

Committee of the Regions conference on natural disasters in cross-border areas

Jointly organised by the Committee of the Regions and the MOT, this conference brought together more than 60 participants, on 3 February in Brussels. Its objective was to present best practice in the area of risk prevention and crisis management in cross-border zones: forest fires (ES-PT), flooding in the Nisa Euroregion (DE-CZ-PL), seismic risks in the Alps (FR-IT-CH), risks in mountainous regions (FR-ES) and more generally, civil protection (EGTC Euregio Senza Confini IT-AT). These concrete examples have helped to identify obstacles to cooperation, such as the lack of familiarity with the institutional system and relevant players of the neighbouring country, the

contradiction between the different States' administrative procedures, the lack of equipment or of linguistic capacities to communicate. Among other solutions, the European Commission presented the financial tools available, as well as its overall approach concerning obstacles to cooperation (the "Cross-Border Review"). The MOT sought to underline the necessity of strengthening multi-level dialogue on each border. The debate was placed within a European and global context with an Opinion of the Committee of the Regions and the new UN Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction under preparation. [More info](#)



The ALARM Project: "For security without borders"

"A shared region and shared risks must not be faced with obstacles to the carrying out of missions by emergency services in emergency situations." Identifying existing risks, learning to collaborate on a daily basis in order to react more efficiently in emergency situations, and promoting a citizen-culture of civil security: such is the ambition of the ALARM project, which brings together 26 French and Belgian partners. This "France-Wallonia-Flanders" tripartite initiative aims to develop an operational cross-

border cooperation between the civil security players on either side of the France-Belgium border at the different levels (risk analysis, planning, crisis management) and on a wide spectrum of cross-border risks. The project is structured around three axes:

- Integrated risk management, with the establishment of a networking platform
- "Day to day" operational cooperation, with the development of a cross-border plan for assessment and management of risks (STACR*)

and actions towards better communication between the emergency services.

- Involvement of local government and the populations.

The project held its launch conference on 31 January 2017, and is scheduled to continue working until 2020. It is co-financed by the Interreg VA France-Belgium programme.

*In French: "Schéma transfrontalier d'analyse et de couverture des risques"

[More info](#)

EVENTS

MOT's 20th General Assembly:

15-16 March 2017 in Belval and Villerupt, at the invitation of the Alzette Belval EGTC:

- 15 March 2017: MOT bodies in Belval

- 16 March 2017: field visits of Belval (Luxembourg) and Micheville (France), presentation of the Alzette Belval EGTC, Technicians' Platform

You can register until 1 March!

[More info](#)

Cross-border stakeholder group meeting of the Interreg Europe PASSAGE Project, 13 March 2017 in St Margaret's Bay, Kent

Castle Talks "Conflict and Cooperation at EU Borders: European borders as models of cooperation: What if the border comes back in Europe?", 20-21 March 2017 in Strasbourg

Study day "Local and Regional Authorities as new diplomatic actors since the 1980's", 21-22 March 2017 in Strasbourg

Fourth Forum of the Outermost Regions, 30-31 March 2017 in Brussels

[All the events](#)

Cooperation in the field of renewable energy and climate change adaptation



In September 2016, with the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the World Future Council, the MOT took part in a study tour from Copenhagen to Brussels, via Germany and the Netherlands. The goal: to study cross-border, transnational and interregional projects contributing to Europe's energy transition.

Certain cross-border projects demonstrate high added value:

- **The FURGY Clean Innovation cross-border cluster** helps businesses in the clean energy sector on the Germany-Denmark border in developing innovation, by promoting exchanges of experience, technology transfer, development of partnerships.
- **The SEREH project** is working towards setting up a cross-border smart grid

between the German town of Haren (which produces four times its own energy consumption thanks to renewables) and the Dutch industrial centre of Emmen, in order to create a local energy loop.

The report as well as a short film present the conclusions of this tour and the political recommendations for facilitating regional cooperation, a driving force in European energy and climate ambitions:

[Presentation of the tour and film \(6 min\)](#)

[Study tour report "Enhancing Regional Renewables Cooperation in the EU"](#)

"Cross-border cooperation and climate change adaptation", in France

The French Ministry for the Environment, Energy, and the

Sea has launched a consultation of players for the elaboration of the new "National Climate Change Adaptation Plan". Following the evaluation of the General Commissariat for Sustainable Development, thematic working groups are together developing recommendations for spring 2017.

The MOT participates in the group "Action Internationale", for which cross-border cooperation is an important focus. It has brought its contribution in the form of a memo on the challenges of climate change adaptation in a cross-border context, and has made recommendations.

