

The Nord Department: a cross-border strategy that translates into concrete projects

More than 100 people gathered on 12 June 2018 in the ancient Vaucelles Abbey (Cambrésis, Nord) for the first Departmental Meeting on Cross-Border Cooperation organised by the Nord Department. Territorial authorities, government representatives, European bodies, EGTCs and bodies from different fields – a diverse French and Belgian audience – attended the presentation of the new departmental strategy on cross-border cooperation and could thereby observe the implementation of the "cross-border reflex" in the Nord Department's policy priorities: jobseeker placement in Belgian Flanders, a cross-border support network for carers looking after elderly people, teaching Dutch and French to young people, discussions about access to food for vulnerable populations and about healthcare, joint management of natural areas, particularly sand dunes, cycle tourism, public reading networks, cultural

projects, etc. A host of actions that elicited proposals from participants, for example concerning child protection, cross-border mobility in rural areas, and cross-border cultural and tourist trails. In its role as key witness, the MOT was able to relate these actions to initiatives implemented on other borders. Lastly, the Hauts-de-France Region, the Provinces of Western Flanders and Hainaut, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Eurometropolis and West-Vlaanderen/Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale EGTCs expressed their desire to work together to achieve more effective governance, in order to develop a cross-border region both by and for citizens, particularly young people. A direction that makes sense in the run-up to celebrating 30 years of cross-border cooperation in the Nord Department in 2019. The Nord Department joined the MOT in September 2017. [More info](#)



Sylvie Labadens

Vice-President of the Nord Department responsible for International and European Relations

Sharing a 350km-long border with Belgium, the position of the Nord Department naturally places it within a huge cross-border Franco-Belgian region. As a consequence, for nearly 30 years the Nord Department has cooperated in many areas with the neighbouring Belgian territories, particularly the Provinces of Western Flanders and Hainaut. Today, our ambition is to go further in the creation of a genuine shared cross-border space, facilitating exchanges and collaboration between Nord Department and Belgian players, and in which the region's inhabitants cross the border regularly to work, study, go shopping, receive medical treatment, discover the cultural and touristic assets of their neighbours, and so on. In line with this desire to strengthen cross-border cooperation, on 13 November 2017 the Nord Department approved an operational strategy that includes a "cross-border reflex" in each of its major areas of competence: employment, young people, the elderly, disability, healthcare, the environment, rural affairs, highways, services to the public, culture and tourism, etc. Engaging directly with local realities, cross-border action enables civil society and citizens to experience the concrete benefits of Europe – a challenge that resonates particularly strongly in the Nord, with its tradition of solidarity and openness to Europe.



EVENTS

Seminar organised by the MOT and the UMS RIATE, 17 September 2018 in Paris :

"Territorial observation and assisting decision-making in cross-border regions"

More info:
<https://trfront2018.sciencesconf.org/>

AEBR General Assembly, 20-22 September 2018 in Oulu (Finland)

8th cross-border job meetings, 27 September 2018 in Frethun (Pas-de-Calais, France)

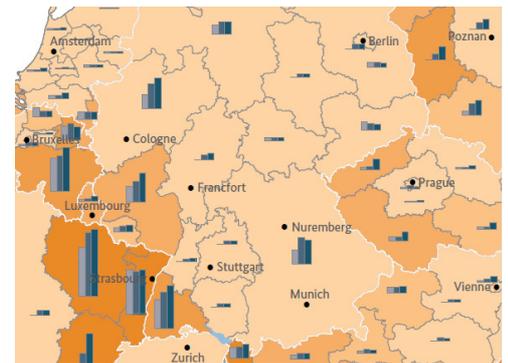
8th meeting of the EGTC Platform (European Committee of the Regions), 8 October 2018 in Brussels

BRIT (Border Regions in Transition) 2018 Conference: "North-South Dialogue on Border Management", 15-18 October 2018 in Nigeria

[All the events](#)

Territorial observation along Germany's borders and European perspectives

The observation of cross-border territories, which is now recognised as a priority by European countries, is moving towards overall coordination. The MORO project launched in Germany has accelerated this progress.



The project "Territorial observation in Germany and neighbouring regions" was launched in 2015 by the BBSR/BBR,¹ as part of the German MORO programme on "Pilot projects in spatial planning". Its objective is to lay the foundations for border region observation along Germany's borders. The project was wound up at a conference of experts in Berlin on 9-10 November 2017. While initiatives to harmonise data on border territories had previously been implemented locally, harmonisation at German federal level was more difficult, which led to the launch of this MORO project. Through the study of seven model regions along Germany's borders,² the aim was to identify indicators designed to monitor living conditions in these regions, and to formulate recommendations regarding actions to be implemented. All of Germany's borders were included apart

from that with the Czech Republic. The final report, which was published in November 2017, sets forth the observation carried out by and on the model regions, and discusses all of the topics studied with respect to the country as a whole, this being complemented by a more detailed approach that draws on each of the model regions and their specific issues (see [the report on the Greater Region](#)). The report concludes that the joint development of regional strategies alone justifies the improvement of their system of cross-border territorial observation. It recommends the optimisation of cooperation between statistical authorities on either side of the border and the design of innovative initiatives in this domain. [More info – the report](#)

Beyond this MORO project, cross-border observation has become a central issue in Europe:

- 1. At French national level** with the relaunch of the Cross-Border Strategic Committee (CSC) by the General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET) and the MOT in September 2018.
- 2. At the Franco-German level** with the publication of the Wassermann Report, in the perspective of the forthcoming new Elysée Treaty.
- 3. At European level** with the pilot project "Border region data collection", funded by DG REGIO.

