

Results of the MOT Annual Conference

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

The MOT Annual Conference brought together 150 participants on 24 May 2016 in Paris at the French National Museum of the History of Immigration, on the topic: "Borders: a resource for the inhabitants of border regions". With 2 million cross-border workers in Europe, freedom of movement – a major objective of the European Union – is an everyday reality in cross-border regions. However, the re-establishment of numerous border controls is creating difficulties in these regions where borders are crossed regularly, forming part of everyday life.

In opening the conference, Hélène Orain,

Director-General of the Établissement public du Palais de la Porte Dorée, emphasised what is at stake: "The utopia of a world without borders, which came to its apogee with the fall of the Berlin Wall, has collided with another reality, at once economic, migratory, and human, which is today threatening the Schengen Area". But as the MOT's President, Michel Delebarre, emphasised in introducing the roundtables: "Faced with all of the current crises, Europe's open borders are a source of hope and solidarity and are part of the solution!" [Continued on page 2.](#)



Annual meetings of the network and Technicians Platform

Following the annual conference, the meetings of the MOT's bodies took place on 25 May. The MOT's President, Michel Delebarre, presented its new members: the Cluster GAT Caraïbes, the Principality of Monaco, the Strasbourg-Mulhouse-Colmar Metropolitan Hub, the IDELUX-AIVE Group (Belgium) and Kiosk Office.¹

The Steering Committee discussed the MOT's activities and the General Assembly approved its work programme as well as the financial and [activity reports](#) for last year. Additional elections endorsed four new members of the Steering

Committee and the Board representing the regions of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes, Grand Est, and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur.² Following this, the Technicians Platform was devoted to "obstacles/resolutions approaches" and cross-border impact assessments. The new discussion forum for members set up by the MOT is aimed notably at identifying obstacles and resolving them. It will be finalised by the end of the year. Initiatives on other borders and at the European level were presented.³ The second part of the meeting addressed the need for training for

players, recalling the MOT's work with government departments and within the network.⁴ One of the MOT's objectives is to strengthen its partnership with the Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFPT) in order to increase the range of training in cross-border settings.⁵

¹ [Map showing members.](#)

² [Minutes of the meetings](#) (reserved for members - FR).

³ Council of Europe: ISIG database; European Commission: Cross-Border Review; follow-up to Luxembourg's presidency; Committee of the Regions' initiative on cross-border impact assessments.

⁴ ["The cross-border director-general" training course](#) (FR).

⁵ [Minutes of the Platform meeting](#) (reserved for members - FR).

EVENTS

MOT Events:

Policy Forum : "Security and development: how to manage borders?", 7 July 2016 in Paris
[More info](#) [FR]

European day of cross-border cooperation, 21 September 2016 in Nice

Comparison of territorial reforms in France and Italy: what lessons can be learned?, 22 September in Nice – [More info](#) [FR]

OPEN DAYS, 10-13 October 2016 in Brussels: the MOT is running two workshops on cross-border rural areas and cross-border investment. [More info forthcoming on the MOT's website](#)

Other events:

2016 intermediate presentation of IBA Basel 2020, 17 September 2016 in Basel

AEBR Annual conference, 22-24 September 2016, in the Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa

ABS Europe Conference 2016 "Differences and discontinuities in a 'Europe without borders'", 4-7 October 2016 in Luxembourg

[All the events](#)

Continued from page I.

In the first roundtable, reports from the French-Swiss, French-Belgian, French-Italian and Swedish-Danish borders on the reality in cross-border territories following the reinstatement of border controls illustrated that this daily experience of borders is a resource but that its equilibrium is very fragile*.

The second round table focused on the role of regional, national and EU policy. Edouard Jacque, member of the Grand Est regional council, in charge of cross-border workers, noted that 20 to 25% of inhabitants in this region are affected by cross-border issues. He underlined the exasperation of a section of the population that feels abandoned with regard to cross-border problems in daily life, often concerning mobility. The testimonial of the German-Dutch border gave the example of an open border where the very high degree of integration seems to go hand in hand with a sentiment of security and shared trust within the population.

According to Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary, professor at Université Grenoble Alpes, who co-moderated the two round tables: "for cross-border regions, the more they cooperate, the safer they are".

"The main question is knowing how to mobilise the inherent resources belonging to each border, in order to aim for a positive equilibrium between "barrier effects" and "necessary openness". In this context, "the role of public authorities is first of all to ensure that the border does not become a place that generates inequalities".

Jiri Burianek, Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions, highlighted that cross-border cooperation is today at a crucial stage in its history. Aside from current events that have pushed the topic of borders to centre stage, progress at the European level in developing cooperation is considerable*.

In his closing address to the conference, Marc Abadie, Director of Network and Territories at the Caisse des Dépôts (France), highlighted his group's commitment to supporting cooperation and

Marie-Caroline Bonnet-Galzy, General Commissioner for Territorial Equality (CGET, France) confirmed this national commitment: "the risk of widening inequalities on our borders is real. Creating communities of interest and building Europe upon our border territories is indispensable".

