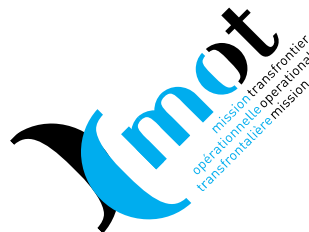


No. 119 / MAY 2016

CROSS BORDER NEWS



P. 2

Events

Effects of the reintroduction
of border controls: the
example of Strasbourg-Kehl
In brief

P. 3

Network news
Europe news

P. 4

Press review
Publication



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With 25 years of supporting Interreg programmes for cross-border cooperation to its credit, celebrated in 2015, but aware of the progress that still needs to be made, the Commission initiated a process of identifying the obstacles that remain at the EU's internal land borders.

In addition to a study whose findings are expected to be ready by the end of 2016 and several workshops with key players, Commissioner Corina Crețu launched a public consultation whose findings were published in April. It transpires that the 222 documented obstacles listed by the study and the 623 replies to the online questionnaire concur: administrative and legal obstacles constitute the main brake on cross-border cooperation, ahead of linguistic barriers, difficulty of physical access or economic disparities. Obstacles related to the labour market (lack of recognition of qualifications and differences in social security, pension and taxation systems) predominate, followed by all of those little daily annoyances that discourage mobility by citizens and entrepreneurs stemming from the conditions relating to different systems of banking, healthcare or transport.

"Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements." Faithful to Jean Monnet, the Commission will therefore seek to analyse the good practices identified, of which there is no shortage, which create a "de facto solidarity" and lay the foundations for multi-level governance, the fruit of effective pragmatism for the benefit of the some 190 million European citizens who live in cross-border regions.

Overcoming the obstacles to cooperation: the Commission publishes the first findings of its consultation

The first report of the European consultation on the obstacles and potential solutions to cross-border cooperation yields some very interesting analyses. A few elements: concerning the profile of the respondents, 84% of them live in a border region and 48% are private individuals. 33% of them cross the border occasionally and 14% every day, with the main reasons for doing so being leisure (30%) and to buy goods and/or services (20%). While legal and administrative obstacles are regarded as being the biggest obstacles by 53% of respondents, linguistic barriers and difficulty of physical access are frequently mentioned. Work to improve cross-border mobility emerges as being essential, and knowing the language and

having an understanding of socio-cultural aspects of the neighbouring country are regarded as being prerequisites for the development of border regions.

66% of respondents see the border as an "opportunity", and consider that cross-border cooperation has improved over the past 10 years.

Lastly, the report states that the replies are seen "as encouraging for further work" and that "the large number of obstacles mentioned together with corresponding proposed solutions show that there is a great will to improve and intensify cross-border cooperation across Europe." [Read the report.](#)

[The response from the MOT and the CECICN.](#)



EVENTS

Policy Forum: "Security and development: how to manage borders?", 7 July 2016 in Paris

The event is being organised by the MOT and the University of Grenoble within the framework of an international research project entitled "Borders in Globalization" ("BIG").

[Programme and online registration](#)

CoR Forum on the EU Urban Agenda, 30 May 2016 in Amsterdam (NL)

Interreg 2 Seas Cooperation Fair, 2-3 June 2016 in Esther (UK)

Conference on "Cross-border exchanges in the area of territorial development and mobility", 3 June 2016 in Arlon (BE)

Interregional conference "The digital challenges for rural areas in the Greater Region: infrastructures and uses", 7 June 2016 in Bastogne (BE)

ESPON seminar "Territory matters: Keeping Europe and its regions competitive", 16-17 June 2016 in Amsterdam (NL)

ITEM seminar "Recognition of Qualifications", 29 June 2016 in Maastricht (NL)

[All the events](#)

Effects of the reintroduction of border controls: the example of Strasbourg-Kehl



Intended to form an integrated urban entity within the framework of the "Two Banks" initiative structured around a tramline, which is scheduled to start running in 2017, the cities of Strasbourg and Kehl constitute an interesting barometer for the consequences of the reintroduction of controls along the French-German border. A considerable lengthening of transit times at the border, delays in cross-border public transport, fewer visits to retailers, but also a fall in petty crime are the main effects of the reintroduction between November and December 2015 of checks on inflows and outflows at the border. Initially carried out jointly

with the German police, since January 2016 border controls have only been kept in place for road traffic over the Pont de l'Europe at the entry point to French territory.

However, they have not called into question or weakened the links and cooperation projects between Strasbourg and Kehl, which, on the contrary, have been reaffirmed by local leaders. Although they are well accepted by the population, these checks nonetheless raise questions due to their discontinuous geographical nature and the feeling they have given rise to of activities and mobility, both professional and residential, between the two cities being penalised. Against this backdrop, the issue of the

reception of refugees, nearly a thousand of which will be located in the municipalities of Strasbourg and Kehl, but distributed very unequally, takes on particular importance. The creation in the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict of a fund for refugee children, which was the first cross-border initiative of this type and was an immediate success, was an appropriate response to the new challenges.

