

Editorial from the political representatives of the Greater Geneva

François Longchamp, President of Greater Geneva and President of the Conseil d'Etat of the Canton of Geneva

Jacqueline De Quattro, second Vice-President of Greater Geneva and Conseillère d'Etat of the Canton of Vaud

Jean Denais, first Vice-President of Greater Geneva and President of the French Geneva area Regional Cooperation Assembly

"Greater Geneva is a cross-border conurbation numbering nearly 1 million inhabitants, with 450,000 jobs, spread across 212 municipalities in the Canton of Geneva, the District of Nyon (Canton of Vaud) and the intermunicipalities of the French Geneva area grouped together within the Regional Cooperation Assembly. We share the same living space, which straddles international and cantonal borders and is demarcated by the geographical boundaries of Lake Lemman, the Jura mountain range and the foothills of the Alps. Greater Geneva is a reality that is integrated into the daily lives of its inhabitants. Every day, over 70,000 cross-border commuters, 20,000 workers who have chosen to live in France and 15,000 workers from the District of Nyon cross the boundary of the city of Geneva to go and work there. Between 2006 and 2011, 15,000 new inhabitants settled in Greater Geneva each year, exceeding the highest demographic projections.

This dynamism and the intensity of the exchanges within the French-Vaud-Geneva conurbation require joint political action in order to both manage the development of our region and preserve the economic, social and environmental equilibrium. In the space of 10 years, we have made major progress, in the form of the signature of two conurbation projects in 2007 and 2012; the creation of an LGCC dedicated to Greater Geneva's governance; the establishment of the Conurbation Forum to foster links with civil society; the implementation of several transport and town-planning projects; an agricultural project for the conurbation; and actions for air quality, etc. This is only the beginning. In 2016, we will step up our actions by drawing up a territorial project designed and shared by public and private stakeholders."

A territorial project for Greater Geneva

In October 2015, the Greater Geneva local grouping of cross-border cooperation (LGCC) launched an initiative to draw up a territorial project for the whole of the French-Vaud-Geneva conurbation for the 2016-2030 period. This process of reflection will be completed at the end of this year. It involves the elected representatives of the region, both Swiss and French, and cross-border civil society organised through the Greater Geneva Conurbation Forum. The territorial project will be a reference document that is both realistic and operational and that gives coherence and a framework for action to planning policy on either side of the border and in the LGCC. The initiative responds to the functioning within this region in which territories are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. It is underpinned by a political will to work together to improve the quality of life in Greater Geneva, in spite of some difficulties in terms of implementation. The

territorial project will also be a document for the multiannual programming of investment that takes account of the financial capacity of the different partners in the French-Vaud-Geneva area, where the fiscal context is complicated. Lastly, it will make it possible to satisfy the requirements of the Swiss Confederation in the drawing-up of the third-generation conurbation project. This federal policy contributes to the structuring of Greater Geneva. It makes possible the co-financing, by the Confederation, of public transport infrastructure projects. The conurbation project also makes it possible to lay down a number of guidelines with respect to planning which are now taken into account in the regulatory documents on either side of the border (territorial coherence plans, cantonal master plans, etc.), but also in the field of the environment (preservation of natural spaces, air quality, energy transition, etc.).

[More info](#)



EVENTS

The MOT's forthcoming events

In connection with the exhibition "Frontières" ("Borders") in Paris, the MOT is organising in 2016:

- a conference entitled **"Constructing across borders: territorial cooperation in Europe"** which will take place on 27 February, in the presence of the authors of the book "Territorial Cooperation in Europe – a Historical Perspective" published by DG REGIO to mark 25 years of Interreg. [Programme and online registration](#)

- its general assembly and annual conference on 24-25 May, on the topic **"Borders: a resource for the inhabitants of border regions"** [More info](#)

Other events

Centre for Cross Border Studies 2016 annual conference: **"Bordering Between Unions: What Does the UK Referendum on Europe Mean for Us?"**, 18-19 February 2016 in Armagh (United Kingdom)

[All the events](#)

Unemployed in France, unemployable in Switzerland

At the end of 2015, the European Cross-Border Grouping (Groupement Transfrontalier Européen, GTE) was alerted by Switzerland's temping agencies regarding the difficulties they are encountering in hiring French unemployed people as temporary workers.

Under a French-Swiss agreement concluded in September 2006, a French border region worker who is receiving unemployment benefit in France and starts working in Switzerland must come under the French social security system if they continue to receive part of their benefit. This specific agreement between France and Switzerland has created an insuperable problem with respect to the hiring of unemployed French people in Switzerland. This is the point of view of Michel Charrat, the European Cross-Border Grouping's President, who is also Treasurer of the MOT: "The situation has been exacerbated since the majority of cross-border workers switched to the French social security system. The French social security bodies can now

better detect people who are registered in both systems and therefore, as soon as the filling of a temporary post is communicated, ask Swiss employers (including temping agencies) to register their cross-border employees in their country of residence and to pay the corresponding social security contributions there. This leads to higher costs and cumbersome administrative procedures that make French border region temporary workers unemployable in Switzerland.

