

## Haute-Savoie - a border department

With its international borders with Switzerland and Italy, the department of Haute-Savoie, which has been a member of the MOT since 2012, cooperates with the cantons of Geneva, Vaud and Valais, as well as the Val d'Aoste autonomous region, in areas such as transport, territorial development, tourism, education, culture and sport.

Since 1973, the historic body for cooperation with Switzerland has been the Comité Régional Franco-Genevois (CRFG – France-Geneva Regional Committee). It carries out particularly innovative work in the areas of statistical observation and public safety. Most topically, and beyond all of the traditional subjects for cooperation, the CRFG is going to have to give its opinion on the introduction of measures aimed at developing cooperation in the areas of higher education, research and innovation.

A member of the Greater Geneva LGCC, the department's Conseil Général contributes with these

partners to the development of the conurbation, which intends to implement a coordinated planning project up to 2030 designed to rebalance the territory with respect to jobs and housing. The France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation has also set the objective of developing an efficient and environmentally-friendly transport system.

Alongside the cantons of Geneva, Vaud and Valais and the Conseil Général of the Ain, the department is carrying out, within the Lake Geneva Council (Conseil du Léman), several projects contributing to the emergence of a strong Lake Geneva identity. Recently, this cooperation made it possible to carry out a statistical study that sheds light on the impact of the border at the level of the Lake Geneva Basin. The Lake Geneva transport coherence plan sets out up to 2030 all of the transport projects and studies sponsored by the Swiss and French territorial authorities under way in order to foster their coherence. [Read more](#)



## The "Geneva Games" - an event that brings people together

The Geneva Games were started in 1940 to enable Swiss sportsmen and -women to take part in international level competitions in spite of the war. They took place 12 times up until 1951. The event was relaunched in 2012 by the Geneva Sports Association, with the support of the canton of Geneva, Geneva City Council, and the Association of Geneva Municipalities. In 2014 – on 17-18 May – they were opened up for the first

time to the whole of the Greater Geneva cross-border region, with new institutional partners.\* They brought together 4,000 young sportsmen and -women from Greater Geneva, with a programme of 32 disciplines across 10 sites. In the future, they will take place every two years and will therefore become a regular fixture in the cross-border region's calendar. With the mission of bringing together the young

people of the cross-border territory through sport in a friendly and positive atmosphere, they are promoting the sporting values of tolerance, fair play and exchange, while also demonstrating a concrete Europe "lived day by day".

### More info

\* The District of Nyon, the Rhône-Alpes Region, the Conseils Généraux of the Ain and Haute-Savoie Departments, the ARC Syndicat Mixte (the Regional Cooperation Assembly Joint Association) and Greater Geneva.

# EVENTS

## REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE MOT ANNUAL AGM AND CONFERENCE-DEBATE!

These events will take place on 18-19 June 2014 in Paris. The topic of the conference-debate is: "Cross-border networks: mutualising services and experimenting with Europe on each border".

[To download the programme.](#)  
[To register online.](#)

## OTHER EVENTS

Forum of the international cooperation of local authorities, 3-4 July 2014 in Paris

Conference "Differing perspectives on prevention", 11-13 June 2014 in Brussels

Conference "Post-Cold War Borders: Global Trends and Regional Responses", 9-13 June 2014 in Joensuu (Finlande) and St. Petersburg (Russie).

TransParcNet meeting, 3-6 June 2014 on the Franch-Belgian border (organised by EUROPARC and the Hainaut cross-border Nature Park)

16th Baltic Development Forum, 3 June 2014 in Turku (Finland), Workshop "Smart solutions for smart cities", on 3rd June, co-organised by the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC).

[All the events](#)

## Study for a France-Brazil cross-border house



At the request of the French Guiana Chamber of Commerce and Industry, between September 2013 and March 2014, the MOT carried out a preparatory study for a France-Brazil cross-border house.

During two assignments to French Guiana and Amapá (Brazil), the MOT team questioned more than 50 French and Brazilian players in order to determine the activities and services provided by the future cross-border house, the partners involved and their respective roles, the target audiences and the technical and financial resources to be mobilised to set up the project.

The border between French Guiana and Brazil is little-known and for both countries

is one of the borders where there is the least cooperation. At once "porous" and "impermeable", European and South American, it is a complex border that is confronted with the problem of unauthorised crossings, which regularly interfere with the shared cross-border vision of players on either side.

In spite of weak economic ties and inadequate transport infrastructures, informal cross-border relations abound and contrast with the formal and institutional approach.

The lack of understanding of one another that was noted in the "assessment and interviews" phase of the study fosters a negative vision that makes it difficult to implement sustainable

projects.

