating to living and working conditions in France and Germany. It covers a wide range of topics: from tax and pension procedures for cross-border jobs, to consumer rights in the neighbouring country. The initiative brings together different partners, the French government, the Land of Baden-Württemberg, the Land of Rhineland-Palatinate and the PAMINA Eurodistrict EGTC.

MEETINGS OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND CITIZENS OF THE STRASBOURG-ORTENAU EURODISTRICT



An initiative conducted by the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict that aims to foster greater involvement of citizens in cross-border projects may be cited as a tool that is transferable to other borders. The “Rendez-vous Elus-Citoyens” (meetings of elected representatives and citizens), which have been organised since 2013, make it possible to involve the inhabitants of the Eurodistrict in the territory's development. French and German elected representatives of the Eurodistrict answer questions from citizens and listen to their views on the territorial strategy adopted. This is how a “360-degree” strategy was developed. It has four priorities, which were discussed and enhanced at the 2016 meetings in Strasbourg. These priorities fall under the following areas: the environment, transport, education/bilingualism, the economy and employment. The next meeting will be held in 2018. It will help to define new thematic approaches for the work of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict EGTC.

“Citizen-representatives” meeting, Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict / © Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict EGTC



2.2. Coordinating policies

Even though a substantial proportion of national laws is strongly predetermined at the European level, Member States transpose directives in a national approach, as the European legislation does not require to take into account cross-border realities. Thus, the European Council asked the European Commission to develop a strategy for the Baltic Sea macro-region, following the realisation that the transnational Interreg programme implemented, though deemed effective, was not sufficient. It had become clear that cross-border coordination of laws, strategies and funding was indispensable. While the macro-regional approach is not transposable to the cross-border context (particularly the fact that it is steered by the European Commission), this observation is also valid for border regions, and calls for specific initiatives involving governments. The obstacles related to the border as a boundary between national systems call for the establishment of appropriate cross-border governance. Local authorities cannot do this alone; national, federal, or even European authorities need to be involved as well. These obstacles to cross-border cooperation may be legislative (incompatibility of legislative systems, new obstacles that emerge due to the lack of ex ante cross-border impact assessments of new laws, etc.), or administrative and technical, due to differing technical standards or lack of knowledge or visibility of the neighbouring country's systems. Increased coordination between players at different levels, consultation between regional and national strategies on both sides, as well as improved interministerial coordination in each Member State, is required to remedy this. Lastly, obstacles that can only be resolved at the European level must be better identified.

a. COORDINATION AT THE BORDER LEVEL

ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL OBSTACLES

Resolving an obstacle on a given border may require adapting the legal framework of one, both or all of the countries concerned, or even signing an intergovernmental agreement. In the latter case, it will need to involve the central governments of the countries concerned.



Inventory of obstacles / Solutions

A recommendation may be to transpose the process undertaken by the Franco-Belgian parliamentary group to each border. This process identified all of the obstacles and categorised them at the regulatory and legal levels, dealing locally with what could be tackled locally, and referring unresolved obstacles to the next administrative level up.

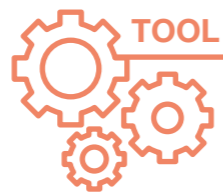
**FRANCO-BELGIAN
PARLIAMENTARY WORKING
GROUP 2007, 2012²¹**



In 2007, the state of cooperation on the Franco-Belgian border was studied by a group of 12 French and Belgian members of parliament. The group worked on different topics (employment, taxes, the environment, healthcare, security, etc.), involving political and technical players at all levels of governance and on both sides of the border, in order to draw up an **inventory of cross-border obstacles** and develop consultation practices. The final report mapped out the obstacles and recommended solutions for overcoming them, including notably the creation of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis and West Flanders / Flanders-Dunkirk-Côte d’Opale EGTCs, as well as the development of an action plan for the entire border territory.

In 2012, the Prefecture of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region, in collaboration with all French and Belgian partners, conducted²² an analysis of the persisting obstacles. It produced a summary table which provides an overview of resolved and unresolved obstacles since 2007, suggests possible solutions and sets out a number of actions. These actions are broken down into four types: increasing knowledge of certain thematic objectives and their implementation; developing administrative coordination practices and tools for consultation; amending national laws; and signing new inter-governmental agreements. The results have been communicated in 2017. New working groups may pursue these reflections.

21 <http://www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/hautes-de-france/Actualites/Rencontre-a-Bruxelles-avec-l-ambassadeur-de-France-en-Belgique>
22 With the support of the MOT.



**Observation /
Coordination**

It is important to carry out observation of border territories at the national level, an interministerial steering committee on cross-border cooperation that addresses necessary regulatory and legislative changes, as well as the possible negotiation of inter-governmental agreements.



Workshop on tools for the observation of cross-border territories, 2015 / © European Union

**INTERMINISTERIAL COORDINATION – EXAMPLE
OF FRANCE**

In France, the Commissariat général à l’égalité des territoires, (CGET – General Commission for Territorial Equality) is in charge of implementing national policy on “territorial cohesion”, as well as European cohesion policy in the French regions, including Interreg programmes devoted to territorial cooperation. By virtue of its competence in the areas of spatial planning, urban and European policies, the CGET has a coordination role that is both horizontal (interministerial) and vertical (with European institutions on the one hand and local authorities on the other); it takes into account the specific issues of cross-border territories.

At the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), the Delegation for the external action of local authorities (DAECT) assists the territorial authorities in developing cross-border cooperation, and an Ambassador is in charge of the Intergovernmental Commissions, cooperation and border issues. The CGET, the MEAE, the Ministry of Interior (the Directorate-general for local authorities), the Ministry of Overseas France (Directorate-general of Overseas), and the other ministries can receive support from the MOT and its network, which allows them to benefit from a direct relationship with border territories, and of a greater knowledge of their circumstances and issues. This coordination is in the process of being strengthened (see Part 3).

**b. COORDINATION AT
NATIONAL LEVEL**

**LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE
OBSTACLES (RELATED TO LACK OF
KNOWLEDGE AND VISION)**

Taking cross-border issues into account at the national level is obstructed by several obstacles. These include internal sectoral compartmentalisation of government departments, external horizontal (between ministries) and vertical (with territorial authorities) compartmentalisation and lack of knowledge of cross-border territories (problems regarding cross-border data). As a result, cross-border issues remain marginal in national strategies; they are often dealt with in the short term and characterised by decisions taken on a case-by-case basis, with no overall vision.

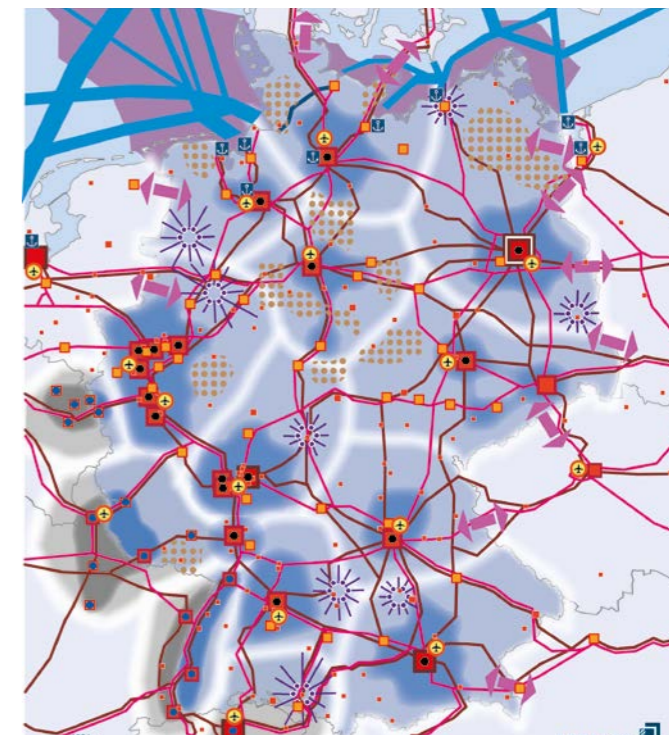


**NATIONAL OBSERVATION OF CROSS-BORDER
TERRITORIES**

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 for 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, the 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 CSC. It is supported by a **Technical Working Group (TWG)** which brings together representatives of national and regional statistical institutes, ministerial departments and experts.

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

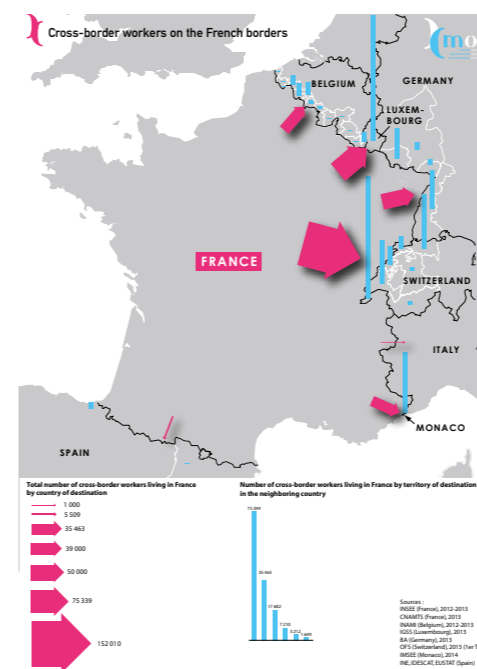


Map “Competitiveness” in Guiding principles and strategies for Germany’s territorial development / Sources: BMVI (editor) / BBSR (cartography), 2016

**MANAGEMENT OF CROSS-BORDER
ISSUES IN GERMANY**

Germany’s spatial planning policy is based on “polycentrism”: the identification of urban centres of varying sizes that provide services to their hinterland. Sharing borders with eight European Union Member States and one non-Member State, these urban centres may be located outside of Germany’s borders, as is the case for Strasbourg and Basel. A cross-border dimension has therefore been incorporated into Germany’s spatial planning policy. Spatial planning research pilot projects (MORO) addressing cross-border issues have been launched. These projects focus for instance on cross-border metropolitan regions,²³ the potential of EGTCs, the joint future of the German-Polish integration area 2030, and on a German territorial observation system for border regions, whose principle has been incorporated into federal law. The “guiding principles” approved in March 2016, both by the Länder and at the federal level, emphasise cross-border cooperation in spatial planning policy. The blueprint relating to competitiveness along Germany’s borders includes “border metropolitan regions” and “enhanced metropolitan integration areas in border metropolitan regions.”

