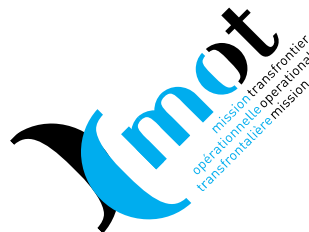


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Anne Sander

Member of the European Parliament
Vice-President of the MOT

Over the past few months, the European Union has seen more and more border controls put in place within the Schengen Area. Two main reasons are put forward to justify them: fear of terrorism and the need to combat illegal immigration.

Indeed, in 2015 Frontex counted 1.8 million illegal crossings of the EU's external borders. With the majority of Member States refusing to take in more illegal migrants, border controls have been reinstated and free movement within the Schengen Area is under threat.

However, the return of these borders has a cost: €470 billion over 10 years according to the experts invited to the last meeting of the working group on cross-border cooperation, which was organised to discuss this topic at the European Parliament on 25 February. Over the short term, it is cross-border working, tourism and the transportation of goods that appear to be most seriously impacted.

These controls also risk weakening the links patiently built up in border territories with financial support from Interreg European funding and assistance from the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière.

The objective is not to place economic benefits and security measures in opposition to another: protecting our fellow citizens and ensuring their safety is an absolute priority. However, we should do everything possible to restore the spirit of Schengen: we should help the countries on Europe's external borders to channel the flow of migrants and ensure better cooperation between countries in order to deal with requests for asylum and maintain open borders within Europe.

"Reform Schengen" : what impacts for border areas?



"Every day, we hear about another member country of the Schengen Area reinstating identity checks at its national borders in order to stop the inflow of illegal immigrants. While checks are necessary, they have a major impact on the daily lives of those who live close to these borders and habitually cross them: long traffic queues have appeared on our roads and the costs are starting to be felt by businesses and individuals."

These issues were at the heart of the discussions at the third meeting of the European Parliament's working group on cross-border cooperation, which was chaired by Anne Sander MEP. More than 70 participants, including the MOT, met on 25 February 2016 in Strasbourg to take stock of the border controls in Europe, assess the impacts on border

regions and think about the different scenarios to achieve a better balance between management of migration flows, internal security and free movement within the EU.

We should recall that the European Commission records 1.7 million cross-border workers and 57 million road transport journeys a year, which are impacted.

[More info](#)

For your diary:

→ MOT is organising its general assembly and annual conference on 24-25 May 2016, on the topic "Borders: a resource for the inhabitants of border regions". [More info](#)

→ Download the map produced by the MOT showing the borders in Europe that have been closed or are in the process of being closed [by clicking here](#).

EVENTS

Programme and online registration for the MOT's general assembly and annual conference:

"Borders: a resource for the inhabitants of border regions"

24-25 May 2016, at the Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris

[More info](#)

Other events:

Symposium "Borderscape as an Interdisciplinary Concept", 8-9 April 2016 in Luxembourg

"bk16" railway congress Cross-border rail transport: "Seven territories in the same train", 26-27 April 2016 in Basel

Symposium/exhibition "Coding and Decoding Borders at the Dawn of 21st Century", 13 April-31 May 2016 in Brussels

15th Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) Conference: "Cities, States and Borders: From the Local to the Global", 17-20 May 2016 in Hamburg (Germany) and Sønderborg (Denmark)

[All the events](#)

Cooperation between rural areas on the German-Luxembourg border



The first-ever cross-border regional development strategy since the launch of the European programme LEADER is being put in place along the Moselle River where it divides Germany and Luxembourg.

The two regions of Moselfranken (Germany) and Miselerland (Luxembourg) are located at the heart of the Greater Region on either side of the Moselle, between the centres of Luxembourg City and Trier. Cooperation between the two regions has been stepped up over the past decade thanks in particular to the setting-up in 2003 of operational Local Action Groups within the framework of the European programme LEADER, which fosters the development of rural regions, and it recently culminated in the joint

formulation of the first-ever cross-border LEADER regional development strategy since the launch of the programme. The aim was to give a new quality to the cohabitation between neighbours and to serve as an example for the 500 other border LEADER regions (out of a total number of 2,400 LEADER regions in the EU)...

Common challenges, common visions

The socio-economic, cultural and historical contexts on either side of the Moselle are similar and population growth rates are very high. Strengthening social cohesion is the crucial challenge for the future. The region displays great socio-cultural diversity, and ever-increasing mobility has resulted in a decline in commercial infrastructures and

the range of services offered in the territory.