It was against this backdrop that the MOT proposed the creation of a multi-site cross-border house (at Cayenne, Saint-Georges and Macapa) operating as a network and at different levels (local, regional and international). The facilities would provide not only economic information but also information on many different topics: administrative standards and institutions in the neighbouring country, training courses, tourism, culture and cross-border cooperation, etc. The services provided to the public might take the form of bilingual brochures, a personalised service and the organisation of events.

## 30th Congress of the European Cross-Border Grouping in Annemasse: Michel Charrat re-elected Chairman



The 30th Congress of the European Cross-Border Grouping (Groupement transfrontalier européen – GTE) was held in Annemasse on 30 April, bringing together nearly 1,000 French-Swiss cross-border workers. With 36,000 members, the GTE renewed its confidence in its Chairman Michel Charrat. In spite of the negative changes that have taken place this year regarding the status of French-Swiss cross-border workers,\* the many issues tackled and fought for by the GTE were recalled: the exemption from CSG-CRDS social security contributions,

health insurance, unemployment benefit at the full rate, hospital charges in Geneva, optional retirement and survivors insurance (AVS), second-pillar taxation, the transfer of unemployment insurance contributions, border workers' French pension, etc. Christian Dupessey, the Mayor of Annemasse, stressed the GTE's remarkable work", and Michel Charrat underlined: "Like others, we could have continued the battle of wills with the Government, published untruths, protected individual interests and persuaded you that a solution was possible! We have the

profound conviction that we would have led you down a dead-end with the risk of harming the interests of many people." And Christian Monteil, President of the Conseil Général of Haute-Savoie, addressing the audience: "Choosing Geneva is not opting for an easy life. You have taken the risk of being unloved. You deserve recognition, especially for the economic impact that you have."

### More info

*\* End of cross-border workers' right to choose with respect to health insurance from 1 June 2014 confirmed by the Government, the change in taxation at source, the vote on 9 February.*

## The European elections: the MOT highlights the key issue of cross-border cooperation



In the context of the European elections, the MOT wished to show how cross-border cooperation addresses the current challenges with respect to social and territorial cohesion, in a Europe that is suffering from a lack of recognition. In order to promote cross-border cooperation in public debate, it has put out a press release and a dossier of project factsheets that testify to the concrete achievements that are part of Europe's daily reality.

[The press release \[FR\]](#)

[The project factsheets \[FR\]](#)

## The importance of economic development for cross-border territories

With the launch of a European project financed by the Europ'Act programme at a conference in Paris on 15 April, the MOT wishes to highlight the topic of cross-border economic development.

In cross-border territories, which are faced with differences that constitute both constraints and opportunities, cooperation represents a potential that is still relatively untapped by private- and public-sector players. The political and institutional developments that are under way are redefining the intervention of territorial authorities and are confirming their legitimacy in terms of local economic development, thus enabling them to address a crucial issue for their future.

The challenge for public- and private-sector players is to move from competition that is endured to a managed "co-opetition" that combines cooperation and competition. A dynamic based on the fact that we move closer to our neighbour since they provide

something extra or make up for a lack of development.

### Two rationales:

- On a border where two or three States with different systems meet, businesses are able to "take the best from each system". What seems at first to be an obstacle is also an opportunity: companies can take advantage of differences by choosing the right system for their needs, or by exploiting the multicultural or multilingual potential of the territory.
- The second rationale is that of economies of scale. Cross-border cooperation "enlarges" the territory and can thus enable it to reach critical mass in terms of facilities and public services. One of the most important benefits is the splitting of investment costs between partners in terms of



infrastructure, laboratories etc., that are often very expensive in innovative sectors. These economies of scale can be applied to cross-border sectoral clusters, bringing together all of the actors concerned. Another example: the implementation of a joint marketing strategy by businesses can increase visibility and make it possible to share costs.

### Two keys to success:

- Knowing the cross-border territory, knowing each other within the territory
- Organising the governance of cross-border economic development.

[More info on the topic](#)  
[More info on the project](#)  
[The proceedings of the conference](#)



Project co-funded by the European Union. Europe is committed in France with the ERDF. [www.europ-act.eu](http://www.europ-act.eu)

## The MOT supports the end of roaming charges in Europe

On 3 April 2014, the European Parliament adopted the proposed regulation on ending roaming charges for mobile phones in Europe. The draft legislation still needs to be adopted by the European Council. Roaming is an artificial market and constitutes a major barrier both to mobility and economic development. In border regions in particular, it seriously hampers businesses'

competitiveness and runs counter to the rights of citizens\*.

[More info](#)



\* Who regularly connect to the phone networks of the neighbouring country without being notified.