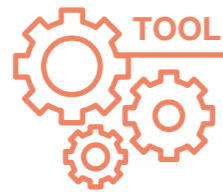
23 Following the ESPON Metroborder project (2009-2010), the second phase of MORO projects extended the concept of “Metropolregionen” to cross-border metropolitan regions, e.g. the Meuse-Rhine Euregio, the Greater Region, the Upper Rhine, and the Lake Constance region.



Map of cross-border workers on the French borders

A DEDICATED STRUCTURE IN HUNGARY

The **Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives (CESCI)** was set up in 2009, based on the MOT model, to foster cross-border cooperation along Hungary's borders. The CESCI's numerous activities include initiating specific work on the resolution of obstacles to cross-border cooperation. It produced a study in 2016 on existing legal tools on Hungary's borders, funded by the Hungarian Ministry of Justice. This project identified the obstacles and pinpointed solutions on the internal and external borders of the European Union. It was established that many obstacles are not legal obstacles but rather the result of a lack of information. The study was supplemented by a series of proposals on legal texts and recommendations at the national and supranational levels, which were related to four themes: mobility and public transport, the labour market, healthcare services and trade in local products.

**Coordination**

Legislative obstacles to cooperation may be overcome by:

- changing European legislation (e.g. the abolition of roaming charges in June 2017);
- creating specific tools, such as the EGTC or the tool proposed by Luxembourg (see below);
- setting up a cross-sectoral process at the European Commission (interservice groups) or the action of the European Committee of the Regions or the European Parliament;
- overall coordination via cohesion policy (dissemination of best practices).

Following the "Cross-border Review", the European Commission made some new proposals, which are set out in Part 3.

**C. COORDINATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL****LEGISLATIVE OBSTACLES**

European legislation fosters free movement, and therefore cross-border integration. However, the relevant laws in the cross-border context do not all fall within the competence of the European Union, and the implementation of European legislation may be deficient in the cross-border setting (for example, non-interoperability of the transposition of directives). The lack of ex-ante evaluation of the cross-border impact of European policies makes them more difficult to implement.



Interregional group on cross-border cooperation meeting, European Committee of the Regions / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – INTERREGIONAL GROUP ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION**

The role of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is to give a voice to the regional territories in the European construction process, and closely monitor border issues. In particular, it develops a procedure for **territorial impact assessment** of new policies that could extend to cross-border territories.²⁴ The objective of the interregional group for cross-border cooperation created by the European Committee of the Regions in July 2015 on the initiative of Pavel Branda is to influence European policies on cross-border cooperation, to exchange experiences and to contribute to discussions on future cohesion policy. The working group contributes to ongoing discussions, with a cross-border perspective, such as territorial impact assessments and the need to take cross-border territories and issues into account. It ensures effective coordination between the group and other initiatives and activities of the European Committee of the Regions such as the EGTC Platform. The European Committee of the Regions regularly adopts positions on issues that are highly relevant to cross-border regions, such as that issued in February 2017 on "Missing transport links in border regions".

²⁴ See the work carried out by ITEM and ESPON on Territorial Impact Assessments.



Working group meeting on cross-border cooperation, European Parliament / © Anne Sander

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT – WORKING GROUP ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The Parliament works on a daily basis on draft legislation aimed at European integration, which, in principle, is favourable to cross-border territories. However, the interests of cross-border territories may not be correctly identified, especially with respect to highly technical sectoral legislation. Since May 2015, the European Parliament's working group on cross-border issues, set up in November 2012, has been chaired by Anne Sander, Member of the European Parliament and Vice-President of the MOT. This informal parliamentary working group brings together Members of the European Parliament and relevant stakeholders two to three times a year to address important European issues from the standpoint of cross-border cooperation. Its aim is to open up the cross-border debate and incorporate it into the different sectoral themes such as digital services in cross-border areas, healthcare cooperation, unemployment, etc. The group also addresses comprehensive approaches such as "removing obstacles to cross-border cooperation".

The European Parliament is also pursuing numerous initiatives to directly or indirectly promote cross-border cooperation.²⁵

²⁵ As shown by the work of the URBAN intergroup chaired by Jan Olbrycht, or the work on "missing links" on the initiative of Michael Cramer, President of the TRAN Committee. In September 2016, the European Parliament adopted a "Report on European territorial cooperation – best practices and innovative measures", produced by the REGI Committee with concrete recommendations for the post-2020 period.

2.3. Support for cross-border territories

All over the world, closed borders²⁶ constitute obstacles to territorial development. They deprive border regions of the potential for 360° development, for example **economies of scale** for economic activities and public services, and **economies of agglomeration**, linked to the size of markets, the free movement of goods and services, capital and people, as well as ideas. This is notably the case for the labour market. The opening-up of borders – not to be confused with their removal²⁷ – is consequently a major driver of development.

Territorial cooperation should, notably within an economic community such as the European Union, facilitate economies of scale and agglomeration across borders. This occurs through actions at local or regional level (development of cross-border territories, as discussed in 2.1), but also through action taken by national governments and the European Union, which are in charge of the legislative frameworks, to coordinate and regulate the opening-up of borders at their level (see 2.2). Lastly, the issue arises of the funding of cooperation, and more generally, of the support given to cooperation, which is the subject of this chapter. It may be found at the local level, but given the very nature of borders, external intervention (at national or European level) is justified.²⁸

Many cross-border investment projects display great potential (notably in the innovation, transport, broadband and energy sectors), as exemplified by the major cross-border infrastructure projects (cross-border tramlines, opening-up access for isolated islands, etc.). But the development of cross-border projects calls for specific technical and financial engineering. Existing tools need to be better used and new ones need to be invented.

Attention should also be given to the disparities that can be observed on many of Europe's borders in terms of demography, economic growth, and framework conditions such as taxes, labour law and employers' social security contributions. Economic theory suggests that the agents concerned (households and businesses) will take advantage of differentials across borders, which is hugely the case along some borders, where flows of cross-border workers demonstrate genuine functional integration, and that national systems and thus framework conditions will eventually converge.

But this purely economic view underestimates the inertia of national systems. On these borders, the reality is actually a distortion arising from a certain form of economic integration combined with a deficit of political integration. This situation benefits the most mobile part of the population and businesses, and players in the residential economy, but ignores captive populations that suffer from rising land and property prices, businesses on the wrong side of the border that are subject to competition they deem unfair, and public authorities forced to shoulder the residential burden without help. This distortion results in the rejection of the opening-up of the border by a section of the population and businesses.

In fact, **support for cooperation must take account of the level of cross-border integration**, which can be at different stages from one border to another:

- A stage where the border remains very marked (with a geographical barrier or recent opening of the border, as in the case of the successive enlargements of the European Union), where cross-border integration is undeveloped and requires external intervention to enable the two sides to go through the process of getting to know one another and establishing trust, and of designing projects that gradually take tangible form in the different sectors of territorial development. Interreg was originally set up for this type of scenario.
- A stage where the opening-up of the border is a reality, both physically and legally, but where substantial cross-border disparities remain, which generate flows that need to be regulated (example of France's borders with Luxembourg and Switzerland). Economies of scale and agglomeration need to be brought into play here, not only for some private players but also for the public sector (services) and all players concerned. This type of border still requires interventions of the previous type, but in addition regulatory intervention involving the national level.
- A mature stage, where integration is more complete and development is balanced; this scenario is rarer (border between Germany and the Netherlands). It continues however to require external intervention, as the potential for cross-border integration may remain greatly underexploited ("cooperation fatigue", which is symptomatic of incomplete European integration).

These different scenarios require external interventions²⁹ on each border – at national or European level. As in the overall approach of cohesion policy, they include both the dimensions of funding and of qualitative support in the form of incentives, of capitalisation and of training of cross-border player. The obstacles addressed by these interventions are notably those that were discussed in Parts 2.1 and 2.2. In addition to the governance and coordination tools set out above, this chapter looks at tools to provide support.

²⁹ Which illustrate perfectly F. Barca's view of cohesion policy (see Part 3).

a. SUPPORT AT THE BORDER LEVEL

LACK OF FINANCIAL RESSOURCES AND ENGINEERING

The funding of cross-border cooperation faces a lack of resources and means to develop significant and sustainable initiatives that might remove other obstacles of a political, administrative or cultural nature. These are obstacles related to all aspects of territorial development – it is not possible to list them all here. Many of these obstacles can be, and are, overcome locally.



By way of example, we will cite two specific obstacles linked to the funding of cooperation:

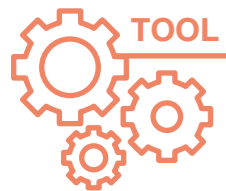
- It is often difficult to fund investment projects because they are peripheral and do not feature spontaneously among national players' priorities, and because national funding mechanisms do not provide for scenarios in which a player in country A invests in a territory in country B, even if this investment will also benefit country A.
- For the staff of cross-border structures, the wage differential (social security contributions, income tax, etc.) remains a significant obstacle to the creation and cohesion of binational teams within the same structure, unless the most advantageous regime is adopted for all of the staff (which the economic model of some projects does not allow).

²⁶ For a complete exposition on this topic, see for example the world development report "Reshaping Economic Geography", World Bank, 2009: Chapter 4 "Scale Economies and Agglomeration", Chapter 5 "Factor Mobility and Migration".

²⁷ The World Bank recalls that borders provide a feeling of belonging that contributes to social well-being, and create manageable units for the governance of society.

²⁸ This is a typical case of an "inefficiency trap" as described by F. Barca – see Part 3.





Funding / Training

Some good practices are presented here that have been implemented at local or regional level with respect to funding mechanisms or support for cooperation.

