

## Basel tram network extended to Saint-Louis!

On 10 December 2017, the elected representatives of the Basel trilateral conurbation had the pleasure of opening tram line 3 linking the centre of Basel-Stadt (CH) to the railway station of Saint-Louis (F). With this tram line it is now possible to travel from Saint-Louis station to Basel city centre in under 15 minutes. The 3.4 km long new line extension (0.8 km in Switzerland and 2.6 km in France) required 29 months of construction work. It marks the completion of a pioneering project made possible by the collective will of Swiss and French partners to make cross-border mobility a

reality in the daily lives of inhabitants of the Basel trilateral conurbation.

This new cross-border infrastructure represents an investment of 48,660,000 € co-financed by the French state, the French territorial authorities, the European Union, the Swiss Confederation, the commuter fund and Basel Public Transport (BVB). This opening ceremony took place two years after the opening of cross-border tram line 8 between Basel Stadt (CH) and Weil am Rhein (D) and ten years after the realisation of the feasibility study directed by the Basel Trilateral Eurodistrict.

[Read the rest of the article.](#)



## Cross-border relations at the heart of Franco-German diplomacy

In response to Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel's desire to sign a new Elysée Treaty in 2018, and on the occasion of its 55th anniversary, the German Bundestag and the French National Assembly, meeting in a joint session on 22 January, adopted a resolution inviting the two governments to renew this treaty in order to "deepen the Franco-German partnership" and "launch a new dynamic". Parliamentarians' recommendations call for the two states to "develop cross-border cooperation"

and "strengthen the competences of Eurodistricts".

Indeed, on the 26 subjects that they hope to see developed in the new text, cross-border cooperation is particularly emphasised, notably on schools, local transport, language learning, supporting joint projects, etc.

The new treaty should therefore "facilitate the lives of inhabitants of border regions, by allowing cross-border Eurodistricts with strengthened competences to find innovative solutions in the

areas of education, social welfare, employment, and security."

The resolution also supports the plan for citizen consultations proposed by Emmanuel Macron, in order to allow everyone to participate in the relaunching of the European project.

**The MOT proposes that citizen cross-border consultations be implemented on all borders** (if you are interested, contact the MOT's team).

[Download the resolution.](#)

# EVENTS

## The MOT's 2018 General Assembly

The MOT's 21st General Assembly will be held on 22 and 23 May 2018 in Nice, on the invitation of Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur, a member of the network.

The meetings of the MOT network's bodies and the Technicians' Platform will be complemented by a field visit on the France-Italy-Monaco border. More info soon.

**8th meeting of the EP Working Group on Cross-Border Cooperation**, on the topic of Education and Research, 28 February in Brussels

**Castle Talks on Cross-Border Cooperation** "Eastern borders: Do borders help to foster intercultural understanding?", 19-20 March in Strasbourg

**Conference of the European Parliament "European Territorial Cooperation Post 2020"**, 27 March in Brussels

**ESPON Seminar: "Regional and national spatial planning"**, 28 March in Paris

[All the events](#)

## Mission on the Haiti-Dominican Republic border

The situation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic is unique in the world: it is the only case in which the entire land area of two states is located on a single shared island. In 2016 and 2017, the MOT was commissioned to develop cross-border cooperation on this atypical border.



The border marks a zone of contact between two countries with a significant economic development differential.

Today, this border region is considered by players on both sides as a potential resource, and a contributor to development and peace. In Haiti this assessment fits within a context of a legislative process of territorial reorganisation, with the rise in power of municipalities in their fields of competence.

It is in this context that the MOT became involved in March 2016, on the request of the Haitian Ministry for the Interior and local authorities, and the French Embassy in Haiti, to carry out a mission of analysis and expertise in the field, on the potential for more structured and project-oriented cross-border cooperation. This work gave

an overview of the needs and obstacles of all types, but also of the reality of this potential. On the basis of a first field diagnostic and numerous interviews with local and national stakeholders, the MOT had drawn up a first proposal in July 2016 for establishing a cross-border partnership between the two states, as well as between the local authorities on the border.

With a stabilised political and institutional situation on the Haitian side, and on the occasion of the 2nd national conference for French-Haitian decentralised cooperation, Olivier Denert, Secretary General of the MOT, carried out a second mission in Haiti in December 2017, with responsibility for a side-event on Haitian-Dominican cross-border cooperation. This stay was the opportunity for numerous meetings with

national level players on the Haitian side. It also allowed the organisation of a seminar for dialogue and co-construction of the training requirements in cross-border issues, involving around 40 local and national Haitian and Dominican stakeholders, which proved to be a first, both in terms of diplomacy and intercultural learning, dialogue and sharing.