Walter Deffaa, Director-General of Regional and Urban Policy at the European Commission, concluded with this wish: "I hope that these regions will demonstrate that it is neither in turning in upon ourselves, nor in closing ourselves off that we will find the future of Europe, but rather that it is in this strengthened cooperation that all of our futures lie." A fine challenge for our cross-border regions, which the MOT will continue to represent and promote!

* **More info in the press release:** [click here](#).



Parental authorisation needed for minors to leave the country?

The legislation to strengthen the fight against organised crime, terrorism and the financing adopted on 26 May 2016 provides for the reintroduction in France of required authorisations for any minor leaving the country. At the MOT's annual conference, Joël Giraud,¹ Vice-President of the MOT, stressed "the dramatic consequences" for his cross-border territory,² where every day many minors, notably primary and secondary schoolchildren, cross the border to go to school. The

reintroduction of exit authorisations for minors living in cross-border regions does indeed risk making their journeys more complicated. While the need for security was affirmed, the MOT emphasises that the impact on local areas should be taken into account in the implementing decree for the new legislation.

¹ MP for the Hautes-Alpes Department and Mayor of L'Argentière-la-Bessée.

² The Briançonnais area, on the French-Italian border, which is remote but very integrated.

A 2020 territorial strategy for the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict

The SaarMoselle Eurodistrict has just adopted an action programme for the next five years. The strategic document approved by the EGTC's assembly states that "in addition to the implementation of projects, a general reflection needs to be carried out in the areas of territorial and urban development, transport, economic development and tourism, as well as language learning and healthcare". To this end, four thematic conferences have been set up. [More info](#)

A platform to facilitate the mobility of territorial civil servants

The Institut National des Études Territoriales (INET) in Strasbourg has put online a platform designed to centralise a large amount of disparate information about French territorial civil servants' possibilities for mobility in Europe and internationally. The different possibilities for mobility are grouped into six categories: European institutions, representation of a territorial authority, cross-border structures, territorial authorities, international organisations and volunteering. [More info](#)

Meeting of the CECICN in Brussels

The CECICN¹ held meetings of its political board and executive board on 15 June in Brussels in the presence of four of its member networks (the MOT, the CESCO, the UBC and the FAIC)². Per Bødker Andersen, President of the UBC, was re-elected the CECICN's President until 31 December 2017. He will now have two Vice-Presidents at his side, Michel Delebarre, the MOT's President and András Levente Gál, Vice-President of the CESCO. The executive board then worked on its 2016 action programme and in particular the forthcoming submission of its project entitled "Europe for Citizens" involving the organisation of four thematic seminars led by four of the CECICN's network members.

More info

¹ Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks.

² Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives, Union of Baltic Cities, Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities.

Fourth meeting of the parliamentary working group on cross-border cooperation

"Unemployment: what solutions in border regions?"

On 26 May 2016, Anne Sander, MEP and Vice-President of the MOT, chaired the fourth meeting of the working group on cross-border cooperation that she has coordinated at the European Parliament since June 2015.

Around 40 experts, MPs, civil servants, staff and representatives of interest groups came together to discuss the solutions to unemployment in border regions.

Barely 1% of the economically active population crosses a border to go to work

Cross-border workers constitute 0.6% of economically active people in Europe. At the same time, unemployment in the EU is close to 9%. "It is common sense that in border regions people should be able to go and work in the neighbouring country if

unemployment is lower there. Unfortunately, this mobility is still too marginal," Anne Sander points out. It is striking in the case of Alsace and Baden Württemberg, with 101,000 job-seekers on the French side and a shortage of qualified labour on the German side.

Practical, regulatory and ideological obstacles

There are many obstacles: language, lack of recognition of professional qualifications, cultural differences, regulatory constraints, lack of information, etc. Ideological barriers also persist. "For some people, 'cross-border work' is synonymous with 'unfair competition between workers' and 'social dumping'. The abuses associated with the status of cross-border worker have

stigmatised worker mobility in Europe. Lastly, for those lucky enough to have found a job on the other side of the border, the struggle is not over!" A multitude of administrative annoyances remain: the headache of pensions, tax, social rights and the random reinstatement of border controls.

Mobility as an opportunity

The EU cannot resolve all of the problems as many of the obstacles come within the competence of national governments and local authorities. But if Europe succeeds in changing mentalities so that people regard mobility as an opportunity rather than a threat, it will have played its role effectively.

More info



Third meeting of the Committee of the Regions' interregional group on cross-border cooperation

On Thursday 16 June, the MOT attended the third meeting of the Committee of the Regions' interregional group on cross-border cooperation (and EGTCs) chaired by Pavel Branda. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss two opinions, the first on tourism as a driving force for regional cooperation across the EU, and the second on the simplification of the ESIF from the perspective of local



and regional authorities. The meeting was also a chance to take stock of recent developments in cross-border cooperation in DG REGIO and the Committee of the Regions.