Several thousand jobs are therefore under threat. The European Cross-Border Grouping has alerted the border region MPs and the French administrative authorities, and referred the issue to the representative of the European Commission when it visited Brussels on 13 November.



Michel Charrat, President of the GTE

This is a classic example of the disconnect between a binational agreement that may appear fair and application on the ground that has concrete consequences that the lawmakers had not anticipated. The problem stems above all from the differential in the level of the social security charges applied to salaries in the two countries, which can be twice as high in France. To deal with all eventualities, some firms make their future cross-border employees sign a document stipulating that they undertake to reimburse the firm should it have to register with URSSAF (the French administrative body that collects social security contributions). A solution needs to be found urgently."

[More info \[FR\]](#)

A new president for the Lemman Council



On 3 December 2015, Jacques Melly, the President of the Conseil d'Etat of the Canton of Valais, handed over the presidency of the Lemman Council to Virginie Duby-Muller, Vice-President in charge of cooperation and cross-border affairs of the Haute-Savoie Conseil

Départemental, who is also Vice-President of the MOT.

She will hold the presidency for a period of two years. "It is vital – in a national and international context that is sometimes marked by tensions and rising nationalism – to increase our populations' knowledge of one another and to help bring them closer together at all levels. That is why I will prioritise actions to support youth and culture. I am convinced that by involving young people in collaborative cross-border projects, the populations of the future will invest more in this territory and its challenges and needs, and thus contribute to its harmonious development. Youth and culture are excellent motors for social cohesion," she declared on this occasion.

[More info \[FR\]](#)

A cross-border platform dedicated to businesses in the Greater Region

The "GreX" platform was set up on 4 January 2016 in order to provide operational support to any sole trader or SME wishing to develop an economic partnership in the Greater Region.

This pilot experiment designed to facilitate business and cross-border exchanges for small firms is the result of a "joint council" of the Belgian and Luxembourg governments set up on 5 February 2015 to increase cross-border cooperation between SMEs.

[More info \[FR\]](#)

Services offered to the members of the MOT network: all of the "service vouchers" online

Since it was set up in 1997, the MOT has developed operational and legal expertise on many cross-border topics. Network members have first call on this experience.

In 2011, the MOT introduced the "service vouchers", which enable every member along France's borders to benefit from one day of work per year from the MOT's technical team. It is now making available in the members' space on its website the technical notes produced in this context [in French only].

[Click here to consult them*](#)

For example, among the latest "service voucher" assignments, topics included: "The Belgian institutional system", "The legal and health and safety framework of cross-border short agri-food supply chains", and "Legal provisions and analysis of the competences of French territorial authorities and their groupings".

* Only the list is available to the general public.

Overcoming the obstacles to cross-border cooperation: the MOT's position within the framework of the DG REGIO's "Cross-Border Review"

Since September 2015, DG REGIO's cross-border cooperation unit has been carrying out a large-scale initiative known as the "Cross-Border Review" aimed at analysing the administrative and legal obstacles that persist along the European Union's internal borders. It is structured around three sequences:

1. carrying out a study in order to draw up a critical inventory of obstacles;
2. a public consultation (see below);
3. four workshops involving experts (with the MOT having participated in the first two, in September 2015 and January 2016).

The public consultation "Overcoming obstacles in border regions" conducted between September and December 2015 gathered more than 620 responses, each identifying three obstacles and three solutions. The MOT invited the whole of its

network to take part in it; it also responded directly, as well as with the European network the CECICN. It highlighted three groups of obstacles:

- obstacles linked to the border separating two national systems (political/institutional, technical/administrative/functional, economic, etc.)
- obstacles linked to borders separating two communities (lack of individual connections, of shared knowledge and vision, etc.)
- obstacles linked to the complexity of European programmes and the lack of synergies with local, regional and national policies.

Among the solutions, it recommends notably:

- improving cooperation between countries and, in each country, taking greater account of the impact of new legislation on cross-border territories, and that

national elected representatives play a more active role regarding these issues;

- at the European level, that account be taken by sectoral policies of the cross-border dimension, the continuation of Interreg programmes on all of the EU's internal borders, better integration in these programmes of the local and regional players (territorial authorities, cross-border groupings, etc.), as well as the creation of relevant European tools such as that proposed by Luxembourg's presidency in 2015;
- in border regions, encouraging exchanges between populations on either side of the border, promoting mobility, and encouraging people to learn the language of the neighbouring country, etc. in order to contribute to the development of cross-border European citizenship.

Download the contribution: [short version](#) – [long version](#).

[More info](#) on DG REGIO's website.



