

European Conference on the  
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signature of a cross-border  
agreement  
In brief

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Publication

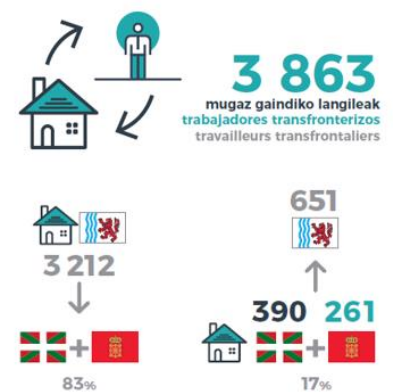
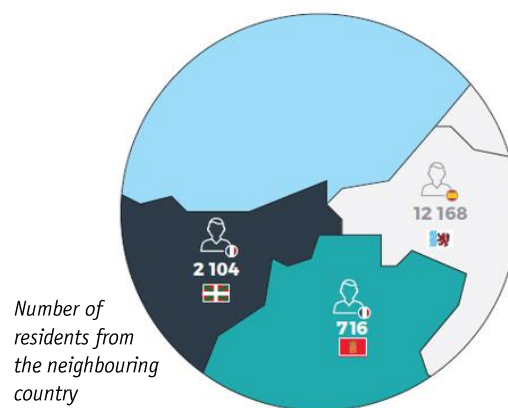
## Aquitaine-Euskadi

## Boosting cross-border employment

A study, launched within the framework of a European project,\* sets out a comprehensive assessment of cross-border employment in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarra Euroregion. The figures presented on flows of workers point to a low degree of cross-border integration in this domain: only 3,863 people cross the border every day to go to their place of work in the Euroregion, whereas 170,000 workers cross the Franco-Swiss border, and 46,000 the Franco-German border. Of these cross-border workers, 87% are Spanish, with the majority of them

living in France and making the journey from north to south. Against the backdrop of this assessment, which provides numerous statistical data (demographic, economic, tax, social, etc.), the aim of the project will be to propose actions to better integrate the region's labour markets and facilitate access to jobs on either side of the border. The MOT has assisted the Euroregion in carrying out this major study. [More info](#)

\* The "Empleo" project ("Strengthening Europe: development of an Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregional employment area"), funded by the Interreg programme POCTEFA.



## Greater Region

## "UniGR", a European centre of skills and resources

As part of the "UniGR - Centre for Border Studies" project, the six member universities\* of the University of the Greater Region (UniGR) are going to set up a "European centre of skills and resources in border studies" with international visibility. The multidisciplinary academic field of "Border Studies" brings together in particular the human and social sciences, economics and geography around the topic of national borders, their meaning, their implications and the societal challenges that they generate. The project aims

to create the framework conditions conducive to cross-border research, increase exchanges and enhance the mobility of researchers through the organisation of academic seminars and visits by UniGR researchers. The "teaching" component envisages the development of remote learning techniques that were tested in the context of the "Border Studies" Master's course. Lastly, the strengthening of ties between researchers and socioeconomic players will be fostered through the organisation of citizen forums and the

contribution to the Greater Region's territorial development programme. The only one of its kind, the centre will help to establish the Greater Region as a place with an ambition for excellence. The project enjoys the support of the Greater Region Interreg VA programme. The MOT is a strategic partner in this project. [More info](#)

\* Universities of Kaiserslautern, Liège, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Saarland and Trier.

# EVENTS

## MOT's 2018 General Assembly

Registration is online for the 21<sup>st</sup> General Assembly that will be held on 22 and 23 May 2018 in Nice, on the invitation of Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur, a member of the MOT network. The meetings of the MOT network's bodies and the Technicians' Platform will be complemented by a field visit in Nice (France) and Ventimiglia (Italy). [More info](#)

**Launch of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis's "Parc Bleu"**, 22 March in Tourcoing (France)

**Conference of the European Parliament "European Territorial Cooperation Post 2020"**, 27 March 2018 in Brussels

**ESPON Seminar: "Regional and national spatial planning: new challenges and new opportunities Contributions from ESPON research"**, 28 March 2018 in Paris

**Morning of the Trans-Jura Conference: "Planning and territorial development tools in a cross-border setting"**, 29 March in Locle (Switzerland)

[All the events](#)

## European Conference on the Energy Transition and signature of a cross-border agreement

The 2018 edition of the European Conference on the Energy Transition took place on 30-31 January and 1 February in the territory of Greater Geneva, a cross-border first for this event that every year brings together more than 3,500 professionals in the areas of energy and sustainable development. The conference also provided the opportunity to sign a cross-border agreement on air quality in Greater Geneva.



Inspiring plenary sessions set the tone for political and civic mobilisation. The "PACT'Air" agreement, which sets out 14 cross-border actions aimed at improving air quality in Greater Geneva was thus signed at the conference. [More info](#)

Cooperation on the development of the economic sectors relating to the energy transition was discussed, with the presentation of the "4 engines of Europe": the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, Lombardy, Baden-Württemberg and Catalonia. These regions have similar needs in their territories (air quality, energy-efficient renovation of buildings, clean modes of transport, etc.). Cooperation projects in the areas of innovation and economic development may be

set up in relation to this theme. Etienne Blanc, Vice-President of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, sees for instance opportunities in the development of the hydrogen car sector with Switzerland.