INVESTMENTS BY THE SWISS CONFEDERATION IN CANTONAL CONURBATION PROJECTS

On the basis of a federal order providing for the co-financing of some conurbation projects at the level of 30%-50%, the Swiss Confederation concludes service agreements with the entities responsible for these conurbation projects, including in the case of cross-border conurbations. The service agreements are a document with an identical structure for all of the conurbation projects in which the measures co-financed by the Swiss government (List A), as well as the measures that are not co-financed, are listed (see the Basel and Geneva conurbation projects). The funding also concerns the non-Swiss part of these conurbations.



MOT documentation center / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

EURO-INSTITUT



The Euro-Institut based in Kehl on the Franco-German border aims *inter alia* to support cross-border cooperation through training, assistance and advice in the field of public policy, as well as to encourage greater mutual understanding among French, and German and Swiss public players. This kind of approach exists on other borders and is the subject of Europe-wide networking (see TEIN in 2.3.c). Ideally, it should be extended to all borders, with the support of Interreg.



b. SUPPORT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NATIONAL SYSTEMS

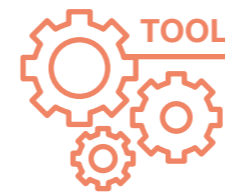
National borders are an institution of the state, from which obstacles linked to the encounter between different national systems arise (see 2.1 and 2.2).



NOUVELLE AQUITAINE-EUSKADI-NAVARRA FUND



The Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra Euroregion encourages the development of cooperation between public or private players from either side of the border by means of two financial instruments. First, it has a so-called competitive subsidy policy – the Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarra call for projects – organised around one or more annual sessions whose themes are decided by the Assembly: culture, multilingualism, youth, citizenship, the knowledge economy, innovation, research, etc. Second, it has adopted a policy of direct subsidies aimed at key players who take part in the implementation of the priorities of the EGTC's territorial strategy for 2014-2020: strategic partnerships.



Funding / Capitalisation / Training

In the context of open borders, it is logical that at national level, over and above the coordination issues described above (see 2.2), policies to support cooperation should be developed.

FUNDING BY THE CDC GROUP

The Caisse des Dépôts group (CDC) assists cross-border projects through its activities as a lender and investor, but also through engineering and in link with its subsidiaries. The MOT acts to support these actions to identify and assist these cross-border investment projects carried out by territorial authorities. Thus and thanks to its network of regional directions, the CDC is committed to support these projects, accompanying thus authorities, which also goes by putting in contact project developers and CDC experts in management and funding. In this context complementarities are searched between the operators and funding, notably by combining Interreg funding, the other programmes funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (Juncker Plan).

Find out more about the CDC offers to territories: www.caissedesdepotsdesterritoires.fr

MOT RESOURCE CENTRE

The MOT has built up a resource centre (surveys of cooperation on each border, thematic approaches, toolkit, good practices, news, etc.). This includes a website (in French and English) with entry by topic or territory; and a documentation portal, comprising an electronic version and a “physical” documentation centre organised into five sections (territories, topics, Europe, national level and atlas). Its value added derives notably from the fact that it covers all cross-border policies and projects, and not only those funded by Interreg.



c. SUPPORT AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Since 1990, the European level has logically focused on financial support for cross-border cooperation. The Interreg cooperation programmes are the leading instrument for the funding of cross-border projects, even if they are not the only sources of funding. Given the amounts allocated, they do not generally include the funding of major investments (transport infrastructure, for example), which require the involvement of other sources of European, national or regional funding on either side of national borders. Interreg, which acts as a catalyst for cooperation, is extremely important for cross-border territories and territorial cohesion. For more than 25 years, it has fostered projects initiated in cross-border territories and has made it possible to improve over time mutual understanding, networking among players and existing structures, the development of joint structures that pool skills and tools, the dissemination of good practices, and the quality of projects. But the projects approved are not always permanent and do not always provide concrete and sustainable assistance to the territories and stakeholders concerned.

DIFFICULTIES LINKED TO PROGRAMMES AND FINANCING

The aim here is to identify the obstacles specifically linked to European programmes as a result of their design or inadequate implementation, notably due to a lack of synergy with policies carried out at local or national level.



An analysis³⁰ of cross-border cooperation programmes along France's borders reveals first of all that, in some cases, there is substantial room for improvement in terms of their development process: inadequate cross-border assessments, notably due to the lack of cross-border data; and the lack of a specific cross-border strategy. Since 2007, cooperation programmes have been asked to be in line with European thematic priorities, without taking account of the specific reality of border regions. Yet, in addition to the material, physical and socio-economic dimensions that cohesion policy usually takes into account, there are intangible aspects, notably relating to linguistic and cultural differences (see 2.1), and to legal and technical differences (see 2.2).

Regarding programme governance, in many cases there is inadequate representation of territorial and socio-economic players, and a low level of political involvement. One can note a lack of coordination between Interreg programmes and other European and national programmes, coordination which is vital due to Interreg's limited financial resources, as well as insufficient account being taken of integrated territorial approaches in programmes. Lastly, in terms of capitalising on projects carried out, inadequate exploitation of the results of cooperation and of the difficulties encountered by projects, and a lack of communication and sharing of experiences, good practices and results compromise their sustainability.

³⁰ Analysis based notably on the methodological guide “Articulate cohesion policy, government structures and cross-border territorial approaches” produced by the MOT in 2012, with the support of the Europ'Act programme.

FUNDING INSTRUMENTS OF THE EIB

Since the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the national development banks like the Caisse des Dépôts have launched a reflection on the development of new products or financial instruments specifically tailored to border and cross-border territories. Such tools could eventually make it possible to combine – or even co-finance – a series of smaller projects with other larger ones within the same programming framework. These types of investments are often of structural importance for cross-border territories (example of the Strasbourg-Kehl tramline). They can provide an integrated territorial approach that is better suited to meeting effectively and comprehensively the needs of cross-border territories, while at the same time fostering positive economic, social and cultural spillover effects. In the future, dedicated cross-border investment platforms could be set up and managed by ad hoc structures of the EGTC type.

procedures they entail, and to the difficulty in achieving convergence in different national policies in a cross-border rationale for investment. Similar approaches have nonetheless been developed by some cross-border programmes, without using the tools provided by the European regulations.

Thus, the cross-border cooperation programme ALCOTRA 2007-2013 tried out the **PIT (integrated cross-border plan)** tool.³¹ In the 2014-2020 period, the programme envisages two types of integrated projects that can be implemented: **integrated territorial plans (PITER)** and **integrated thematic plans (PITEM)**, which encourage territories to draw up joint strategies over several years and to develop coordinated projects. These plans are the subject of specific calls for projects.

THE ESPACE MONT-BLANC



The Espace Mont-Blanc's **integrated cross-border plan (PIT)** was implemented between 2009 and 2013 around six projects, and involved more than 20 partners around four strategic themes (education and raising awareness about the environment, sustainable development indicators, mapping, and management of the mountain range). Networks of players could thus be reinforced and tangible actions carried out in the three territories with respect to territorial planning, cross-border public transport links, energy assessments of public buildings, encouraging low-impact tourism



and the promotion of local products. This process culminated in the “Strategy for the Future of Mont-Blanc”, a joint management tool that makes it possible to apply for international recognition, such as inclusion on UNESCO’s World Heritage list.

31 Applying to the cross-border setting methods developed within the framework of Italian programmes.



RIVES

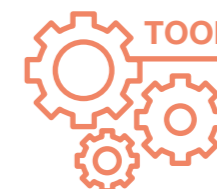
The **Franco-Italian project RIVES** (Interreg IIIA ALCOTRA), implemented by the Province of Cuneo (lead partner), on the protection of the cross-border territory against natural risks concerned, in terms of the territories studied, the Alpes de Haute-Provence and Alpes-Maritimes Departments on the French side, and Cuneo Province and Imperia Province on the Italian side. It helped to strengthen relations between French and Italian players in the area of civil defence, to pool knowledge about natural risks, to develop crisis management tools for the territory and to carry out full-scale cross-border crisis management exercises. This project was promoted in the document “Les Risques Naturels en Provence Alpes-Côte d’Azur”.³² Cooperation in this domain is now continuing with the project PRODIGE (Interreg V ALCOTRA), which aims to create a virtual reality platform to train civil defence managers, to step up data collection and to facilitate exchanges with the population. Reflections are underway on a new **integrated thematic plan (PITEM)** focused on natural risks.

Espace Mont-Blanc, Chamonix valley / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

> **PITER** “The High Valleys: Heart of the Alps” Interreg V (ALCOTRA) – Syndicat du pays de Maurienne (lead partner), with the participation of the community of municipalities Briançonnais.

PIT/PITER
/PITEM

32 Co-published by the BRGM (French Geological Survey), the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region and the Provence Alpes-Côte d’Azur DREAL (Regional Directorate for the Environment, Planning and Housing), 2009, http://webissimo.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/risques_naturels_cle13db38.pdf



Micro-project funds and similar mechanisms

Micro-project funds are aimed at the implementation of local projects that only require small financial investment and encourage the involvement of citizens. They are developed by some programmes within the framework of European territorial cooperation (ETC).

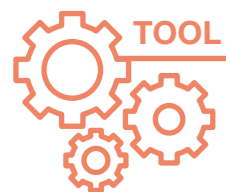
In the future, it would be helpful if a common framework were drawn up at European level to enable citizens to set up and use these funds effectively and flexibly (funding frameworks are currently cumbersome and sometimes very divergent).

Similar mechanisms are “**meeting funds**”. These operate on the basis of funding provided by the participants, like the fund set up by the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict. This fund encourages initiatives by associations and non-profit structures aimed at facilitating cross-border meetings between people, and funds projects up to a maximum level of €5,000.

All of these mechanisms can be found on a dedicated page (see the MOT website).

> **Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict** – Child refugee support fund

OTHER
PROJECTS



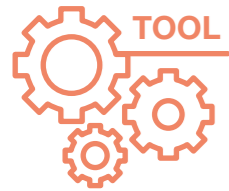
Integrated territorial development

In order to promote harmonious development in cross-border territories, the regulations in the 2014-2020 period make possible the use in this context of “integrated territorial development” tools, notably **CLLD (community-led local development)** and **ITI (integrated territorial investment)**, which can be utilised by EGTCs or similar entities. This approach satisfies the need for coordinated action across cross-border territories (see 3.1).