Tensions around the Öresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden



Following Sweden's decision to introduce on 4 January 2016 systematic checks on all people coming from Denmark in order to better control the influx of refugees, the 15,000 cross-border workers who every day travel by public transport between the two countries across the famous Öresund Bridge, a symbol of the two countries' long-standing and extensive cross-border integration, are facing long queues on a daily basis. At a meeting in Brussels on 6 January with the Danish and Swedish immigration ministers, the European Commission attempted to defuse the tensions sparked between the two countries. [More info](#)

EU to invest €1 billion in regions along its external borders

The European Commission has adopted a series of cross-border cooperation programmes totalling €1 billion, supporting social and economic development in the regions on both sides of the EU's external borders.

[More info](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Schengen: border controls are expected to be extended until 2017

Le Figaro, 17 December

"The border controls reinstated by several countries of the Schengen Area – including France – may be extended until the end of 2017 due to 'exceptional circumstances', according to a recommendation submitted on Thursday to the 28 heads of state and government of the EU."

▲ At Europe's borders, traffic jams, delays and other annoyances

Le Monde, 19 January

"The reinstatement of border controls in several Schengen Area countries is making life difficult for cross-border travellers and is arousing fears about repercussions on Europe's economies."

▲ 8,500 inhabitants of the Ardennes department hospitalised in Belgium

L'Ardennais, 19 December

"On Thursday evening, at the municipal council meeting [...] one of the points on the agenda concerned the revision of the regional organisation of healthcare programme, the system that enables patients in the border region to receive treatment on either side of the border. 'The programme raises a problem in terms of healthcare, [...] there is an extreme imbalance in the relationship: in 2014, the latest year for which figures are available, 19 Belgian patients received treatment in France whereas 8,537 patients from the Ardennes department crossed the border in the opposite direction.'"

▲ A "Maison du Luxembourg" for cross-border workers

L'Est républicain, 29 Dec.

"Thionville. 'Reality has shown us that this structure was meeting a need,' emphasises Anne Grommerch. 'There is a strong demand for information.' The Mayor of Thionville that she is and the former cross-border worker that she was can, with the same voice, defend the rationale for an indispensable tool in this area on the doorstep of Luxembourg with the 87,000 jobs it provides every day to people of the Lorraine Region."

▲ Economic exchanges remain unchanged

DNA, 19 December

"The reorganisation of the regions, and in particular Alsace's merger with the neighbouring regions, has not diminished German entrepreneurs' interest in their immediate neighbour."

▲ The Haute-Savoie department reforms its border funds

Le Dauphiné libéré, 15 Dec.

"Inevitably, a windfall of nearly €20 million gives some leeway to change the rules of the game... 'We have indeed taken advantage of the increase resulting from the exchange rate to make the reforms [...]. The first of the two reforms is that the department has succeeded in granting nearly €10 million to the intermunicipal bodies for important projects for the territories, such as the Annemasse tram. The second is a new system of counting the number of cross-border workers.'"

▲ A cross-border observatory for healthcare

20 Minutes, 20 December

"On Friday, the hospitals of the Canton of Geneva and neighbouring France signed an agreement to share their statistics."

▲ MCABH, an accelerator for business between Monaco and the Côte d'Azur

Le Journal des Entreprises, 17 December

"Forging business links between companies in the Côte d'Azur and Monaco is the aim of the association Monaco Côte d'Azur Business Hub. 'We are positioning ourselves as consultants, dynamic and benevolent entrepreneurs who help to create links between the two territories by introducing the right person to the right project in order to accelerate synergies.'"

▲ Creation of an EGTC for the Catalan valleys

La Semaine du Roussillon, 24 Dec.

"For the first time, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation has been officially set up to link the groupings of municipalities in the Vallespir Valley and the Catalan municipalities in the Ter Valley. The idea is to join together in order to promote common cultural and tourism development."

Interact publications: a typology of Interreg projects and a project management handbook

A report of the Interact programme sets out a typology of 600 projects across 15 Interreg programmes. It is aimed at building better on past experience and provides an input for the future harmonisation of Interreg indicators.

http://www.interact-eu.net/news/overview_of_interreg_projects_achievements/7/19884

Interact has also published a project management handbook – a useful tool for project developers for the 2014-2020 programming period. Going step-by-step through the phases of the project cycle (from idea to closure), it provides practical guidance and keys to success.

http://www.interact-eu.net/news/new_publication_project_management_handbook/7/20161

INTERACT Sharing Expertise

TYPOLOGY OF INTERREG PROJECTS
Measuring main project achievements across
Interreg programmes in 2007-2013



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle
Transfrontalière
38 rue des Bourdonnais
75001 Paris France
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80

Photos: All rights reserved.
Page 1: Grand Genève / Rezo.ch

To subscribe:
www.cross-border-territories.eu

Director of publication:
Jean Peyrony
Production: Domitille Ayral



cget



Under the patronage of the European
Commission Representation in France