## The Polish-Czech border

On 27 May 2014, the MOT made a contribution in Trutnov in the Czech Republic at an international conference devoted to "the systemic obstacles to Polish-Czech cross-border cooperation". Organised within the framework of the [Interreg project "Euregio PL-CZ"](#), a network of six Euroregions located on either side of the Polish-Czech border, this event brought together around

100 participants. During the conference, the different aspects of Polish-Czech cooperation were addressed, from the analysis of problems encountered on the ground to the solutions provided to give new impetus to cross-border relations, notably in the context of the new European funds programming period 2014-2020. [More info on the Polish-Czech border](#)

# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ In Lappeenranta, the orphans of the rouble

Le Monde, 13 May

Special dossier: WHAT'S NEW IN THE EAST? 1/5 – A journey along the European Union's eastern border. Today, Finland.

"Seen from the roof of its main building, the border post in Vaalimaa in the far south-east of Finland, is one huge building site. To the left, bulldozers are marking out the 34 lanes into which, in several months, the lines of Russian cars and minibuses from the region of St Petersburg, 200 km away, will divide. To the right, workers are finishing putting the roof on the lorry park in which checks will be carried out of the lorries that have come from the east to fetch merchandise from ports on the Finnish coast."

## ▲ The BRIDGE Project - Signature of a memorandum of understanding between Dover and Calais

Echos du Comité des Régions, 24 April

"The representatives of the ports of Dover and Calais have stepped up their partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding, in the presence of Kent County Council and Gilles Pargneaux, MEP and member of the Transport and Tourism Committee. [...] George Jenkins, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Port of Dover, stressed the interdependence of the two ports and highlighted the need for them to work together to address future challenges."

## ▲ The green path continues to wend its way along the border

La Voix du Nord, 6 May

"In November, Belgians and French people inaugurated the Maere footbridge, which crosses the Furnes Canal on the border between the two countries. Six months later, a new 300 metre-long section has been opened, the "Ghyvelde green path", which extends a little further still this route dedicated to environmentally-friendly cross-border movements."

## ▲ Small steps towards a French-German-Swiss regional transport network

Le Moniteur, 30 April

"The inauguration of the German extension of the Basel tram system in December will precede the start of the work to extend the same network into France in 2015."

## ▲ When the current comes from Lorraine, or even Germany!

L'Ami du peuple Hebdo, 11 May

"RTE (Réseau technique d'électricité), which manages the supply of electricity in Alsace and all of France's other regions, is going to invest €60 million over the next two years to secure Alsace's electricity supply [...]. The RTE network is large enough to both import electricity from Germany and also to export it to our neighbours, according to the needs of the two countries, particularly in cross-border regions."

## ▲ Archamps Mobicoman.com, the first French-Swiss smartphone app for tourists

Le Messenger, 8 May

"On 28 April, the first app for cross-border tourism in the Lake Geneva region [...] was presented."

## ▲ Cerdanya Hospital: framework agreement between France and Spain approved by the Senate

L'Indépendant, 25 April

"[...] the Senate unanimously adopted the bill authorising the framework agreement between France and Spain on cross-border cooperation. [...] Thanks to this framework agreement, Cerdanya Hospital [will] finally be able to open its doors and receive patients."

## ▲ Hendaye: an extra rail to cross the border

L'Eclair des Pyrénées, 2 May

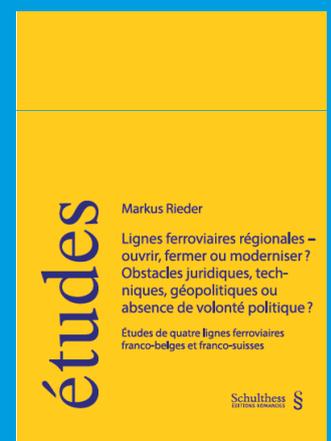
"From June, Aquitaine's regional trains will be able to go as far as Irun. They are currently obliged to stop in Hendaye due to the difference in track gauge. The work to add a third rail to the track has started, which will make it possible for trains to run on either side of the border without difficulty."

## Studies for four French-Belgian and French-Swiss rail services

Public money is hard to come by, including for public transport. This financial pressure has led to the calling into question of rail services in border and rural regions, where the potential and coverage are limited. The need for these rail services is making newspaper headlines. Moreover, sustainable development policies recommend the shift of traffic from roads to the railways. The reopening of numerous regional rail services has therefore long been on the political agenda. The author shows where the obstacles lie, as well as the legal, technical, geopolitical and sustainable development constraints that impede the modernisation and reopening of regional rail services. The planning method proposed aims to go beyond a simple cost-benefit analysis.

Author: Markus Rieder, Ph.D. (public administration); February 2014, 418p, €65. Published in French.

[Abstract of the study \[FR\]](#) - [To order the study \[FR\]](#)



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière  
38 rue des Bourdonnais  
75001 Paris France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80  
[www.cross-border-territories.eu](http://www.cross-border-territories.eu)

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