CLLD is a methodology for governance and the implementation of local integrated development strategies for specific territories based on the involvement of the local community, through local community groups. The Interreg VA Italy-Austria programme can be cited as an example of good practice in carrying out cross-border CLLD projects.

ITI makes it possible to develop solutions to address the issues of a particular territory, going beyond its administrative boundaries and involving several programmes or strands of the same programme. The integrated territorial development strategy comprises a series of actions, with provisions regarding governance to manage the ITI. In terms of good practice, we can mention the Interreg VA Italy-Slovenia programme, and the implementation of ITI by the EGTC GO.

However, these tools are very seldom used in cross-border settings, perhaps due to the cumbersome administrative



Capitalisation / Training

Often funded by Interreg, thousands of projects have benefited the inhabitants of cross-border territories; important knowledge has been developed for this occasion, but the transfer of experiences to other borders, or to new generations of players, is not fully ensured. It is important to develop, not only at a local or national, but also a European level, capitalisation and the transfer of this knowledge.

CAPITALISATION

The “**Critical Dictionary of Cross-Border Cooperation**”, coordinated by the University of Strasbourg, is an expanded version of “Territorial Cooperation in Europe – A Historical Perspective”, published in 2015 to mark the 25th anniversary of the launch of Interreg. Like any dictionary, it will take the form of a list of keywords arranged in alphabetical order accompanied by their definition. The latter will take the form of a short article written by an expert in the field, along with a map, where relevant. The dictionary will be published in English initially (around 500 pages), with an online version to be published subsequently.

Urbact: The capitalisation project **Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations (EGTC)**, in which the MOT was the lead partner, was co-financed by the Urbact II programme between October 2008 and May 2010. The partners worked on promoting innovative governance tools in implementing their cross-border conurbation project, through joint assessments, strategies and organisational plans. The aim was to capitalise on the best practices, to draw up a methodology and to analyse how structural funds, other public funding and legal tools (such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) can be used to develop this kind of cross-border governance.

Interact: The Keep database (www.keep.eu) is administered by the Interact Programme, with the support of the European Commission. It contains information about all of the cross-border, transnational and interregional programmes, and about the projects funded and the beneficiaries. Interact has also embarked on work to capitalise on the experience of programmes, through thematic capitalisation networks for the 2014-2020 period.

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TRAINING

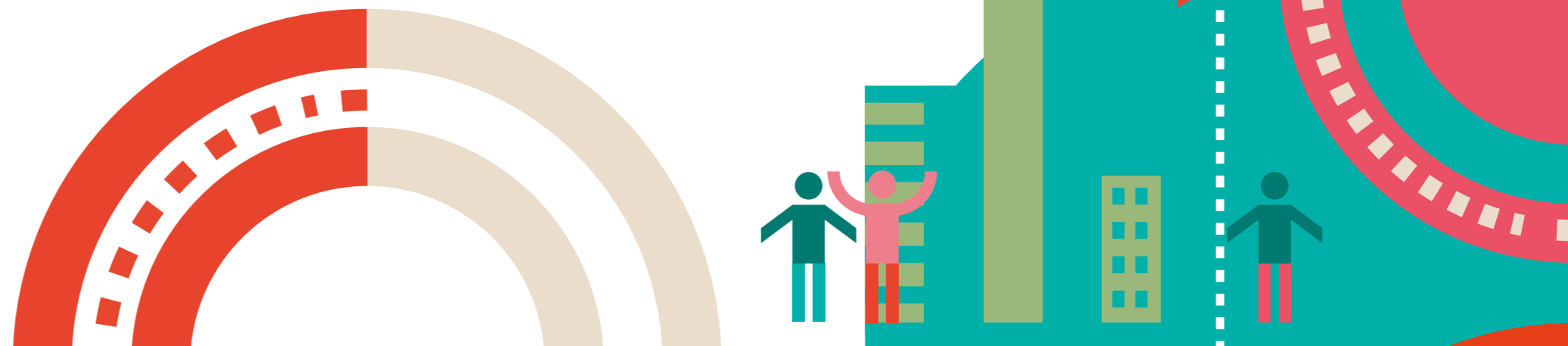
The **INTERFORM project** – the European Network for Training and Research in Cross-Border Practices, co-financed by the INTERACT programme, with the MOT as lead partner, was implemented between 2004 and 2008, around three focal points: resources, production (development of a training offer) and professionalisation (organisation of meetings between practitioners and researchers). Following on from the project, the **TEIN** network evolved. Its lead partner is the Euro-Institut in Kehl.

The **Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network – TEIN**, set up in 2010, brings together 14 partners from eight border regions,³³ with the MOT and AEBR as associate partners. TEIN is made up of research institutes and training centres. The network is aimed at exchanging and capitalising on practices, and developing training tools and interdisciplinary research. In this way, based on the experience of the Euro-Institut in Kehl it was able to develop a toolkit for the intercultural management of cross-border projects. TEIN also contributes to stepping up exchanges between practitioners and researchers.

Various European universities have set up masters programmes devoted to cross-border cooperation. The “**Master Class**” organised for the past five years by the Catholic Institute of the Mediterranean and its partners, other universities, the Provence Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region, the CNFPT (France’s National Centre for Territorial Public Service) and the MOT, provides an annual forum to teaching staff/researchers, students and professionals to think about European decentralised territorial cooperation, thereby furthering the construction of an academic network for training and professionalisation in this area.

³³ Countries involved: France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, Czech Republic, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, United Kingdom and Ireland.

In the future, the actions carried out on each border, and at national and European level, would benefit from being coordinated within the framework of a multi-level European platform (see Part 3).





PART 3

**Ambitions for the
future and political
responses**

3.1. Cohesion policy post-2020

a. GENERAL CONTEXT

The debate on territorial cooperation is part of a wider debate on the European Union, its future, budget and policies, especially cohesion policy.

The 2008 financial crisis and the economic recession that followed it are currently being overcome. However, the conditions that caused these crises (deficiencies in regulation, governance, etc.) have not gone away. In some countries such as France, the ensuing public funding crisis has led to reforms of national and territorial public action, focusing particularly on the necessary overhaul of public services.

Many countries and regions are experiencing a social crisis characterised by unemployment and growing inequality. The changes – globalisation, the digital and energy transitions, adapting to climate change – affect territories and population groups unevenly.

The demographic transition, with the drop in birth rates coupled with migratory pressure, remains a long-term structural issue that transcends the current crises on the eastern and southern external borders of the European Union and their consequences with respect to security and hosting refugees.

These painful crises and transitions have in turn engendered a crisis of confidence in institutions, and national as well as European citizenship crises, with a surge in nationalist and anti-European rhetoric focusing on the closing of borders and the reclaiming of national sovereignty. The protests include a strong territorial dimension, as shown by the electoral maps of recent votes such as the Brexit referendum and other national elections. The anti-European vote is not so much the vote of the “poor” as of the “pessimists”, who retreat into old identities and fear social and territorial mobility.

The strengthening of European integration will provide the solutions to these different crises, even though a section of national public opinion thinks differently. The European Union has thus far been able to guarantee peace and a level of prosperity on its territory, and has a shared history and destiny. What policies should be developed to gain the support of the European population as a whole?

b. COHESION: ORIGINS, OBJECTIVES AND CURRENT POLICY

The founding fathers purposely initiated European construction with the European market (competition and free movement), industrial Europe (the European Coal and Steel Community – ECSC) and functional Europe (trans-European networks, so-called sectoral policies). In the immediate aftermath of the war, they sought to set aside latent political conflicts among Member States jealous of their sovereignty, and start with “concrete achievements” to win over citizens. Jean Monnet sought “not to merge States, but unite people”. His plan was to move forward with a civic Europe, which was partially achieved with the European Parliament and European solidarity, expressed through the objective of cohesion and implemented through the policy of that name. Other components of European construction gradually evolved: the Europe of public opinion (European media), of culture, and of interpersonal connections, symbolised notably by the Erasmus programme.³⁴

European territorial organisation is characterised both by its unity (model of the European city) and its diversity, and even fragmentation (Member States of very different sizes, systems of local government that remain within central governments’ jurisdiction). It was to implement European integration in this fragmented institutional context that cohesion policy, spearheaded notably by Jacques Delors, took shape. The “Delors Package” was founded on two pillars: the completion of the single market, and cohesion policy, whose objective was to incorporate countries and regions (economic cohesion)³⁵ and people (social cohesion)³⁶ into the market. Territorial cohesion subsequently took into account the diversity of territories and levels of action, of social and territorial (not merely economic) capital, and the interdependence of territories. The principles established over 25 years ago have been enlarged on by successive reforms of cohesion policy: shared management (the only way of funding local investment in the absence of a European federal government) within multi-tiered governance; and an integrated approach,³⁷ aimed at making the actions of the European Union visible to citizens on the ground.

However, this policy has not fully succeeded.³⁸ Some citizens feel that national or local values are under threat, and have little confidence in the public authorities. Structural reforms are too often conducted without taking the territorial context, the know-how and preferences of inhabitants into account. A territorial approach targeting people where they live, for example equality of territorial opportunity, must be promoted to address this. This approach requires innovation, based on the capacity-building of local players, and also opening up to external knowledge and experiences. Hence the need for the intervention of external authorities (governments, Europe) and exchanges with other European territories, made possible by cohesion policy. The policy should contribute to funding development, through a process regulated by the Commission, based in each territory on a vision of the future shared by politicians and all other local stakeholders, and on obtaining measurable results for the well-being of citizens and under their control.

While the current framework of cohesion policy is underpinned by these principles, its implementation does not sufficiently involve elected representatives and citizens; the objectives and results of policies are not adequately shared and discussed.

c. A NEW VISION FOR EUROPE, REDESIGNING EUROPEAN COHESION

Is cohesion policy still the appropriate response to the challenges cited above?

There have been regular calls for a review of the current structure of the European budget and of this policy in particular.