For more information about the fund for refugee children set up by the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, [click here \[FR\]](#).

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A cross-border strategy for the French-Swiss Jura Arc

On 18 April 2016, the Conférence TransJurassienne (CTJ) presented its new strategy for cross-border cooperation in the territory of the French-Swiss Jura Arc. The result of a consultation process with all of the territory's stakeholders and drawn up with assistance from the MOT, this strategy is designed to generate fresh dynamism in the Jura Arc. It is based on a system of closer cooperation with the regions that make up this area and should facilitate the emergence of new

French-Swiss projects. It is structured around four thematic areas: economic development, mobility, spatial management and "living together".

The strategy will constitute a framework for the mobilisation of public cofinancing granted to cross-border projects, notably those supported by the France-Switzerland Interreg programme. It can also draw on a recently created fund to support small projects.

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

Seminar on observation in Tournai

At the instigation of INSEE and its French and Belgian partners, a seminar entitled "Cross-border observation: what type of organisation for what type of actions?" was held in Tournai on 28 April 2016. The participants shared their experiences of the often complex exchange of statistical data and geographical information. Tools for the exchange of data were presented such as the [PEPTID platform](#) and the geographical portal of the Lille European Metropolis ([MELMap](#)). The MOT, which works on the topic of observation at both national and European levels, made a contribution in the concluding phase of the seminar. [More info \[FR\]](#)

Survey on Greater Geneva

Evaluating quality of life and the desire for "living together" in Greater Geneva is the objective of the study that has just been published by the Geneva HES-SO (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland). The study concludes that people regard Greater Geneva as useful (6.9 points out of 10) and shows the progress that needs to be made in terms of a sense of belonging (5.4 out of 10) and particularly in coherence in the development of the project (4.8 out of 10). It also highlights differences in perception between regions. The Geneva HES-SO wishes to carry out this study every two years, which would make it possible to have points of comparison and to observe changes over time. [More info \[FR\]](#)

EUROPE NEWS

A new project for European straits

On 12 May, a conference was held to launch a new European project entitled "PASSAGE",¹ initiated by the Pas-de-Calais Department and Kent County Council within the framework of the European Straits Initiative. Funded by the Interreg Europe programme, it involves eleven partners on five maritime borders² and is aimed at encouraging cross-border low-carbon initiatives. The idea for the project arose from the fact that Europe's straits, which are at the heart of maritime border regions, are major points of transit with a high concentration of flows and activities resulting in considerable carbon pressure.

[More info](#)

¹ "Public Authorities Supporting low-carbon Growth in European maritime border regions".

² France/United Kingdom, Estonia/Finland, Germany/Denmark, France/Italy, Albania/Greece/Italy.

Launching of the "Europe in My Region" campaign

"Europe in my Region" is a European communication campaign organised by Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy around four different initiatives: the EU Open Project Days, a treasure hunt, a photo competition, a blogging campaign. All these activities aim to encourage citizens to discover and learn more about EU-funded projects, while sharing images and experiences via social media.

[More info](#)

NETWORK NEWS

"The cross-border director-general" training course

A training course entitled "The cross-border director-general" was held on 26-27 April in Strasbourg by the MOT and the Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFPT). Bringing together senior managers from border region local authorities from several of France's borders including overseas departments, it enabled them to:

- Deepen their understanding of the specificities of cross-border territories;
- Take stock of the implementation of policies relating to territorial cooperation (European developments and territorial reforms in France);
- Think about their own authority's organisation with respect to cooperation issues.

The training course gave the participants, who are experts in cooperation, a great deal of space

to express themselves and position themselves in a forward-looking dynamic.

Given that territorial development falls primarily within the competence of the local authorities concerned, the discussions focused particularly on the priorities for actions to be developed and the coordination between cross-border governance structures (such as EGTCs) and actions by the departments of the authorities that are members of them. The relationship between the different levels – departments, regions and countries – in accordance with their respective competences, was also discussed from the point of view of governance; and the example of the Strasbourg-Kehl tramway served to illustrate the particular difficulties and solutions relating to the setting-up of projects.

Lastly, issues relating to the day-to-day management of cross-border cooperation within a local authority were discussed (its "Europe" department and partners): how can the cross-sectoral dimension in a local authority best be managed? What is the role of the decentralised State? What are the needs in terms of training?

The final discussion was devoted to the concept of "cross-border inter-territoriality": how will the cross-border action of local authorities evolve? What is the role of the director-general? Other sessions of the same type can be organised within the framework of the MOT/CNFPT partnership.