The mission came to a close with a trip to the Dominican side of the border. The trip was an opportunity for several meetings with the central authorities of the country confirming their expectations regarding local cross-border development and the structuring of a process co-constructed with Haiti, and for increasing cross-border know-how with the support of the MOT over future assistance missions.

## Grand Est region: study on cross-border obstacles

The Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council (Ceser) of the Grand Est region has published a study looking at the reduction of cross-border obstacles in the Grand Est region. The study details the physical obstacles to free movement, the obstacles encountered by economic actors, and by citizens, or "administrative subjects". It proposes solutions such as "the creation of direct cross-border railway lines", the implementation of "online procedures to overcome administrative differences", "the promotion of apprenticeships abroad", or "the right to experimentation" [allowing communities to test public policies]. [Download the study \[FR\]](#).

## French-Swiss innovation fair in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

The "Rencontres franco-suisses de l'économie et de l'innovation en Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes", an 'economy and innovation fair', was held for the first time in Lyon on 15 January 2018. On the programme were presentations of cross-border projects, as well as workshops in the digital, biotech and medtech fields, education and training, and naturally, research and innovation. Sharing a language, a culture and a rich common history, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region and the Geneva and Vaud Cantons, as well as Valais, affirmed their desire to strengthen their exchanges. For Laurent Wauquiez, President of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, the 600 or so kilometres of border with Switzerland



are a "link that must enable the creation of a world-leading common economic zone, the European Silicon Valley of tomorrow".

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

\* In partnership with the clusters and competitiveness centres, as well as the France-Switzerland Interreg programme.

## DG REGIO: Call for proposals on cross-border obstacles

"b-solutions" is an initiative to tackle legal and administrative border obstacles/difficulties along EU internal borders promoted by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), as one of the actions proposed in the referred Communication ["Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions"](#), adopted by the Commission on 20 September 2017. This initiative will last for two years with the main objective of identifying and promoting sustainable methods of resolving border obstacles of a legal and/or administrative nature along EU internal land borders. A first call for pilot projects has just been launched - the deadline for responding is 30 April 2018.

[www.b-solutionsproject.com](http://www.b-solutionsproject.com)  
More info on the DG REGIO website

# EUROPE NEWS

## Launch of the "Boosting EU Border Regions" platform

The European Commission has launched its new online platform ["Boosting EU border regions"](#) dedicated to cross-border stakeholders.

This new tool is part of the 10 measures proposed in the Commission Communication ["Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions"](#). This communication aims to reveal ways in which the complexity, length and costs of cross-border interaction across Europe can be reduced. It also aims to promote the pooling of services along internal EU borders.

The EU-wide online professional network provides cross-border stakeholders with a platform to discuss and present concrete issues of the border regions and showcase potential solutions.

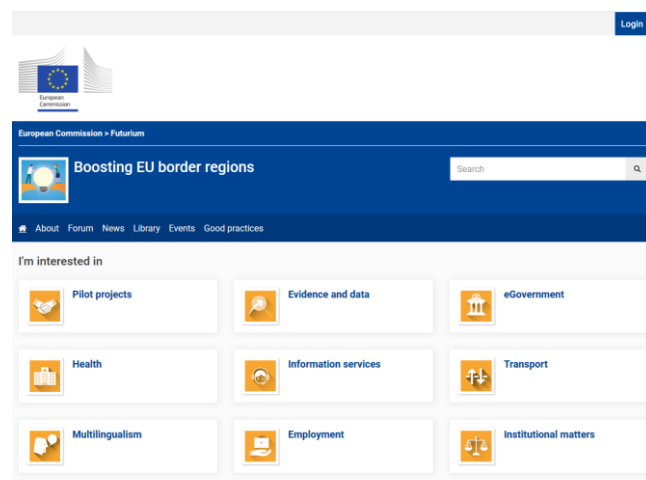
Among the resources made

available: an open discussion space, news, an online library, events, and good practice.

The Border Focal Point set up by the Communication will also use this platform to engage fully with border stakeholders.

The platform has been launched during the Workshop ["Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions"](#), organized by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, the Nordic Council and the Danish Parliament, in Copenhagen on 16 January 2018. All the presentations of the conference are now available: [click here](#).

[Access the platform.](#)



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**In synergy with this European initiative**, the MOT launched its online forum last autumn. Made available to its members, the facility allows the sharing of experience and good practice for cooperation on French borders, and enables the relaying of information on obstacles and requirements in the field to the appropriate levels of resolution. The results of these exchanges will be used to contribute to the European platform.

[More info](#)

## What place for the cross-border citizen in building Europe?

Two workshops and a study trip with local stakeholders were organised around this topic in the territories of SaarMoselle and Flanders-Dunkirk-Côte d'Opale, as part of the work of IHEDATE\*. Feedback from this work was presented on 7 December 2017. The IHEDATE auditors presented their recommendations for more effectively involving citizens in cross-border cooperation and improving communication on cross-border issues and on the EU.

