



## VIEWPOINT

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### To what extent can the establishment of this Euroregion be considered an important development for cross-border cooperation between France and Italy?

The political will to define common strategy and objectives for the whole area represented by our five French and Italian regions is a decisive step and will doubtless lead to concrete work being carried out on the ground. Within this framework two important directions have been followed:

- firstly on the legal and organisational level with the decision to provide the Euroregion with a common governance instrument: an EGTC which should help organise and structure cooperation;
- and also at the operational level with the will to move forward on content and to set up technical working groups responsible for helping in the development of cooperation projects. A number of priority areas have emerged in the preparation process of the action plan, transport, tourism, the environment being but a few...

The eventual aim is to achieve a two-fold orientation: political orientation first of all with the creation of a "Conference of Presidents", whose role would be to define the main strategic guidelines for the area, and technical orientation with the working groups consisting of experts and the competent authorities of the different regions.

### What are the next steps?

The next meeting of the Presidents will be held in Valle d'Aosta in March. The signing of a memorandum of understanding on this occasion will help formalise all these developments, one being the creation of the "Conference of Presidents".

The following step will be taken in the autumn and will consist of joint representation in Brussels. It is not only a strong symbol of our approach but it will also be a common place to exchange views and carry out actions. The ground floor of the new head offices will be designed as a meeting place where joint events can be organised.

Another important event to be undertaken by the end of the year: a second meeting of Presidents in the PACA region and hopefully during the course of this meeting we will be able to effectively develop the EGTC.

## A Franco-Italian Euroregion

*On November 27 the presidents of the Italian regions Liguria, Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta and the French regions Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Rhône-Alpes signed a Declaration of Intent asserting their will to set up an "Alps-Mediterranean" Euroregion.*

In the wake of the Turin declaration of July 10, 2006, which had established the principle of a Euroregion between France and Italy along the model of the "Pyrenees-Mediterranean", the five regions, who met in a "community of destinies", manifested their desire "to work together for stronger territorial integration of their policies in compliance with the principles of sustainable development".

On the operational level, the partners listed all the topics on which they would like to cooperate: accessibility and transport, economic development, innovation and employment, higher education and vocational training, quality of life, the environment and natural risks, culture and tourism, community services and finally cohesion and solidarity. One of the aims in this domain is to "move forward pragmatically" on all these topics by "promoting thematic meetings" before "moving on to the proposals which could be supported within the framework of a strategic programme for the sustainable development of the Euroregion".

On the political level, the issue is to "favour a permanent inter-regional dialogue". According to Michel Vauzelle, President of the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur: "We do not want merely to coordinate our policies, what we want is to have one common policy." The Charbonnières declaration also states



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"the will to work according to a model of governance for the area covered by the Euroregion with a view to coordinate public policies and investments". And in order to provide this entity with an institutional and legal framework, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation\* (EGTC) will be created during the next presidents' meeting next spring.

The aim of the new Euroregion is to ensure it is included within the framework of the community programmes for the period 2007-2013. The five regions have thus decided that by the summer of 2007 they will set up a single joint representation in Brussels, the purpose of which will be to enhance the visibility of the Euroregion in the institutions and to take better advantage of structural funds.

*\* New community legal instrument for the period 2007-2013 which will aid implementation of cooperation (cross-border, transnational and inter-regional) projects and programme management.*

## Close relations between France and Monaco

*The Binational Committee responsible for local issues of cross-border cooperation between France and Monaco met for the second time in December 2006. This decentralised consultative body set up in July 2006 will help to efficiently settle especially complex neighbourhood-related issues on French and Monegasque territories.*

This Committee, made up of members of the Monegasque government and representatives of the French State, has been enlarged and now includes the French territorial communities concerned, that is, the communities of the conurbations of Nice Côte d'Azur and the French Riviera and the communes bordering the Principality of Monaco. All the levels represented, national and communal, appear convinced of the interdependence of the projects and the need to conduct them jointly. According to Christian Estrosi, "deciding together on initiatives to be taken work on the heart of the matter with specific schedules is a huge first step."

The meeting of December 15 has allowed us to move forward with concrete projects and to

establish the main guidelines which will be addressed by the main working groups. The transport question was at the core of the discussions: modernisation of the Nice/Ventimiglia line (increased participation by the Principality of Monaco, decision to move from 70 to 100 daily services and the creation of car parks and multimodal poles at a number of train stations), research into a better coordination of transport systems relevant for the different communities, creation of a cable car between Monaco and La Turbie to relieve automobile traffic and improvement of road connections.

Other important projects were discussed particularly in the area of economic development (property initiatives related to the establishment of strategic economic activities) and waste treatment with a cooperation project between the incineration plant in Monaco and a compost centre which will be established by the French Riviera conurbation community.



## Cross-border passenger transport

*Cross-border passenger transport, due to the huge increase in short journeys, currently has an important influence on the development of territories of cross-border life. Regardless of whether it is urban or inter-urban it is the centre of the daily lives of the inhabitants in these areas. It encourages mobility and relieves road infrastructures.*

Cross-border transport lines were often sporadically built on a case by case basis to meet specific needs. Now they are an increasingly more integral part of territorial projects. Cross-border mobility, on the rise for the last 30 years, is characterised by mainly short distance trips: home-to-work commuting in most cases (for example, every day 280 000 workers residing in France cross the border), but also travelling on school trips, for health reasons and for leisure, etc.