[The documents from the training session are available for members on the MOT's website, in French: \[click here\]\(#\).](#)



The European Consumer Centre's new websites

The French-German association has launched two new websites aimed at providing consumers with better information:

- www.cec-zev.eu, dedicated to French-German consumer questions.
- www.europe-consommateurs.eu, for all consumers' questions relating to Europe.

Its latest [press release on the new amendment to the French-German tax agreement](#) should also be noted: since 1 January 2016 German employees of public institutions living in France have been liable to pay their income tax in Germany.

European Congress of Local Governments in Krakow



The second European Congress of Local Governments was held on 5-6 April 2016 in Krakow in Poland. The event brought together more than 1500 participants, among which there were many locally elected

representatives especially from Central and Eastern Europe. The MOT made a contribution as part of a workshop run by France's embassy in Poland entitled "How can we make the external action of local authorities more effective?". Contributions were also made by Bertrand Fort, delegate for the external action of territorial authorities in France, a representative of the association of Polish municipalities and a representative of the association of Ukrainian municipalities.

PRESS REVIEW

Roaming charges: last leg before abolition

La Tribune, 30 April

"The 'digital single market' has taken another step forward with this significant reduction in roaming charges that comes into effect on Saturday 30 April across the whole of the European Union, in anticipation of their complete removal next year."

Back to Schengen

European Commission press release, 3 May

"The Council has today adopted the Commission's proposal to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, for up to six months. These countries had already introduced measures to address the threat to public policy and internal security."

Reassurance for Belgian cross-border farmers

L'Avenir, 22 avril

"Belgian farmers that grow crops in France recently received a letter. The French administration informed them that they would not receive CAP subsidies for these crops on French territory as their farm business was not located there. For dozens of farmers this news seemed to spell economic disaster [...]. At lunchtime on Thursday [...] the French minister affirmed that Belgian farmers will receive their CAP subsidies as in the past."

Luxembourg is the reflection of our weaknesses!

La Semaine, 28 April

"Town planning agencies have a crucial role in understanding territories and they should pool their expertise," argued André Rossinot, the president of the Sillon lorrain, in discussion with Manuel Valls. This role was illustrated on Monday at the meeting of the Sillon lorrain in Epinal in a presentation by the AGAPE (North Lorraine Town Planning and Sustainable Development Agency) on the issues around cross-border mobility to Luxembourg."

Cross-border workers

L'Ami Hebdo, 17 April

"In October 2015, the MP Frédéric Reiss questioned the Minister of Finance and Public Accounts, Michel Sapin, about the implementing procedures for the amendment of 31 March 2015 to the 1959 French-German tax agreement. He has finally received an answer from the ministry [...] which has confirmed that the new provisions apply to income received from 1 January 2016 onwards."

The green way from one country to another

L'Alsace, 24 April

"The trinational green way linking Basel, Huningue and Weil am Rhein was officially inaugurated late yesterday morning – a concrete achievement of the cross-border cooperation under the label IBA 2020."

An agreement brings relief to border region companies and unemployed

La Tribune de Genève, 28 April

"The GTE (European Cross-Border Grouping) has just secured a moratorium from the French government on a French-Swiss agreement from 2006. The agreement stipulates that a cross-border worker who receives unemployment benefit in France and then takes up a job in Switzerland should be subject to the French social security regime. Several Swiss employers had received demands from France to pay their cross-border employees' social security contributions."

Two public ferry services between Corsica and Sardinia from October?

Corse Net Infos, 19 April

"Ensuring and making safe sea links between Corsica and Sardinia throughout the year and not only during the summer is the shared wish that over the past three months has been at the heart of the discussions between the two island executives."

Death at Cerdanya Hospital: continuing administrative problems

Midi Libre, 22 April

"Once again, the death of a French resident at the cross-border hospital poses the problem of the repatriation of the body to France."

[Consult all of the press articles*.](#)
Reserved for members – in French.

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

"Nature conservation in a cross-border setting"

"La conservation de la nature transfrontalière", doctoral thesis by Simon Jolivet, éditions mare & martin, Bibliothèque des Thèses, 2015 – in French.

"Relations between nature and national borders have traditionally been regarded as antagonistic: while nature does not recognise borders, international public law is structured by them. Borders thus constitute a threat for nature in a context of accelerated erosion of biological diversity worldwide." [More info](#)

This publication is available in the MOT's document portal [FR].
Specialising in cross-border cooperation, the portal provides more than 4,000 document references. [More info](#)

NB: the downloading of online documents is reserved for MOT members and, on request, students and researchers.

Simon Jolivet

La conservation de la nature transfrontalière

Préface de Jessica Makowski
Professeur à l'Université de Limoges

Prix de thèse du GRIDAUH (Groupe de recherche sur les institutions et le droit de l'aménagement, de l'urbanisme et de l'habitat)

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