The policy principles established over 25 years ago remain relevant, even if new expenses (energy, security, migration) must be funded in a context where increases in the European Union budget are a sensitive topic.

Ten years of crises have shown up the need to implement European cohesion in all of its dimensions: the single market Europe, the functional Europe of trans-European networks, and the civic Europe of the European Parliament.³⁹ And also to create a Europe of public opinion (European media), a Europe of interpersonal connections (Erasmus), and an inspired Europe (cultural, “moral and spiritual” heritage) with common roots and a shared vision of the future, in short, a shared narrative, albeit woven from multiple threads. Policies carried out by governments and regions must be the foremost instruments of this cohesion, supported by the European policy conducted in this area.



For the principles of this policy to be fully effective, European, national and regional authorities must demonstrate their commitment alongside local officials and populations in the territories, through a **social contract**⁴⁰ between citizens and the European Union that respects the diversity of national social contracts and takes the form of “**local pacts**”.⁴¹ **Shared knowledge of policies** implemented and **citizens’ participation** must be ensured; and an external impetus must be given both by the European Commission, which needs to have the resources to provide expert intervention on the ground, and by networking with other territories supported by the European Union.

In other words, public policies must be aimed not only at the individual economic agent, the user of public services, the citizen with rights and responsibilities, but also the relational, informed and inspired being, in short **the person**.⁴²

³⁴ These six dimensions of European construction (market, industrial, civic, opinion, inspired, and interpersonal) echo the six “cities” identified by sociologists L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot in their book “On justification. Economies of worth”.

³⁵ Aimed at convergence as measured by regional per capita GDP, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

³⁶ Aimed at increasing the employment rate and inclusion, through the European Social Fund (ESF).

³⁷ “Integrated bundles of public goods”, to quote F. Barca in his 2008 report.

³⁸ See F. Barca, lecture given at the Cohesion Forum in June 2017.

³⁹ By inventing a new “industrial civic” European compromise, to use L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot’s expression, that is both functionally (French approach) and institutionally (German approach) ambitious.

⁴⁰ F. Barca.

⁴¹ Speech by Jacques Mézard, France’s Minister for Territorial Cohesion, at the Cohesion Forum in June 2017. Local pacts would take into account local particularities and would enable an approach that is differentiated according to the territory. This concept is also used in the EU Urban Agenda, and will be tested and developed in the Urbact pilot initiative and generate guidelines for the future.

⁴² P. Ricoeur.

3.2. Cross-border territories and the issue of European territorial cooperation (ETC)

Cohesion policy must be safeguarded. However, with the exception of these players directly involved in Interreg, publications or statements on this issue merely skate over, or even entirely ignore, the issues of territorial cooperation, even though it is at the heart of the European integration project. The Seventh Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, published by the European Commission on 9 October 2017 underlines that borders still constitute obstacles to the free movement, disposal of such obstacles might boost economic growth and improve access to services in the affected regions.

a. THE GENERAL CONTEXT FOR BORDER REGIONS

In situations of crisis and transition, land and sea border regions are places where symptoms are revealed, but also where opportunities can be seized. Each border brings into contact national public and private systems that are fundamentally different but face common challenges. The border may highlight differences or even flaws in national policies, but also make convergence possible for the benefit of all: shared services, adapting standards to ensure their interoperability, new cross-border transport and energy infrastructures, cross-border clusters, creative management of a shared environment, and even the emergence of cross-border and European citizenship. The border is a place of competition, but also of cooperation, where the movement of people, goods and services, capital, and also ideas, creates innovation and wealth. It is an emblematic site of the “glocal”, like the large metropolises, which combine mobility and specific territorial capital. The absence of common regulatory policies can generate serious social and territorial segregation, but where such policies are implemented, the value created can be shared for the benefit of all. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, cross-border territories, the **meeting places** along a border between two (or more, within cross-border or macro-regions) **distinct national communities**, or sometimes linguistic or cultural communities previously separated by the border, are a test for the European project itself. On each border, European peoples, their governments and territorial authorities, either invent a shared narrative based on their – at once different and common – histories, and a shared vision of their future, or they shall conclude that the only course is divorce.

b. BORDER REGIONS AND ETC: ORIGINS AND CURRENT POLICIES

Cross-border cooperation developed in parallel with European construction, which has maintained peace among European peoples, fostered free movement across national borders, and funded Interreg from 1990 onwards.

From the 1950s, obstacles to cooperation have been overcome through three types of actions:

- the emergence of cross-border **governance** at different levels, that is, local (cross-border territories), regional (Euroregions), or even larger (what are now called macro-regions). This governance may take varying, more or less institutionalised forms depending on the geographical, socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. Beyond economic integration (growth in trade), it also links other dimensions: civic (engagement of elected representatives and citizens across borders), functional (cross-border coordination of local players on joint projects), informational (construction of shared knowledge), cultural (shared heritage or vision), and interpersonal (links between people). This governance evolved from the grassroots, and was subsequently structured by legal tools (Madrid Convention, EGTCs, etc.).
- **coordination** of national systems across borders, with states remaining the custodians of distinct political and legislative systems that need to be made interoperable. This coordination has always existed, even if European awareness of its necessity had to wait until the emergence of macro-regional strategies, then in 2015 the Cross-Border Review launched by the European Commission, as well as the proposals to resolve obstacles to cooperation made by Luxembourg during its presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2015.
- the **financial support** provided by the European Union to cooperation (Interreg), in its cross-border, then transnational and interregional dimensions. At the European level, the Interreg tool has hitherto often masked the first two dimensions. The current challenge is to fully develop their synergies, and multiply projects designed to serve cross-border inhabitants and territories.

Thus, the “bottom-up” European construction represented by territorial cooperation echoes “top-down” construction. It is aimed at all facets of individuals: the cross-border productive economic **agent** (employee or entrepreneur) and consumer, the **user** of cross-border services, the **citizen** with rights and responsibilities also in the context of crossing the border, as well as the **relational being**

(engaged in cross-border relationships), the **informed individual** (through cross-border media) and the **inspired individual** (conveyor of cultures and vision that transcend the border): in sum, it is aimed **at the whole person**, whose identity is not fixed at birth, but is constructed throughout the narrative of his or her life, and by the borders he or she crosses.

c. THE FUTURE OF CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES AND ETC

In what follows we focus on cross-border cooperation, even though what is said about cross-border territories may be transposed to larger transnational areas such as macro-regions (the Baltic, Danube, Alps, etc.).

We need to have **cross-border territories that are active and smart**, open to exchanges of all kinds (cross-border workers, entrepreneurs and consumers); **functional and sustainable**, supported by integrated infrastructures and services; **civic and equitable**, led by elected representatives and citizens engaged across the border and implementing cross-border cohesion; **informed**, sharing joint knowledge of their territories (cross-border media: TV, newspapers, internet, e-democracy, cross-border maps); **inspired**, sustained by a shared culture and vision of their past and future (shared history books, cross-border educational projects, networked universities); and most of all, **human**, bringing people together across borders.

This project is inextricably linked to that of European integration which makes it possible. **Interreg is a funding tool**, which must be placed in the larger context of the European project and its policies, especially cohesion policy, which serve inhabitants in their territories. Jacques Delors’ vision remains relevant today: Europe embodies competition that stimulates, cooperation that strengthens and solidarity that unites. **Cohesion** must be **economic, social and territorial**. It should be aimed at people in their territories, increasing the opportunities there and the social and territorial capital specific to these territories, without however impeding the growth in mobility and the multiple functional interdependencies created by globalisation, which the European project makes possible to regulate. In other words, territorial cohesion is also **inter-territoriality**, cooperation between neighbouring or distant territories, of which cross-border cooperation is emblematic. It is in this specific sense that cross-border territories may be considered **laboratories for Europe**. In border regions, cross-border integration is characterised by a three-tiered – local/regional, national, European – territorial system in which:⁴³

- cross-border local/regional areas are where inhabitants live their lives, and where territorial governance and public policies that serve them and are under their control must be developed;
- the national area remains that of political cohesion and the social contract, where a country’s citizens define their rights and responsibilities, frameworks for laws and public policies, in collaboration with other states;
- Europe, with its institutions and specific policies that give strategic impetus, is the shared horizon of its Member States.

Cooperation is therefore developed in a multi-tiered framework, which cohesion policy seeks to support.

CONSTRUCTING CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES AND EUROPE ON THE BASIS OF NEW NARRATIVES

Beyond the policies that need to be implemented at different levels to construct Europe and cross-border territories, the challenges of the future require universal support for cooperation. This can be achieved through projects aimed at people – not only economic agents, voters or users.⁴⁴

Today, the narratives⁴⁵ of the inhabitants of cross-border territories are often split along the two sides of the border.⁴⁶ In the future, each border inhabitant’s narrative, and that of each European, will meld with new collective narratives: joint visions of our both shared and different national pasts, and our shared future. This process, which does not rule out differences and rivalry, and even controversy, between national visions, is the foundation stone of the European process itself. The cross-border context lends itself most particularly to such work.

A country’s border remains a sacred place that is little, or badly, thought about.⁴⁷ It is the demarcation line that links each country to itself, and where countries turn their backs on each other.⁴⁸ This is most particularly true for borders that have recently experienced conflicts, but also for all others – because indifference may follow reconciliation, at a time when proficiency in the language of the neighbouring country is waning in border regions, etc. Translation is however the common language of Europe.⁴⁹

Europe is a reality that pre-exists the nation states; it is in itself a “borderland”.⁵⁰ This is manifest in cross-border territories. The challenge for nation states is not giving up their sovereignty, but rather building together a European sovereignty, a transnational, not post-national, citizenship. What is needed is to develop a vision of the “common good” that is shared but pluralist, that respects cultural and institutional diversity. Each of our countries embarks on the construction of its area and its common good, by interlinking the roles of the market, public authorities and civil society in its own specific way. Players involved in the cross-border and European integration process have agreed to merge their national visions to construct a common area. National identities were created,⁵¹ and a European identity can also be forged based on nation states. On each border and across Europe as a whole, intercultural dialogue must be engaged in, to learn about the narratives and heroes of neighbouring countries, and jointly weave new personal and collective narratives.