Workshops provided a forum to discuss a range of topics such as the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregional strategy on renewable marine energies, a comparison of French, Swiss and German views on geothermal energy, and the exchange of good practices on energy-climate planning between the Metz Metropolis and the city of Worms (DE), etc.

The MOT led a workshop on cross-border cooperation and climate in West Africa and also took part in many of the other workshops, including that run

by Enedis, one of the MOT's members, on multi-fluid data platforms. Other MOT partners were also present, such as the Caisse des Dépôts, which had a stand on the "Energy Transition Village" to present its new programme "EnRciT", which funds citizen-led renewable energy projects in their development phase.

[More info](#)

The Greater Geneva conurbation presented several cross-border transport projects that foster sustainable cross-border mobility. [More info](#)

The 2019 edition of the conference, which will mark its 20th anniversary, is scheduled to take place in Dunkirk – another cross-border and European event...

[More info](#)

## Bourgogne-Franche-Comté: optimising cross-border relations

"The regions and countries that border the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region are very attractive to its inhabitants, businesses and territorial authorities." The Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council has attempted to understand the dynamics at work in the neighbouring territories and their impact on the region, in an 84-page document entitled "From good neighbourly relations to a development strategy". [More info](#)

## "MMUST" to facilitate mobility within the Greater Region

The MMUST project (Multimodal model and scenarios for cross-border mobility) has just been approved by the Greater Region Interreg VA programme. It is an ambitious project that aims to simulate cross-border movements between France, Luxembourg, Germany and Belgium. In a cross-border region where the road infrastructures leading to Luxembourg are almost permanently congested – over 185,000 cross-border workers travel every day to Luxembourg – and where the situation is constantly getting worse, resulting in delays and stress for cross-border workers, the MMUST project should make possible:

- in-depth knowledge of cross-border movements;
- a comprehensive overview of transport-related projects as well as improvements in them;



- forecasts of cross-border movements and traffic in the future;
- increased cooperation between the four neighbouring countries.

The project brings together 23 partners and is led by the North Lorraine Urban Planning and Sustainable Development Agency. [More info](#)

# NETWORK NEWS

## Meeting of Anne Sander's group on higher education and research

The eighth meeting of the European Parliament's working group on cross-border cooperation, chaired by the MEP Anne Sander, Vice-President of the MOT, took place on 28 February and was devoted to the topic of higher education and research. The meeting, which the MOT took part in, was an opportunity to present integrated cooperation initiatives between higher education institutions and research institutes, with experiences shared by Eucor (the European Campus – FR/DE/CH), the University of Maastricht and the Benelux Union, which has just signed an agreement in this area. The contribution by DG REGIO highlighted the main obstacles to be overcome such as recognition of qualifications and incompatibility between courses.

[The MOT's map of universities in cross-border areas \(French borders\).](#)

# EUROPE NEWS

## Towards a new European legal tool: the "ECBC"

The intergovernmental working group on innovative solutions to cross-border obstacles met for the sixth time on 6 February 2018. It is working on the proposal for a new European tool dedicated to cross-border cooperation: the European Cross-Border Convention (ECBC).



Initiated by Luxembourg and France (General Commission for Territorial Equality) and coordinated by the MOT, the group was set up during meetings of directors of spatial planning and urban policy in May 2016 under the Dutch presidency. Its mandate was renewed in Tallinn in December 2017.

During its presidency of the EU Council (second half of 2015), the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg highlighted cross-border cooperation issues and the need to resolve obstacles to cooperation. A study on legal solutions to overcome obstacles to cross-border cooperation was then entrusted to the MOT, with the remit to examine the need to change the law and envisage new legal tools.

At European level, the assessment was made, through the "Cross-Border Review" conducted by DG REGIO in 2015-17, that the majority of obstacles to cross-border cooperation are of a legal or administrative nature.

Given the coexistence of different legal systems on either side of a national border, Luxembourg proposed a new European legal tool known as the European Cross-Border Convention (ECBC), which would make it possible, in the case of a territorially circumscribed cross-border infrastructure or service (e.g. a hospital or tramline), to apply the standards of one of the two countries. The idea is to enable local players to trigger a procedure whereby a request is made to the national

authorities concerned, which would then have to provide a response, within a given timeframe, to resolve the cross-border obstacle in question – either adapting the legal provisions blocking the project, or concluding an agreement covering their shared areas of competence (e.g. a cross-border public service), choosing to apply just one of the national normative frameworks concerned. This tool, based on the principle of mutual recognition, would allow local players to propose a solution that national governments would either validate or not following a simpler procedure and within a shorter timeframe than in the case of an intergovernmental agreement.