[Consult the MOT's memo on "Cross-border Cooperation and Climate Change Adaptation".](#)

Impact in border territories of the law on public security

The vice-president of the MOT, Joël Giraud, member of parliament for Hautes-Alpes, is demanding special arrangements in border areas for authorisations for minors leaving the country. "What does a student at the agricultural college of La Motte-Servolex (Savoie) who makes the journey from Briançon to Chambéry have in common with the child of a family in Ile-de-France who takes a combined train/coach ticket for Paris to Montgenèvre? They both cross the France-Italy border twice even though their departure and arrival points are in

France. And, since 15 January, they can only make their journey when in possession of an up-to-date and correct authorisation to leave French territory. The problem for the first, is if the parents are in conflict and do not both sign the permit, the child has to give up studying. [...] It is in seeking to avoid such absurd situations that Joël Giraud has been taking part in the general discussion of this draft law, as well as proposing amendments in order to find a legislative solution for border areas. [More info](#)

France and Germany will test autonomous vehicles in a cross-border area

France and Germany have announced for the end of March the setting up of a test zone between the two countries for experimenting on the road with connected and autonomous vehicles. Along a 70km stretch linking the cities of Metz, in eastern France, and Merzig, in the west of Germany, the two countries particularly want to test communication between the vehicles via 5G, the overtaking of vehicles, as well as automatic braking, and cross-border automatic ("eCall") calls to emergency services. [More info](#)

5th Master-Class in Marseille

The 5th "Trans/frontières et dialogue des disciplines"* Master-class was held in Marseille from 18 to 20 January 2017, on the topic "Young professionals and neighbourhood/proximity relations within the European Union? Between Conflict and Cooperation". This edition pursued the building of an academic network for the professionalization of students of high-level qualifications on European territorial cooperation and decentralised cooperation. The MOT, which moderated a roundtable, is an associated partner of this event. [More info](#)

* Cross/borders and dialogue between disciplines

In 2017 the MOT is celebrating its 20th anniversary!



On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, the MOT will be holding a large European conference, in partnership with the Committee of the Regions, in Brussels from 30 November to 1 December. The goal will be to take stock of the last 20 years of cooperation, to show the ground covered and the progress made in the service of cross-border territories, but also to debate persisting obstacles and the solutions to implement, particularly in the context of an ambitious European policy post-2020. A working group has been established for exchanges within the MOT network on all these questions, to decide on a format for the event, and to develop a MOT position paper.

Analysis of the “Letchimy” law (France)

Freeing up external action of French local and regional authorities



The “law relating to external action of territorial authorities and to the cooperation of overseas territories in their regional environment”^{*} was adopted on 5 December 2016. This law, commonly known as the “Letchimy” law after the member of parliament Serge Letchimy who proposed it, modified article L1115-5 of the General Code for Local Authorities (CGCT), thus lifting restrictions on the external action of local and regional authorities. Indeed, the new dispositions allow, under certain conditions, for French local and regional authorities to sign conventions with States. This possibility, previously confined to the legal framework of existing European instruments, listed limitingly in the first subparagraph of article L1115-5, has now been extended “for the needs of a territorial or regional cooperation”. The field of external action of French local and regional

authorities has been opened up to include all anterior international accords approved by France, to the execution of all regional cooperation programmes also approved by France, and also to any other future cross-border, regional or inter-territorial cooperation grouping. This evolution, which has been progressive, attempts to allow French local and regional authorities to further develop their exchanges with the countries in their regional environment. Indeed, while the current decentralised regional cooperation has been meeting some success, obstacles, both de jure and de facto, persist and limit its full effectiveness. Thus, the Letchimy law gives local and regional authorities a clear legal framework for their cooperation efforts, which only serves to legitimise their outreach within their respective regional environments.

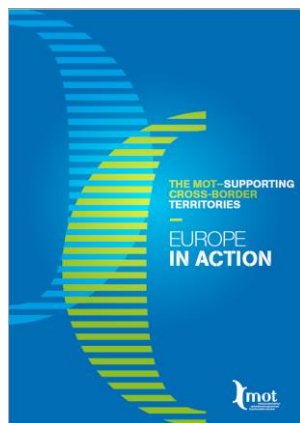
And although the law aims essentially to overcome the obstacles to the external cooperation of overseas territorial authorities mentioned in article 73 of the French Constitution of 1958, it brings about a major evolution for all French territorial authorities, particularly those situated on borders, as they now have the capacity to pursue a “diplomacy of proximity”.

For further information:

- [The Letchimy law \[FR\]](#)
- [M. Serge Letchimy's report from the presentation of the draft law relating to the external action of territorial authorities and to the cooperation of overseas territories in their regional environment, before the French National Assembly on 16/03/2016 \[FR\]](#).