⁴³ Echoing the vision set out by F. Barca.

⁴⁴ It is the only way to prevent the experience of the British voter quoted by Le Monde on 22/6/2017 whose heart voted for Brexit, his wallet against it and his head did not know.

⁴⁵ According to the narrative identity concept developed by P. Ricoeur.

⁴⁶ See “Frontaliers pendulaires, les ouvriers du temps”, M. Veullermet, 2016.

⁴⁷ The “horizontal transcendence” of the nation state (P. Beckouche); the “anti-democratic condition of democracy” (E. Balibar).

⁴⁸ The word “boundary”, expresses this concept. Today, states retain not only the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence (M. Weber), but also of statistics and the construction of reality (L. Boltanski).

⁴⁹ U. Eco.

⁵⁰ E. Balibar.

⁵¹ See AM. Thiesse, “La création des identités nationales”.

3.3 Political responses: context and roadmaps for the future

The European Union has launched a reflection on the post-2020 period. Several countries, including France, have initiated crucial reforms to public action. It is important to place this in the current context, which is characterised by significant progress in the area of cross-border cooperation, and to propose roadmaps for the future, at different levels.

a. RESPONSES AT LOCAL / REGIONAL LEVEL

At a time when some of France's neighbours are developing dynamic cross-border policies (particularly Germany), and others have embarked on territorial reforms (notably Belgium and Italy) that have reshaped the links between central government and territorial authorities, the new relationships between the French government and territorial authorities must also take into account developments in cross-border cooperation with neighbouring countries.

TERRITORIAL REFORM IN FRANCE AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

France's territorial reform in 2014 and 2015 has given French territorial authorities fresh impetus. French regions are now developing SRDEII⁵² (with the possibility of including a cross-border aspect) and SRADDET.⁵³ This gives them similar powers to those of the regions or federal states of neighbouring countries. The three border metropolises (Lille, Strasbourg and Nice) are drawing up cross-border cooperation plans. France's departments are developing public service plans. At the regional level, the territorial conferences for public action coordinate the various authorities, and have the power to tackle cross-border issues.

Thus, with extended powers – and in some cases extended geographical areas – the role of the different territorial authorities has been reconfigured, which has led to rethinking the action of the deconcentrated state to support them. President Macron⁵⁴ has called on central government to reinvent its role in the face of this transition, to differentiate its actions in accordance with territorial realities, review public policies with an eye to giving more freedom to territories, and even experimenting with new public service policies and modes of organisation. The right to experiment will be simplified, notably by removing the obligation to generalise experimentations. Central government will be able to devolve its powers in the areas of economic, social and spatial planning, if this is justified by local interests. This devolution may be accompanied by a transfer of regulatory power, and the adapting of legal standards to local realities. In border regions, the standards in force in neighbouring countries could be systematically examined, in order to assess the effectiveness of standards in France. These guidelines clearly echo the proposals of the working group set up by Luxembourg and France (cf. 3.3.c).

⁵² Regional Plan for Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation.

⁵³ Regional Plan for Spatial Planning, Sustainable Development and Territorial Equality.

⁵⁴ Speech to the territories conference, 17/07/2017.



Governance and projects

The development of cross-border territories through projects serving their inhabitants calls for the setting-up of cross-border governance that ensures synergy between the different players involved. In the sphere of public action, this entails ongoing actions in the area of territorial technical assistance to facilitate both cross-border daily life and the rebuilding or emergence of a culture, vision and social life shared by inhabitants. Cross-border governance occurs at the local (cross-border territories, for local functions) and regional levels (Euroregions, for higher-level functions).⁵⁵



- Carry out **sectoral and integrated development projects** at the level of “cross-border territories” for the benefit of their inhabitants: “**cross-border pacts**”, as a variation of “**local pacts**” (see 3.1.c).
- In each cross-border region, implement what is possible **under existing laws**: administrative **coordination**, organisation of **cross-border governance** (political leadership), improving **knowledge of one another**, observation and prospective, **pooling of public services**, cross-border project development.
- Take the border context and existence of neighbouring territories into account in the **strategic documents** at all levels of territorial authority (and deconcentrated government departments).
- Develop **cross-border experimentation**.
- Create places for ongoing **training** and **capacity-building** in the area of cooperation, in order to increase intercultural competencies and capacity to cooperate.
- Encourage proficiency in the **language of the neighbouring country** in primary, secondary and higher education systems, and adult education programmes.
- **Develop cross-border and European citizenship** through a common curriculum for history (example of the Franco-German history book) and culture, while identifying differences across the border; develop cross-border media.
- Promote cross-border areas as laboratories for European citizenship.
- Foster **cross-border mobility** of school children, apprentices, students, workers, etc.
- Develop **participation**, people-to-people projects and encourage civil society to cooperate in order to create links and build mutual **trust**.

b. RESPONSES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

New policies have been launched at the national level to improve cross-border strategies and policies.

A STRATEGY FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND INTERMINISTERIAL COORDINATION DRIVEN BY THE “DIPLOMACY AND TERRITORIES” WHITE PAPER

In 2009, three French parliamentarians⁵⁶ were charged by the Prime Minister with identifying ways to improve France's cross-border policy. In June 2010, they submitted their report entitled “Mission parlementaire sur la politique transfrontalière: Les frontières, territoires de fractures, territoires de coutures...”. With 19 concrete proposals, this document broadly outlined a cross-border policy to correct imbalances between territories on both sides of the border. The recommendations of the parliamentary report were not immediately executed; however, implementation of a few recommendations, such as the border regions observatory was initiated, with the support of the MOT. It was not until 2016 that the most prominent recommendations took shape, with the drafting by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of the **White Paper “Diplomacy and Territories”**, approved on 23 November 2016 by the National Commission for Decentralised Cooperation (CNCD). The paper aims to strengthen the **coherence** of France's diplomatic initiatives and those of the territorial authorities, through better coordination of the various tools and institutions that support the external action of territorial authorities. This strategy document notably presents an assessment of the current situation, the issues at stake in the internationalisation of territories and 21 concrete proposals to improve the partnership between central government and the territorial authorities. ▶

⁵⁵ This approach, which is part of “integrated territorial development” should be fully supported by national and European policies, both by developing specific legal tools such as the EGTC and by stepping up programmes, see below.

⁵⁶ Etienne Blanc, MP – Ain, Fabienne Keller, Senator – Lower Rhine, and Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, MEP.

In addition to highlighting **cross-border cooperation economic issues**, the White Paper devotes an entire chapter to setting out a **“strategy for cross-border cooperation”**. The strategy is broken down into four core areas:

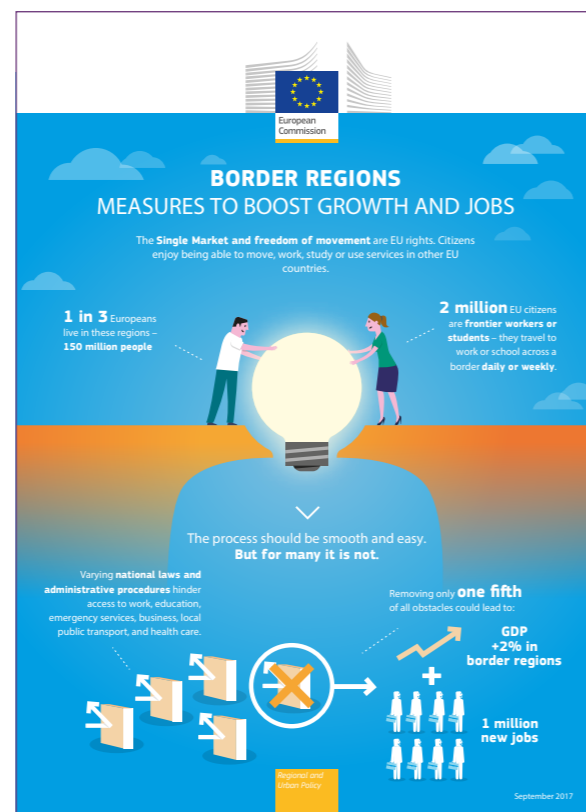
- Developing a new coherent strategy to bring together all of the players involved and strengthen cross-border governance;
- Drawing on the diplomatic advisors of the prefects of the region;
- Strengthening the MOT (Transfrontier Operational Mission);
- Better mobilising all of the players involved.

In each region in order to support cross-border cooperation, **diplomatic advisers** support the prefects and the State services, and mobilize other actors and particularly local authorities. At the national level, a **Committee of interministerial coordination on cross-border issues** is set up. The first meetings of the group in charge of setting up the committee, which were held in 2017, confirmed that improving cross-border cooperation passed via a strengthening of the coordination of the actors, both at the level of the bilateral relationship with neighbouring States, and at national level between the ministries in charge of public policies, concerned by the territories, and with the local authorities. In the line of the recommendations of the White Paper, an interministerial “instance” could be created and roadmaps could be adopted for each border and its cross-border territory.

Spanish Cerdanya Hospital in Puigcerdà, see Part 1), **obstacles of all kinds** – economic, legal, administrative, technical, but also political, cultural and human – **increasingly emerge as integration progresses**. The obstacles, whose effects extend beyond the local cross-border territory, are resolved one by one by the project. While these obstacles are familiar to local cooperation practitioners, their identification, and pinpointing of the tools required to resolve them, have come later at the national and European levels. Cross-border territories also remain the business of governments, not only as regards authorising their territorial authorities to act, and implementing to support them, but also in terms of the internal and external coordination discussed above.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

- **Support the cooperation** of local and regional players.
- Make better legislation at the national level and take account of the **impact of new laws** on cross-border territories.
- **Mobilise elected representatives** (notably members of parliament in each country) to pinpoint difficulties and propose solutions.
- In each country, have a cross-border **contact person in each ministry**.
- Organise **thematic monitoring and steering** for each border, and **interministerial and horizontal coordination** among the ministers in charge of “sectoral” policies, and **vertical** coordination with regional and local players.
- **On each border**, implement cooperation between neighbouring countries in their areas of competence, to coordinate their legislation, strategies (or even change them), funding and statistical observation in all sectors.