The fundamental principle of the LEADER programme consists in giving responsibility to regional stakeholders in the social, economic, political, non-profit and institutional fields by providing them with the means to run their own projects as part of a territorial development strategy. The German-Luxembourg model along the Moselle border is adding to this the search for better solutions to common problems by gradually but systematically bringing the two populations closer together. A resolutely modern and European approach.

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Cancellation of the Strasbourg marathon and other cross-border sporting events under threat



The 2016 edition of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict marathon has been cancelled due to "participation by German runners being too low". With a cross-border route (13 km Germany and 29 km in France), it was the only binational marathon in the world. In France, every participant in a public sporting event

has to provide a medical certificate showing there is "no contraindication to them taking part in competitive running events". This regulation, which does not exist in Germany, is "culturally" surprising for most German runners and explains their low participation.*

The approaches made by the organisers over the past year and a half to the French ministry of sport to obtain an exemption have met with no response.

Other sporting events along the French-German border are also under threat, such as the "La Transfrontalière", the race along the Wine Route in the region of Wissembourg/Bad Bergzabern. We should recall that cross-border sporting events play an important role in bringing populations on either side of a border closer together.

**They accounted for only 6% of the runners in 2014, with 12% of the participants being non-French.*

The 2016 "Science Offensive" has been launched

The Upper Rhine Trinational Metropolitan Region is renewing its scheme to finance cross-border projects in the area of research and innovation entitled the "Science Offensive". This fund with a budget of €7 million is aimed at higher education institutions, public research bodies and micro-enterprises/SMEs in the Upper Rhine. Applications must be submitted by 15 April.

[More info](#)

Conference "Building beyond the border" on 27 February

"There is no more contemporary phenomenon than that linked to borders," emphasised Jean-Barthélemy Debost, head of the network and partnerships department at the National Museum of the History of Immigration, in his opening address to the conference organised on 27 February by the MOT in connection with the exhibition "Frontières" ("Borders") in Paris. The presentation of the publication "Territorial Cooperation in Europe – a Historical Perspective" produced by DG REGIO to mark the 25th anniversary of Interreg, in the presence of its authors, brought together academics and practitioners from many different backgrounds in order to put the achievements of European territorial cooperation and 30 years of Schengen into a historical context, while at the same time highlighting the need for and topicality of the discussion. [Download the minutes \(in French\)](#)

Meeting of the cross-border group of the Committee of the Regions

The "cross-border cooperation" interregional group of the Committee of the Regions, which was set up in July 2015, held its second meeting on 11 February 2016 in Brussels.

Chaired by Pavel Branda (ECR/CZ), this group aims to step up the resolution of the "common challenges faced by border regions in Europe, with the aim of sharing points of view and experience of EU programmes [...] and of influencing EU legislation". It has 30 members.

The meeting of 11 February, in which Michel Delebarre, a member of the group in his capacity as the MOT's President, and Jean Peyrony, the MOT's Director-



General, took part, addressed the following points:

- Regarding the territorial impact analyses for draft legislation carried out by the Committee of the Regions, the group affirmed the need to also take account of cross-border territories and issues. A methodology to achieve this is in the process of being drawn up.
- Coordination between the group's work and that of the EGTC Platform, whose next meeting is due to be held on 19-20 April, was strengthened.
- DG REGIO reported the initial findings of the "Cross-Border Review": following the public consultation conducted between

September and December 2015 to identify the obstacles to cross-border cooperation in Europe, a study of these obstacles is underway, and meetings of experts, to which the MOT has been invited, have also been organised. The findings will be made public during the course of the year.

- Lastly, an update was given on the activities of the AEBR and the MOT. Jean Peyrony was able to present the MOT's activities and potential avenues for cooperation with the Committee of the Regions.

[Consult the minutes of the meeting on the MOT's website.](#)

"Regional Territorial Systems" The MOT's contribution on the topic of tourism

The publication "[Systèmes Territoriaux Régionaux](#)" ("Regional Territorial Systems") that was brought out in January 2016 by the French Federation of Public Urban Planning Agencies (the FNAU) provides an analysis of territorial issues and interrelationships in France, through the lens of legislative developments and the issues at stake in public policy. A section written by the MOT is devoted to the cross-border dimension.

The MOT made a contribution on the topic of cross-border tourism in Europe to the Commission for Natural Resources ("NAT") of the Committee of the Regions, which is currently working on an opinion on the subject entitled "Tourism as a driving force for regional cooperation across the EU". [Consult the MOT's contribution.](#)

Cross-border workers would be among "those most affected" by the Schengen Area being called into question

On 4 March, the European Commission unveiled its roadmap for a return to the "normal" functioning of the Schengen Area of free movement "by the end of 2016".