[Continued.](#)

## MOT's 20th anniversary

### The proceedings are online



[Download the proceedings \(in French\)](#) of the European conference marking the MOT's 20th anniversary (30/11 and 1/12/17). [More info](#)

## Call for applications for the 2018 EGTC award

The Committee of the Regions has launched the call for applications for the 2018 EGTC award "Building Europe across borders". The deadline for submission of applications is 16 April 2018. The award will be handed over at the eighth meeting of the EGTC platform, in October.

[More info](#)

## France: report on the European mobility of apprentices

This report by France's General Inspectorate of Social Affairs sets out around 20 proposals to proactively increase the European mobility of apprentices; they fall within the competence of the Ministries of Labour and National Education, the social partners and the regions, in the context of the ongoing discussions on the reform of apprenticeships.

[More info](#)

## Cross-border cooperation: "a vector of good practices in other continents"

The magazine *Raisonance* of the International Association of Francophone Mayors has published an article by Olivier Denert, the MOT's Secretary General, entitled ["Cross-border co-operation in Europe: a particular instance of territorial development and a vector of good practices in other continents"]. [Download \[FR\]](#)



# PRESS REVIEW

## ■ A Franco-Belgian action plan to preserve biodiversity

**La Voix du Nord, 5 March**

"The triennial project TEC (Tous éco-citoyens – 'All eco-citizens') comprises twelve partners in the Franco-Belgian border region that have committed to ten action plans to protect cross-border biodiversity."

## ■ Merging Greater Region emergency services

**La Dernière Heure, 20 February**

"National borders cannot be an obstacle to the provision of rapid and appropriate help to the population by the fire and other emergency services. Some areas would, for example, be better covered in terms of intervention times by a service from the other side of the border – hence the idea of merging the Greater Region's emergency services."

## ■ Franco-German apprentice: a first in Lorraine

**Le Républicain lorrain, 24 February**

"Unlike Alsace, there have been few experiences of Franco-German apprenticeships in Lorraine. Charles is the first person from the Lorraine to obtain a double qualification. He has just been hired by Michelin in Homburg, the only industrial firm in Saarland to have introduced cross-border work experience."

## ■ Those French unemployed people who go and work in Germany

**France 2, 27 February**

"In the Grand Est Region, France's employment service Pôle emploi is collaborating with its German counterpart to orient border region jobseekers towards German firms that are having difficulties hiring staff."

## ■ The French drill, the Germans dig their heels in

**DNA, 3 March** - "On the fringes of the GeoTHERM fair at the Offenburg exhibition park, a conference on geothermal energy projects in the Upper Rhine brought together supporters and fierce opponents of this technique on Thursday. Between the power stations that are proliferating in Alsace, Swiss caution and opposing 'citizen-led initiatives' in Germany, geothermal energy sometimes struggles to cross the Rhine."

## ■ Agricultural innovation in the Upper Rhine

**PHR, 2 March**

"Innov. AR is a new European applied research project focusing on major crops (maize, wheat and potatoes) and is aimed at supporting efforts to develop agro-ecology in the territory of the Upper Rhine."

## ■ Switzerland – an eldorado for European workers

**24 Heures, 2 March**

"Free movement last year: 80,000 more working age Europeans lived [in Switzerland] compared with 2014, i.e. nearly one million in total. Four years after the approval of the 'Against mass immigration' referendum, Switzerland remains in the top five most attractive European countries for workers from the European Union (EU), behind Italy and ahead of France."

## ■ Cooperation in the area of blood transfusions

**Principauté de Monaco, 23 Feb.**

"On Friday 23 February a meeting was held at the Ministry of State [...] within the framework of the drafting of a cooperation agreement aimed at the implementation of the 'Accord on cooperation in the area of blood transfusions between the Principality of Monaco and the Government of the French Republic' signed on 13 July 2017."

## ■ Heritage: a Franco-Italian cross-border programme

**Le Journal du Bâtiment et des Travaux publics, 22 February**

"Two proposed itineraries are going to be put in place between Savoie, Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta, with the focus on the promotion, preservation and restoration of certain monuments and sites."

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

## The Saar-Lor-Lux Greater Region: towards cross-border supra-regionalisation?

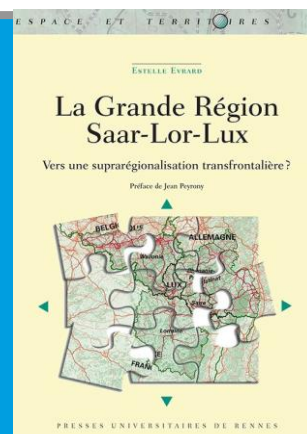
*PhD thesis by Estelle Evrard, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017*

"Beyond the speeches and symbols, what meaning can the concept of a cross-border region have? By defining the region as an identity-based, territorial and institutional construction that endures over time, this work identifies and interrogates the specificities of this process in the cross-border setting. The issues are explored using the emblematic example of the Greater Region, which launched a long-term strategy in 2008 involving Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Wallonia."

[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](#)



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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