“Border regions, measures to boost growth and jobs”, European Commission, 2017 / © European Commission

C. RESPONSES AT INTERGOVERNMENTAL / EUROPEAN LEVEL

At the intergovernmental and European level, two major initiatives set the course for the future of cooperation.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – CROSS-BORDER REVIEW AND THE OUTLOOK POST-2020

The **“Cross-border Review”** launched by DG REGIO in the autumn of 2015, analysed the administrative and legal obstacles that persist along the European Union’s internal borders. It was structured around three pillars: a three-month-long public consultation that received more than 600 replies; a study aimed at compiling an inventory of 240 obstacles; and four workshops with key stakeholders. **Administrative and legal obstacles** are the most significant obstacles, followed by **obstacles linked to language and culture**, and those relating to **cross-border mobility and accessibility**. The findings of the Cross-border Review were the subject of a **communication (“Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions”)** by the European Commission on 20 September 2017, which set out new proposals, in particular a “border focal point” at the European Commission, and an online professional network concerned with cross-border cooperation issues.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO CROSS-BORDER OBSTACLES – DESIGNING NEW TOOLS

Following Luxembourg’s presidency of the Council of the European Union (second half of 2015) and its proposal to create a new legal tool dedicated to cross-border cooperation, a working group on innovative solutions to cross-border obstacles was set up by Luxembourg and France. The MOT provides its technical secretariat.⁵⁷ A new legal tool, known as the **European Cross-Border Convention (ECBC)**, would be aimed at authorising local application of a national standard in a neighbouring country to enable the setting-up of a cross-border project. The working group received its mandate under the Dutch presidency (first half of 2016) from the director-generals for spatial planning and urban policy. It held five meetings between 5 July 2016 and 30 May 2017. Designed to be an intergovernmental platform in dialogue with the institutions of the European Union (European Commission, European Parliament, European Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank), and the local authorities represented notably by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the CESCO (see 2.2.b), the group’s remit is to address innovative solutions to obstacles to

cross-border cooperation. The findings of the European Commission’s Cross-border Review (see above) and studies of cases of obstacles to cross-border cooperation were at the heart of their discussions. Testimonies from intergovernmental and transnational organisations were also gathered.

The working group explored the **toolkit** of existing solutions to obstacles to cooperation, developed and tested the legal basis and value added of the **legal tool proposed by the Luxembourg presidency**, and recommended the setting-up of a **multi-level European platform for the resolution of obstacles** (see below). The results of its work are intended to be the starting point for a European legislative process which the European Commission could take up.

This group could be made permanent to enable it to monitor the development of the Commission and different countries’ initiatives with respect to combating obstacles to cooperation, such as those referred to above, or the coordination of cross-border observation, in accordance with the perspective opened up by the Cross-border Strategic Committee (see 2.2).

57 See the MOT’s website.

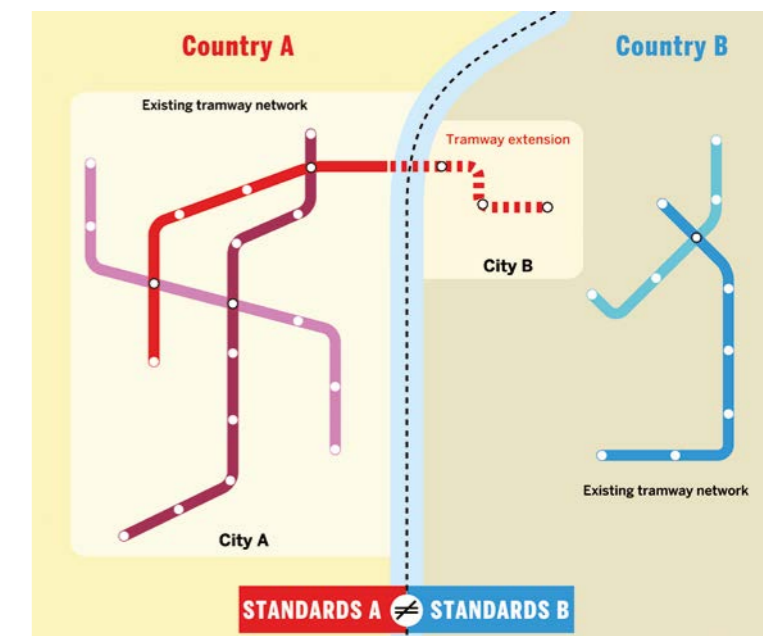


Illustration of the European cross-border convention (ECBC) / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière



Coordination (in the intra-national context and between countries)

All local territories need openings onto the outside, which are made possible by cooperation with other territories and higher administrative levels. The same is true for cross-border territories, where national frameworks remain prevalent, even in federal states, where the border remains the meeting point for spheres that are politically, administratively, legally and culturally different.

All governments must set up their own **specific coordination** for issues concerning **cross-border territories, which are on the periphery of their countries**.

The significance of coordination on each border with a neighbouring country goes beyond that of the cross-border territory, while drawing strength from local cooperation. In the development process of a cross-border facility or service (e.g. the Franco-



Interreg and beyond

The achievements of cohesion policy legitimise the European level as the one that should determine the strategy, the major policy aspects, and its steering and evaluation. The **community approach** (cohesion policy, but also other policies that need to take account of cross-border issues and that need to be coordinated) should be combined with the **intergovernmental approach** (coordination of governments across Europe). **Interreg is an indispensable tool** on all of Europe's borders to strengthen partnerships and **carry out joint projects**, but also **bringing peoples together** and constructing Europe on the ground in local territories. It needs to be reaffirmed, notably with respect to the "old borders" of Western Europe. We need to step up our vigilance: new generations are coming which often do not learn the language of the neighbouring country, and do not see the importance of reconciliation between neighbouring peoples. Cross-border territories need to remain at the heart of programmes, with a **political vision** for the medium and long term. Territorial authorities, national governments and European institutions need to learn the lessons from each project and to work, each at their level, towards the **construction of Europe**, the original purpose of Interreg.



At the level of Interreg programmes

- Improve **knowledge of cooperation programmes**, their functioning and achievements among all of the stakeholders: public, private and civil society players, so that everyone can understand Europe, with its frameworks, capacity to provide funding, and above all its value added.
- **Increase funding for ETC**, but also its role as a **catalyst** and incubator (for example, by fostering the funding of cross-border infrastructures via border regional or national programmes).
- **Coordinate ETC programmes** among themselves (work of joint secretariats, enhanced territorial coordination, etc.) and with other regional and national programmes.
- Allocate **funding by border**, and focus it on projects that have an impact on the border territory, while retaining the flexibility needed.
- Strengthen the **role of cross-border authorities and groupings** in programmes, in order to build cross-border territories and regions, notably **through integrated territorial development tools; develop cross-border planning and prospective**, in order to envision the future together with one's neighbours and within the framework of Europe.
- Develop **innovative forms of cross-border territorial governance** by means of cross-border territorial technical expertise, with support from programmes.
- Develop **cross-border impact analyses** and specific indicators of cross-border integration that take into account not only the socio-economic impacts of projects and policies, but also the links between people, the ability to cooperate, etc.

- Make mandatory the launching by Interreg programmes of **permanent observation** activities to provide data, notably on cross-border flows.
- Improve and constantly maintain the process of getting to know one another, **mechanisms for cross-border information** and consultation, and strengthen the feeling of belonging to a common territory.
- Develop **the funding by micro-project funds of people-to-people projects** aimed at civil society players, implemented by the governance structures of cross-border territories.
- Have programme managers communicate about the difficulties encountered in the implementation of projects to national administrations and elected representatives, as well as to the relevant DGs, to enable better account to be taken of the reality on the ground.



Beyond Interreg programmes

- Ensure that account is taken of border issues by **European sectoral policies** and that they are coordinated; make better legislation (taking account of the impact on cross-border territories of new legislation).
- **European Parliament**: ensure account is taken of these issues by the different committees and dialogue with national parliaments.
- **European Committee of the Regions**: ensure account is taken of these issues by the different commissions; draw up cross-border impact analyses.
- **European Council**: regularly raise cross-border issues at the General Affairs Council and in the informal meetings of ministers (territorial agenda); working group on cross-border issues (see Luxembourg's presidency in 2015).
- Add a coordination dimension to the role of the **European Commission**: inter-service processes (as is already the case for macro-regions and urban policy to be extended to cross-border cooperation); impetus with respect to observation and the resolution of cross-border obstacles (see the establishment of a "border focal point" decided by the Commission following the Cross-border Review).
- Pursue cohesion policy, with greater synergy between ETC and regional programmes; put cross-border territories at the heart of this policy (in particular by coordinating on each border the drawing-up and monitoring of partnership agreements, etc.).
- Strengthen European programmes aimed at **networking** and applied research – Interact, Interreg Europe, Urbact, ESPON – and ensure that they take better account of the issue of cross-border integration.
- Develop **legal tools** for cross-border projects and territories (EGTCs, etc.).
- Develop **new tools** like the one proposed by Luxembourg (the European Cross-Border Convention – ECBC).
- **Set up a multi-level platform for the resolution of obstacles.**

MULTI-LEVEL EUROPEAN PLATFORM

This platform is aimed at fostering exchanges and coordination between the different organisations that work for cross-border cooperation (the AEBR at the European level, the MOT on France's borders, the CESC on Hungary's borders, the Nordic Council in Northern Europe, cross-border regions such as the Upper Rhine, the Greater Region and the Meuse-Rhine Euregio, and institutes and universities such as the ITEM and Euro-Instituts, etc.). It should act to support the legal tool proposed by the working group. It will make it possible to:

- carry out actions on each border to support local and regional players;
- facilitate the sharing of good practices in order to remove obstacles, drawing on the approach of the MOT's forum;
- identify remaining obstacles more easily, with support at national level and coordination between neighbouring countries;
- support the intergovernmental process by pursuing the work of the above-mentioned working group;
- support the European level through the creation of a European database of obstacles and solutions; to be reflected on in relation to the proposal for an online professional network made by the European Commission in its communication in September 2017.