In it, it points out that "the creation of the Schengen Area without internal borders has brought important benefits to European citizens and business

alike, yet in recent months the system has been severely tested by the refugee crisis", estimating at between €5 and €18 billion annually the direct costs of re-establishing border controls.

The players and sectors most affected would be "road transport [...], cross-border workers, tourism and government administration".

More info

[Regarding the movement of persons across borders, we should recall that the European Parliament adopted a legislative resolution on 2 February 2016 on the subject, which includes a specific paragraph on the procedures for checking cross-border workers \(click here to consult it\).](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Philippe Richert writes to François Hollande

DNA, 23 March

"The President of the Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine Region, Philippe Richert, and his first Vice-President, Patrick Weiten, have written to the French President of the Republic. They are asking for 'a strong signal' to be sent at the French-German council of ministers meeting on 7 April in Metz. [...] Philippe Richert and Patrick Weiten are calling on the French President to fully include 'cross-border issues' in the French-German council of ministers scheduled to take place in Metz (Moselle) on 7 April. [...] Messrs Richert and Weiten hope that the April joint council will 'announce new commitments to support the strategic measures initiated in the territories'."

[Download the letter to François Hollande \[FR\]](#).

Cross-border BtoB meets in Fruges

Le Journal des Entreprises, 4 March

"At the instigation of Dunkerque Promotion, the Urban Community of Dunkerque, the West-Vlaanderen/Flandre - Dunkerque - Côte d'Opale EGTC and VOKA (the Flanders Chamber of Commerce and Industry), on 1 March the first cross-border meeting in the territory was held. An evening of economic opportunities."

When ERTMS blocks TER trains at the Luxembourg border

Ville et Transports Magazine, 7 March

"In terms of TER networks, the new Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine Region will have to find a solution by the end of the decade...so that the 25 TER-2N-NG tricaisses trains from the Lorraine Region's former rolling stock can continue to provide the cross-border service between Nancy, Metz, Thionville and Luxembourg. Because from 2019-2020 onwards, only trains equipped with ERTMS will be authorised on Luxembourg's rail network."

The Pamina youth network

L'Ami Hebdo, 6 March

"At Seltz, around 50 leaders and coordinators of the youth networks of the regions of Southern Palatinate, Mittlerer-Oberrhein and Northern Alsace came together to share experiences and projects."

160,000 cross-border workers in the ACAL Region

Insee Analyse ACAL, 2016

The third issue of Insee Analyse on the ACAL Region analyses the phenomenon of cross-border workers in the new north-eastern super-region. "By virtue of its geographical position, the Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine Region (ACAL) is the region in mainland France most concerned by cross-border working." [The study \(in French\)](#).

Geneva abides by the Greater Geneva pact

La Tribune, 4 March

"Housing – the Canton has enlarged its housing stock by 1,986 housing units. [...] Two thousand additional housing units every year until 2030 was the commitment that Geneva made as part of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project signed in 2007 and renewed in 2012 with the label 'Greater Geneva'."

When unemployment rises in Switzerland...it's France's employment service that pays

Le Figaro, 11 March

"Even in Switzerland, employment has its ups and downs. In January, the unemployment rate there rose by 0.1 percentage point to 3.8%, notably in the border cantons, which are those most affected. [...] The 14,000 French cross-border workers that have lost their jobs all have their benefit paid by Pôle emploi (France's employment service) in accordance with an agreement that came into force in 2009."

Cerdanya - a cross-border hospital to end the isolation

La Gazette Santé Social, 29 Feb.

"At first sight, it all seems simple. As the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital is located in Catalonia, the staff regulations are governed by the Catalan health system."

[Consult all of the press articles*](#).

Reserved for members.

* Each month, the MOT posts online around 100 articles about cross-border cooperation (in French).

"European borders - sources of innovation"

Academic publication, François Moullé, Sabine Duhamel, Belgeo
Revue belge de géographie No. 2, 2015.

At a time when the paradigm of open borders conducive to free movement appears to be called into question by the political choices being made, borders remain complex geopolitical phenomena that continue to durably impact territories through either centripetal or centrifugal dynamics depending on the place. [More info](#)

This publication is available in the MOT's document portal. Specialising in cross-border cooperation, the portal provides more than 3,800 document references. [More info](#)
NB: the downloading of online documents is reserved for MOT members and, on request, students and researchers.



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