^{*} In French: “Loi relative à l'action extérieure des collectivités territoriales et à la coopération des outre-mer dans leur environnement régional”.

A new presentation pack for the MOT!



The MOT's new presentation brochure presents the major challenges of cross-border cooperation at three levels: local, national, and European, and then details the actions of the MOT at each level. In addition, three secondary leaflets present the MOT's activities:

- Technical engineering at the service of (cross-)border territories; expertise at European and international level.
- A resource centre, a networking platform.
- Taking account of cross-border issues at national level and European level.

[Download the presentation packs](#)

International symposium “European territorial cooperation bodies, institutional and material aspects”

An international symposium entitled “European territorial cooperation bodies, institutional and material aspects”, was held on 10 February 2017 at the University of Valenciennes. On this occasion, researchers and practitioners came together for three roundtables, respectively examining the institutional aspects, and the material aspects of European territorial cooperation bodies, and also, most significantly, the practice

of territorial cooperation in Europe. Over the course of this third session, the MOT was able to bring its wide-ranging expertise on the advantages and limits of said bodies to compare and contrast with the contributions of the other participants. The result was an enriching and educational day of exchanges, of which the conclusions will be published in the near future.

PRESS REVIEW

The Filière AD-T project

Horizons Nord-Pas-de-Calais, 16 February

"The Filière AD-T [cross-border sustainable food supply chain] project seeks to help and support French and Belgian agro-food SMEs and micro-enterprises in their cross-border development efforts."

Mobility of cross-border commuters to Luxembourg: what will change

Le Républicain lorrain, 12 February

"Cross-border commuting – what a headache! The punctuality of trains is continually worsening. Which is exasperating the 'Râleurs du TER' [Train complainers' group], guests of the Luxembourg Minister for Transport and Infrastructure last Tuesday. 'From now until 2023, each year, things will be better and better!', François Bausch assures."

Careers profiling at the service of cross-border employment

France 3, 10 February

"In order to facilitate careers guidance, the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau has organised careers profiling tests. They will allow 42 French and German young people to identify their key strengths to help them choose a career more easily. The launch of these first careers profiling tests was held with great fanfare with the mayor of Strasbourg and the press."

"Allez Hop!" cross-border bilingual theatre festival

Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, 12 January

"On 11 January 2017, the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau and BAAL novo Theater Eurodistrikt launched the cross-border bilingual theatre festival 'Allez Hop!'"

Seven million euros for applied research in the Upper Rhine

DNA, 4 February

"The Science Offensive is the name given to a scheme for supporting cross-border research projects in the Upper Rhine region. Since 2011, Alsace (subsequently the Grand Est region), Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, [...] have been supporting initiatives selected by international scientific experts on their behalf."

Tax for cross-border workers: a year of respite for quasi-residents

Le Messenger, 8 February

"Following legal action taken in Geneva, the capping of travel expenses at 500 Swiss francs will be suspended, but pending a judgement on the substance of the case, it is better to be prudent. The votation of 25 September 2016 had considerably reduced the advantages for cross-border workers."

The French National Assembly approves the French-Swiss convention for the CEVA rail link

Le Dauphiné libéré, 16 February

"The appeals on the Geneva side could delay the entry into service of the Ceva, planned for the end of 2019, but the rest is going well, whether it is the works underway, or the administrative procedures."

"I am profoundly European"

Nice Matin, 15 February

"Regional councillor elected on the list of Christian Estrosi, also municipal councillor in Breil-sur-Roya, Laurence Boetti-Forestier says she is doing everything possible to promote a cross-border territory."

Cross-border sport: a reality in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department

Aquitaine Online, 6 February

"Fabienne Costedoat-Diu, departmental councillor and President of Réseau Sport 64 was on 3 February in Zaragoza alongside the three Ministers for Sport of Navarre, Aragon and Gipuzkoa, to sign for a duration of three years, a historic convention on cross-border sport."

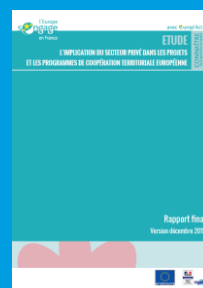
Consult all of the press articles*.
Reserved for members – in French.
* Each month, the MOT posts online around 100 articles about cross-border cooperation.

Involvement of the private sector in European Territorial Cooperation projects and programmes

The CGET has published a study - available in English - on the involvement of the private sector in European territorial cooperation programmes (INTERREG). This study aims to provide matter for reflection to help inform ETC programmes and French decision-makers on the challenges associated with participation of the private sector in these programmes. The report is supplemented by a project evaluation and management kit (in French).

[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.



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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