[More info](#)

¹ Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung (Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development) / Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning), Germany.

² Schleswig-Holstein/Syddanmark/Sjælland; the PRO EUROPA VIADRINA Euroregion; the International Lake Constance Region; the Upper Rhine Trinational Metropolitan Region; the Greater Region; the Charlemagne Border Region; and the Germany/Netherlands Euregios.

The "Transfermuga" project receives the "Le Monde - Smart Cities" award

"Reducing inequalities and making urban life easier for everyone while respecting of the environment: these are the aims of the eight projects that have been selected as winners of the European competition "Le Monde - Smart Cities". The "Transfermuga" scheme in the Basque Country is one of these eight projects – well-deserved recognition for this European project that aims to "boost Franco-Spanish cooperation with respect to all modes of transport, thus reducing the dominance of individual car use".

[More info](#)

"Towards an Alsace Euro-authority"

The executives of the Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin Departments have submitted to the Prefect of the Grand Est Region a proposal for an authority with special status, based on the views of 13,000 citizens. The aim of this contribution entitled "Towards an Alsace Euro-authority" is to promote and strengthen the territory's Rhineland and European identity.

[More info](#)

"Horizon 2035: le Transfrontalier dans tous ses états ?", a publication by AGAPE

This new issue of "InfObservatoire" sets out the cross-border forecasts of the North Lorraine Urban Planning Agency (AGAPE): "With 150,000 French cross-border workers in Luxembourg in 15 years and huge movement of goods, isn't it time [...] to make the cross-border dimension a priority issue?".

[More info](#)

Statistical portraits of the Jura Arc territories

The Jura Arc Cross-Border Statistical Observatory has published statistical portraits of four cooperation territories identified along the Franco-Swiss border as part of the 2016-2020 strategy of the Trans-Jura Conference. The aim is to better target the cross-border actions to be carried out within the framework of this strategy.

[More info](#)

Launch of the "Banque des Territoires"

On 30 May 2018, the Caisse des Dépôts launched the "Banque des Territoires" ("Bank for the Regions") – a new instrument aimed at territorial authorities and other local public bodies to help them to carry out future projects. Through this tool, it intends to offer a set of support and financing solutions for projects, with particular attention being given to small territorial authorities and territories facing difficulties. Border territories are directly concerned and were mentioned at the launch conference. The MOT promotes this initiative within its network.

[More info](#)

Conference in Dubrovnik

The MOT took part in a conference entitled "Cross-Border Cooperation In Europe: Decentralisation, legal frameworks, and practice", organised under the aegis of the Council of Europe on 25 May in Dubrovnik. [More info](#)

The cross-border dimension in the Territorial Observatory's annual report

The General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET, France) has just published its 2017 annual report. An extensive chapter looks at the dynamics of cross-border employment. Border issues are also discussed in other sections of the report.

Cross-border employment dynamics in France and Europe

In Europe, 2 million people work at least once a week in another country. This figure is rising very sharply and has trebled since 1999. For France, Eurostat estimates that there are 438,000 cross-border workers. Against this backdrop, the report analyses cross-border employment (typology of flows, profile of cross-border workers, etc.) along the borders between France and five neighbouring countries: Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland and Monaco. Pointing out the fact that in certain territories cross-border workers account for up to a third of

the labour force, it emphasises the major issues raised in terms of public policy and governance (development of infrastructure, provision of public services, etc.). The report also highlights the dynamism of cross-border work along France's borders, and the potential for growth and cohesion that it represents for territories even if it is still underexploited.

The cross-border dimension addressed in thematic analyses

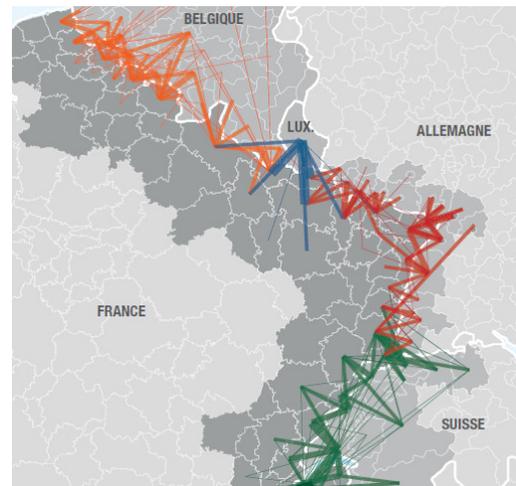
The report addresses other cross-border issues with respect to topics such as access to housing and disparities in income:

- In border areas close to

Switzerland and Luxembourg, "high property prices are combined with the presence of populations whose income is relatively high thanks to access to cross-border employment", but this needs to be set against the fact that "households that do not have Luxembourg or Swiss levels of income find it increasingly difficult to access housing".