Despite this, the use of public cross-border transport is poor. The limited offer results in the use of private transport and a saturation of road infrastructures. The modal proportion of cross-border public transport also varies between 4 and 5% in major conurbations on the French borders (78 % by train and 22 % by bus).

### Obstacles and issues

In Europe the supply of cross-border transport is still poor. Its development is confronted with important technical, legal and organisational difficulties: different regulations on both sides of the borders, a huge diversity of levels of competence of the transport organisational authorities, etc. Developments in both national and community legislation are needed if this situation is to change and integrated and intermodal cross-border networks are to be set up in cross-border conurbations.

Another problem concerns the low level of observation of trips in cross-border areas. The absence of statistical data, the heavy-handedness and the costs of cross-border "family polls" puts constraints on the pursuit of a development policy and an efficient cross-border transport plan.

Despite these difficulties, the organising authorities and carriers in these areas are working together on a more regular basis to improve cross-border supply. The France-Vaud-Genève conurbation which is working on the integration of the French and Swiss networks has for example developed a unique cross-border tariff system.

### Work undertaken by the MOT

The MOT has just published the sixth edition of its thematic Dossiers on the subject of cross-border passenger transport\*. They sum up the research undertaken by the MOT since 2002\*\*: they contain a list of experiences and difficulties found on French borders, describe the methods used in and the legal framework of cross-border transport and draw up proposals for their development. Four fieldwork experiences are highlighted: the French-Belgian Lille Eurometropole, the cross-border conurbation of Longwy, the France-Vaud-Genève conurbation and the French-Italian border in the Southern Alps.

\* Available on [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu) and soon available in German.

\*\* "Cross-border transport in cross-border conurbations" study (MOT, Ministry of Equipment, 2002) ; "Cross-border passenger transport" study and seminar (MOT, Ministry of Equipment, January 2006).

### ■ European Conference

A major European conference "Cross-border territories: day-to-day Europe" will be held in Lille on 8 and 9 November 2007. Organised by the MOT on the occasion of its 10th anniversary in cooperation with the Caisse des dépôts and the Lille Métropole, this major European event will host close to 800 participants to discuss the political and operational issues involved in cross-border cooperation as well as the future of territorial cooperation in Europe.

Further information : [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu)

### ■ A Franco-Italian employment passport

A cross-border "portfolio" is being tested between France and Italy in the territorial regions of PACA and Liguria. This "portfolio" is a certificate of skills acquisition in which the job applicants describe their profiles, career and professional experience. Geared towards favouring mobility on both sides of the border, the instrument will connect the job applicants to recruitment structures. Produced on paper and electronically it should be available by this summer. Funded by the European Union this project involves the PACA region, the Departmental Division of Labour and Employment, ANPE, ASSEDIC, AFPA and the Local education authority on the French side and on the Italian side the region of Liguria, the Province d'Imperia, employment services and a number of training entities.

Further information : [www.lariviera-interreg.eu](http://www.lariviera-interreg.eu)

## Press Review

### ■ Border workers worried they may have to pay taxes in Belgium, La Voix du Nord, 3 January

"Since the Belgian government has decided to strictly enforce the Franco-Belgian convention on border workers a number of French residents who work in Belgium are very concerned..."

### ■ 15 millions Euros in investments have been concentrated on the Sarreguemines slaughterhouse, Les Échos, 3 January

"The new cross-border slaughterhouse in Sarreguemines, designed to slaughter 10,000 tons of meat per year in five years' time, will be operational by the end of the month after the activity and 52 workers have been transferred from the former site which is to be demolished..."

### ■ Creation of a school exchange pool, Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 24 January

"On the occasion of the Franco-German Day on January 22, the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict has placed a cross-border pool for school exchanges on their website ([www.eurodistrict.eu](http://www.eurodistrict.eu)). This new service will help schools and kindergartens of CUS and the Offenbourg district to find a partner on the other side of the Rhine should they so wish..."

### ■ France / Germany: launch of the [www.france-allemande.fr](http://www.france-allemande.fr) site, Actualités diplomatiques, 18 January

"Ms Catherine Colonna, minister delegate for European Affairs and Secretary General for French-German cooperation, and her German counterpart Mr Günter Gloser [launched] the new French-German webpage [www.france-allemande.fr](http://www.france-allemande.fr) ([deutschland-und-frankreich.de](http://deutschland-und-frankreich.de)) [...] on Tuesday, January 23. The aim of this site is to become the main portal for French-German news..."

### ■ Basel Dossier - A cross-border laboratory, Le Monde, 9 February

"On January 1st the Tri-national Basel Conurbation association became a Eurodistrict."

### ■ France-Germany-Switzerland: project for a cross-border high-speed internet connection, AFP, 25 January

"Alsace and its neighbours Germany and Switzerland envisage that in 2008 a cross-border high-speed internet connection covering 450 km, 60km of which still to be built [...] will be operational. The future connection network which will cost somewhere between 20 and 25 million Euros will be located between Basel (S) and Landau (A)..."