More info

"Obstacles to investment at local and regional level"

To help identify obstacles to investment, the Committee of the Regions has invited the representatives of EU cities and regions to take part in a survey on "Obstacles to investment at local and regional level", the results of which will be presented to the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council. The MOT encourages border cities and regions to actively participate in it. The survey is open until 14 July. [More info](#)

ESPON seminar

Jean Peyrony, the MOT's Director-General, took part in the ESPON seminar "Territory matters: keeping Europe and its regions competitive" held in Amsterdam on 16-17 June 2016. He spoke as part of a workshop on the contribution made by cross-border cooperation to competitiveness. He notably presented the MOT's study on cross-border economic development.

[Download the MOT's study](#)
[More info on the event](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Brexit threatens the Le Touquet treaty

Euractiv, 24 June

"The bilateral agreement on the management of the French-UK border could be one of the first casualties of Brexit."

The return of borders and also of politics?

Le Monde, 31 May

"The geopolitician Michel Foucher is a happy man: the issue of borders has signalled his return to the global scene, from Ukraine to the Middle East by way of the migrant crisis. A geographer by training, in his latest short essay the former ambassador does not conceal his joy at witnessing the spectacular return of this territorial institution in the organisation of the world. But, he warns straightaway, beyond his satisfaction, this renaissance of borders needs to be seen in a nuanced manner."

The Netherlands is launching an investigation into cross-border nuclear safety

AFP, 15 June

"The Dutch Safety Board is launching an investigation into how the Netherlands works with neighbouring countries to prevent and contain incidents at nuclear power stations, it announced in a press release on Wednesday."

Launch of the Erasmus + project "Training without Borders"

Greater Region, 31 May

"On 31 May 2016, the European project 'Training without Borders' was officially launched in the presence of around 90 people." [More info](#)

The digital challenges in rural areas

L'Avenir, 9 June

"Rural areas need very high-speed and high quality digital networks as much as cities. This message should be sent out loud and clear to Europe. A conference to support the interests of Europe's rural areas in the face of the challenges of the digital age. [...] The conference was held at the level of the Greater Region [...] to strengthen lobbying aimed at Europe."

The end of cross-border insurance policies

L'Alsace, 16 June

"Having failed to reach agreement with its German partner DEVK, Macif Germany is going to end on 1 July its dedicated service for French policyholders living in or moving to Germany, the number of which is estimated at over 200,000. "Thousands of policyholders are going to find themselves without French-speaking interlocutors or advisers regarding often incomprehensible German insurance policies."

Discussion about the EuroAirport and cross-border workers

L'Alsace, 8 June – "The Upper Rhine Council – the trinational 'parliament' is calling on France and Switzerland to rapidly reach an agreement on the tax regime for Basel-Mulhouse Airport and says that it is concerned about the possible introduction of a quota system for cross-border workers in Switzerland."

Projects selected by the fund to support refugee children

Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, June

"The Eurodistrict wished to contribute to helping refugees in its territory by setting up a support fund aimed specifically at refugee children and teenagers. With a total amount of €30,000 for 2016 [...] The Eurodistrict has published a list of projects selected this year. [More info](#)

Signature of the "Lake-Foot of the Jura" corridors contract

Greater Geneva, 13 June

"A second wildlife corridors contract has been concluded in the district of Nyon. The 'Lake-Foot of the Jura' contract was signed on Monday, 30 May 2016 in Genolier."

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

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

Joint spatial planning in Komarno and Komarom

Study carried out by the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI), 2016

This study looks at the cooperation between two border towns, Komarno and Komarom, on the border between Slovakia and Hungary. It examines the cross-border spatial planning for the two towns and sets out an overview of the cooperation, an analysis of the challenges involved and proposals for their resolution based on examples of good practices. [Download the document.](#)

This publication is available in the MOT's document portal [FR].

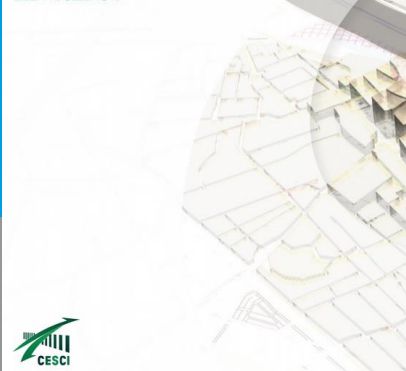
Specialising in cross-border cooperation, the portal provides more than 4,000 document references. [More info](#)

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

JOINT SPATIAL PLANNING IN KOMÁRNO AND KOMÁROM

CASE STUDY
2016

LILLA K. SZILAGYI



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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

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

Director of publication:
Jean Peyrony
Production: Domitille Ayral



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