Download the feedback report [FR]: [SaarMoselle - Flandre-Dunkerque](#).

\* Institut des hautes études de développement et d'aménagement des territoires en Europe (Higher Education Institute for European Development and Planning)



## International conference in Ottawa

The international research network "Borders in Globalization" (BIG) held its second international conference in Ottawa between 6 and 8 December 2017. The programme is an opportunity for dialogue between different regions of the world (Europe, North America, Africa) on the theme of border management. The event also allows academics and policy makers to meet and strengthen their collaboration on this subject. Jean Peyrony, Director-General of the MOT, was there to participate in the discussions. [More info](#)

## Public consultation on EU funds in the area of cohesion

In 2018, the Commission will make comprehensive proposals for the next generation of programmes for the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, which is the EU's long-term budget. This consultation (launched until March 2018) is an integral part of the process and its objective is to collect the views of all interested parties. [More info](#)

# PRESS REVIEW

## ■ Brexit: the key sectors for the Hauts-de-France region

20 Minutes, 2 January

"The regional 'task force' established following the Brexit vote has identified the key sectors in which the Hauts-de-France region should position itself in order to positively benefit from the effects of Brexit: the financial sector, and the automobile and creative industries."

## ■ Sixteen thousand jobs lost because the Belgians do their shopping abroad

La Libre Belgique, 30 January

"In 2016, turnover in the food sector was down in Belgium, while in neighbouring countries it was up."

## ■ At the Luxembourg border, the planned free-trade zone splits opinion

Les Echos, 21 December

"A free-trade zone in northern Lorraine? The debate is dividing local politicians. Last March, Christian Eckert, former MP for Longwy, and the then Minister of State for the Budget, stepped into the breach opened up by Bernard Cazeneuve in Hauts-de-France to urge the creation of a zone with favourable tax arrangements at the France-Luxembourg border. The objective: to attract new businesses so as not to 'remain commuter towns', say its promoters."

## ■ Children of cross-border commuters denied study bursaries

La Dernière Heure, 24 Jan.

"Belgian cross-border workers and their children, denied Luxembourg study bursaries, are angry."

## ■ A 'grand plan' for preparing the post-nuclear Fessenheim

Libération, 18 January

"Visiting the site, Sébastien Lecornu [French Ecology Minister] will announce support from the state to help the Haut-Rhin to absorb the shock of the closure of the power station. Politicians want a 'special economic zone' for developing new energies [...]. The Fessenheim plant is also a cross-border subject: The Germans and the Swiss have long demanded its closure. And the French government would like to involve them post-closure."

## ■ Along the Rhine, the first European campus

La Croix, 10 January

"Emmanuel Macron has proposed the creation of around twenty European universities by 2024. He is taking inspiration from the Eucor initiative - the European campus that brings together the universities of Basel, Freiburg im Breisgau, Karlsruhe, Strasbourg and Haute-Alsace."

## ■ First France-Geneva cross-border agreement on air quality

Actu-Environnement.com, 31 January

"Greater Geneva has just signed, with its French and Swiss partners, the first cross-border agreement for the improvement of air quality, baptised Pact'Air. The objective is ambitious for the conurbation of more than a million inhabitants: 50% reduction in nitrogen oxides (NOx) and 18% reduction in PM10 particulates by 2030."

## ■ Monaco supporting the Alps' candidacy for UNESCO world heritage status

Monaco Matin, 31 January

"Monaco has signed, with Italy, the candidate application for the inclusion of the 'Mediterranean Alps' on the UNESCO world heritage list. France joined them in this tripartite signature."

## ■ The EU invests 578 million euros in the electricity link between France and Spain

Sud Ouest, 27 January

"The European Union is preparing to invest 578 million euros to finance the construction of an electricity link between France and Spain [...]. At 370 km long, the liaison will link the post of Cubnezais, a municipality several kilometres north of Bordeaux, to that of Gatika, near the city of Bilbao in Spain."

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

## Cross-border cooperation in Europe: beyond the scars of history

This special edition of RECERC, online publication of the Institut Franco-Catalan Transfrontalier, focuses on the historical aspects and the evolution of cross-border cooperation.

It is composed of three parts: the first examines the notion of the border as a "scar of history" and the function of cross-border cooperation as a contributor to the reconciliation of European peoples (with a contribution by Jean Peyrony, Director-General of the MOT); the second part is devoted to examining questions of identity in border regions; and the third looks at cross-border cooperation in practice.

<http://recerc.eu/numeros/numero-1-special/>

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](#)



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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