- Border areas are also identified, together with the Île de France Region, the areas along the Mediterranean coast and the large metropolitan centres, as "territories characterised by large income disparities".

[More info](#)



A study by the European Commission on "missing cross-border rail links"

The European Commission has published a report on the existing rail transport connections and the "missing links" on the EU's internal borders. It provides a comprehensive inventory of the 365 cross-border rail links which are underexploited or not exploited at all. In total, there are 176 missing rail links and, after consultation of the stakeholders and competent

authorities, 48 of them – 9 of which are located along France's borders – were assessed as "potentially beneficial projects". The study goes on to analyse the viability and usefulness of these missing links, their investment requirements and possible sources of funding. The study concludes by proposing recommendations to facilitate their implementation. [More info](#)

Reform of unemployment benefit for cross-border workers

On 21 June in Luxembourg, the 28 EU Employment Ministers adopted the revision of the regulation on the coordination of social security systems in the EU, which provides for reform of unemployment benefit for cross-border workers. Currently, cross-border workers pay into the unemployment benefit system of the country in which they are employed, but have their benefit paid by their country of residence when their contract comes to an end. This will be reversed under the reform: once a cross-border worker has worked for at least 12 months in a country, this country will be responsible for paying their unemployment benefit. [Continued](#)

"B-solutions": ten projects selected

Ten projects have been selected within the framework of the "b-solutions" call for projects launched by DG REGIO on the theme of overcoming cross-border obstacles.

A total of 36 projects were submitted. Among the ten selected, four involve France's borders. This call for projects is administered by the AEBR.

[For more info and to consult the list of projects](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Unemployment: Luxembourg will pay for its cross-border workers, but not straightaway

AFP, 21 June

"Luxembourg will have to pay benefit to unemployed people who do not live in its territory – so the EU's Employment Ministers decided on Thursday, while giving it more time to do so than other EU countries. The 28 EU Employment Ministers adopted in Luxembourg by qualified majority voting (i.e. 55% of Member States representing at least 65% of the EU population) the revision of the regulation on coordinating social security systems in the European Union."

▲ The impact of cross-border workers – a headache

Le Soir, 2 June

"I work in Arlon, I live in Arlon and I suffer from the price rises due to Belgians who work in Luxembourg.' [...] How can you live comfortably with your Belgian salary when prices close to the border keep going up? For more than half of the municipality's population this is not an issue: 58.7% of them work in Luxembourg."

▲ Alzette Belval: the major work is under way

Républicain lorrain, 23 June

"More than 8,000 housing units are being built. This time it's really happening – cranes have taken over the site at Micheville. Four sites for the development of the Alzette-Belval area are now in the construction phase. And this is only the beginning."

▲ Luxembourg is looking for cross-border workers!

L'Est républicain, 25 June

"Luxembourg may need 150,000 French cross-border workers by 2035 to ensure its economic development, compared with 93,500 today. Except that the Lorraine Region isn't ready."

▲ Cross-border cooperation between hospitals

Républicain lorrain, 22 June

"During the visit of the Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, to Metz on Thursday 21 June, the mayors of Sarreguemines and Forbach, Céleste Lett and Laurent Kalinowski, brought up the issue of the Mosar cross-border healthcare agreement. The two officials [...] are arguing that this agreement should be signed to enable patients in the Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict to receive treatment on the other side of the border."

▲ A Franco-German apprenticeship qualification under construction

La Semaine de Metz, 21 June

"The success of a cross-border pilot project on apprenticeships involving young people and businesses, launched four years ago in the Saar-Moselle area, was celebrated by the Grand Est Region and its German partners on 20 June in Saarbrücken. The next stage [...] is the recognition of this qualification in both countries, with a view to creating a genuine common labour market."

▲ The issue of cross-border workers threatens to undermine negotiations with the EU

Tribune de Genève, 23 June

"The legislation must still be approved by the European Parliament, but it is already generating fear in Switzerland. The introduction of this mechanism would have enormous financial consequences. 'With 320,000 cross-border workers, Bern would see its benefits bill rise by several hundred million'."

▲ Bastia: SUCCESS, a project for the promotion of jobs in cross-border sectors

Corse Net Infos, 19 June

"The Bastia and Upper Corsica Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the lead partner in the project, is seeking to promote jobs by supporting the creation of VSEs/SMEs and the social enterprise economy in priority cross-border sectors."

▲ Cerdanya, a laboratory for cross-border dynamics

L'Indépendant, 25 June

"We're not afraid of learning Spanish and coming to work here – we are the European generation."

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

Euroregions, Excellence and Innovation across EU borders. A Catalogue of Good Practices.

Red Europea de Cooperacion Territorial (RECOT Network, Spain), University of Vigo (Spain), University of Barcelona (Spain), 2018

This catalogue of good practices is designed to be a practical guide that gives people a better understanding of the "Euroregions": definition, list, typology, historical and geographical development, their role in cross-border governance, sectors of cooperation and the Euroregions' projects, etc. [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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