In particular, the MOT will play an active role in facilitating the resolution of obstacles to cross-border cooperation through the multi-level European platform that is to be set up.

ONLINE FORUM ON OBSTACLES TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

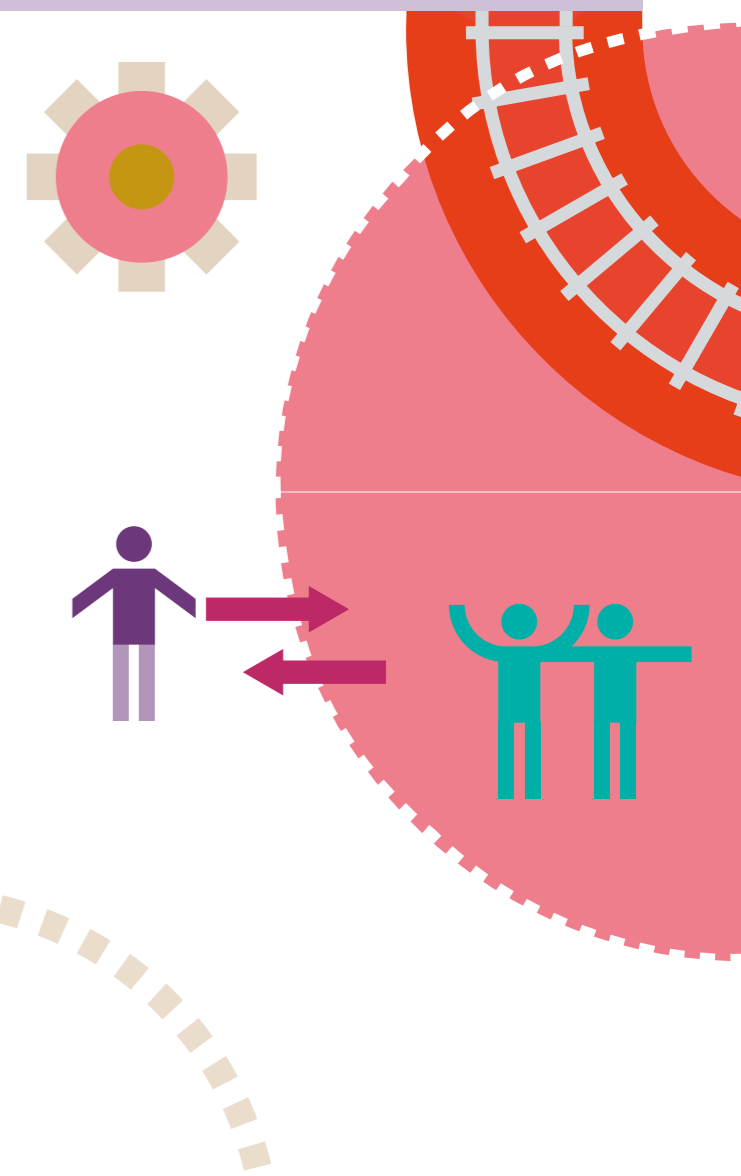
The MOT is setting up an online forum dedicated to its members and partners. This interactive forum, coordinated by the MOT and its network, is focused on the identification of cross-border obstacles, the search for and sharing of solutions, and more generally direct exchanges between members about different issues aimed at meeting needs on the ground. Over the longer term, the forum's objective is to feed back to the national and European levels the needs and obstacles to cooperation that prove to be recurrent, to enable them to be addressed. The MOT's forum will also be a place where resources and documentation relating to obstacles can be shared, with a view to their resolution with the relevant levels of governance, and where good cross-border cooperation practices can be promoted. The typology of the obstacles discussed are inspired by existing analyses. The forum could be extended to include other borders within the framework of the multi-level European platform.

d. THE ROLE OF THE MOT

On **each of France's borders**, the MOT contributes to the specific partnership there, by engaging with the players present, and by supporting cross-border initiatives and tools. It is involved in cross-border strategies, observation, technical assistance, capitalising on cross-border achievements, and training. With the support of its network, the MOT will continue to work alongside the other players present to ensure that border issues are better understood and better account is taken of them.

The MOT also acts through the support it gives **to the national level in France** (interministerial coordination), **to other governments** (Luxembourg, Andorra, Monaco, etc.) and more generally through its contacts with the governments of France's neighbours and other governments in Europe. It will endeavour to act as a contact point in the establishment of coordination between countries (intergovernmental working group).

At European level, the MOT is involved with the initiatives taken by the different institutions: the European Committee of the Regions within the framework of the joint statement signed in 2011 (EGTC Platform, interregional group on cross-border cooperation), the European Parliament, with the parliamentary working group on cross-border cooperation, the European Commission, the EIB and the Council of Europe.



3.4. Exchanges with other borders in the world

Cooperation along the internal borders of the European Union, which arises from and is made possible by this integration project, is a particular case. Nonetheless, exchanging experiences with other borders in the world is vital.

First of all, the EU Member States use the experience gained on its internal borders (tools like Interreg, EGTCs, etc.) to develop cooperation with their neighbours, whether it be European countries that have advanced free movement agreements with the EU (Switzerland, Norway), future Member States (in the Balkans), or countries on Europe's external borders, to the East, the South and in the outermost regions.

Moreover, even if the degree of openness of borders and the nature of regional integration projects are very variable, many of the issues affecting border regions in the world are shared. In Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, cross-border cooperation projects are being developed that are similar to those being implemented in Europe, and the players involved in these cooperation projects have everything to gain from exchanging their experiences.

Symmetrically, the crises that is currently experienced in terms of security and migration show that Europe's borders remain mechanisms linked to the sovereignty of States.

The MOT's expertise, with its multi-level approach (local/regional, national and European), can serve not only France's borders, in Europe and around its overseas regions, but also other geographical areas. It has thus been asked to carry out studies in West Africa, Central Africa and on the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Several international university networks focused on the issues of borders and cross-border cooperation have evolved over the past few years: BRIT (Border Regions in Transition), BIG (Borders in Globalization), the ABS (Association for Borderlands Studies) engage in dialogue with players on the ground, in order to bring together the views of researchers and practitioners. As a partner, the MOT takes great interest in these exchanges.



a. TAKING ACTION ON OTHER BORDERS

The MOT's expertise is highlighted in the French government's "Diplomacy and Territories" White Paper, in the context of transferring skills and sharing good practices, as exemplified by the work carried out in support of cross-border cooperation in Africa and the Caribbean:

- **Cross-border urban systems and adapting to climate change in West Africa:** having conducted a study consisting of an assessment of cooperation between Mali and Burkina Faso and proposals for its improvement (2010), the MOT and the OECD's Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) relaunched their partnership in this area. The MOT is producing together with the OECD a practical guide to identifying financial and legal levers and appropriate modes of horizontal and vertical coordination to assist the development of cross-border actions aimed at increased resilience to climate change.
- To **strengthen cross-border governance in West Africa:** the MOT provided methodological assistance to the **UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF⁵⁸)**, with the production of a toolkit for cross-border project developers (2015).
- For the **Development of cross-border co-operation in Central Africa** the MOT provided assistance to the **AIMF (International Association of Francophone Mayors)**. The MOT's assignment consisted of a survey of the state of cross-border cooperation and an analysis of potentialities in the light of the legal and institutional framework specific to each country, and in proposing a series of recommendations at different levels for a roadmap for cross-border cooperation, and the basis for a framework agreement on cross-border cooperation to the Member States of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC).
- To foster **cross-border integration and the account taken of it in Haiti's decentralisation process**, the MOT undertook a field mission to Haiti in March 2016, at the invitation of the Republic of Haiti's Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Authorities, with the support of the French embassy in the country.

58 For more information, see www.uncdf.org/lobi



b. EXCHANGES WITH ACADEMIC NETWORKS

The relationship that links the MOT to these networks goes in both directions. On the one hand, the MOT brings its empirical experience from 20 years of working on borders to the research carried out by the university networks. On the other hand, Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) and Borders in Globalization (BIG) allow the MOT to benefit from the findings of their research projects, which enables it to explore new working methods and to innovate in its approach to cross-border cooperation.

BORDER REGIONS IN TRANSITION

Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) is an international network that brings together researchers and practitioners that deal with border regions. Every two years, the network organises international conferences on university sites located on either side of a border. The first BRIT symposium was held in 1994 on the German-Polish border. The MOT has actively participated in the last editions of the conference: in 2012 on the Franco-Swiss border, in 2014 on the Franco-Belgian border at which it coordinated several workshops, and in 2016 on the German-Danish border, where it organised a workshop on twin towns and cross-border conurbations.

BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION

The Borders in Globalization (BIG) research network brings together researchers in an international partnership (Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia and the Middle East), with the participation of non-academic organisations involved in the management of borders such as the MOT. The aims of the project are to develop knowledge of and policies for borders from a global point of view, and vocational and academic training in this area, prioritising solutions to the practical problems faced by policymakers. Its research topics fall into six categories: culture, cross-border flows, governance, history, security and sustainability. The target audience are students, researchers and professionals in the sector. In July 2016, the MOT organised a policy forum in Paris on the topic "Security and Development".

Brazzaville (foreground) and Kinshasa (background), largest cross-border conurbation in the world / © Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

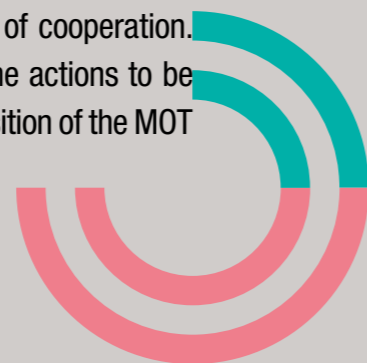


This brochure published at the occasion of 20 years of the MOT shows the rich spectrum of cross-border cooperation:

Experiences presented in the Part 1 are best practices and may inspire other borders.

In response to the obstacles that still pose a problem, the tools developed in the Part 2 are a true toolkit.

Part 3 brings responses at local, regional, national and European level, to face issues of cooperation. The roadmaps for the future and the actions to be taken are specified in a strategic position of the MOT network on the horizon 2020.



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