

Greater Geneva

Made up of 209 municipalities spread between the Swiss cantons of Geneva and Vaud and the French departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie, Greater Geneva is one of the most dynamic territories in Europe, both from an economic and demographic point of view. With over a million inhabitants and more than 550,000 jobs, the challenge for this shared cross-border living area is to maintain at the same time its attractiveness, quality of life, territorial and environmental balance and social cohesion.

Greater Geneva's inhabitants experience the cross-border reality in their day-to-day lives – in the journeys they take, their work and their cultural, sporting and leisure activities. In order to develop this territory, while protecting its environment, it is crucial to coordinate and implement cross-border public policies in the areas of

transport, spatial planning and the ecological transition. This is the purpose of the Greater Geneva Local Grouping of Cross-Border Cooperation (LGCC), which provides political, technical and financial solutions to enable joint cross-border actions to be carried out.

2019 will be an important year for Greater Geneva: it marks the launch of new transport infrastructures*. With over 3 million daily journeys, of which 600,000 involve crossing the border between France and Geneva, sustainable mobility in Greater Geneva requires constant and sustained efforts. It is a fundamental issue that affects public health, quality of life and economic competitiveness for all of Greater Geneva's inhabitants. [More info](#)

*The Léman Express cross-border regional rail-line, the Geneva-Annemasse cross-border tram, new park and ride facilities, dynamic car-sharing schemes, and new cycle routes.



Christian Dupessey

Mayor of Annemasse
President of Annemasse Agglo
Vice-President of the MOT



Jean Denais

Mayor of Thonon-les-Bains
President of the
Metropolitan Pole of the
French Genevois

"Greater Geneva is a daily cross-border reality. It is the fruit of history and exceptional dynamism, with the complex issues that come with it. That is why the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois was created: 8 groups of French municipalities, including Annemasse Agglo, that have come together in order to be able to implement structural projects, to respond coherently to growth in our shared living area, and to find solutions with our Swiss partners, within the framework of Greater Geneva, but also with Europe, the French Government, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and the Ain and Haute-Savoie Departments.

To best address the cross-border issues, being a member of the Transfrontier Operational Mission (MOT) and sharing our experiences within this network is vital. That is why we are delighted to be hosting the MOT's annual conference on 20-21 March. In the light of the daily flows between France and Switzerland, we need to find solutions to address the challenges in terms of sustainable mobility, air quality, economic development, housing and social cohesion. We have chosen to work hand-in-hand with our Swiss partners to ensure good quality of life in this territory of a million inhabitants known as Greater Geneva. 2019 is a milestone year for our cross-border region, [...]" Cont. on page 2.



The cross-border greenway of Greater Geneva

EVENTS

MOT's annual conference

The MOT is holding its general assembly and annual conference on the topic of cross-border investment, on 20-21 March in Annemasse and Geneva, at the invitation of Annemasse Agglo, the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois, the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the Greater Geneva, which are members of the network. [More info \[FR\]](#)

EGTC Platform of the European Committee of the Regions, 9 April 2019 in Brussels

"Missing Railway Links: A challenge for cohesion and growth in border regions", 11 April 2019 in Brussels

International conference on the 10th anniversary of CESCO, 25-26 April 2019 in Budapest

ESPON seminar "The role of functional areas for territorial cohesion", 19-20 June 2019 in Iași (Romania)

"Franco-German Cooperation 2.0", 28-29 June 2019 in Ludwigsburg (Germany)

[All the events](#)

Interview with Anna-Karina Kolb, Director of the External and Federal Department of the Republic and Canton of Geneva



What is the contribution made by Greater Geneva?

Greater Geneva is the current tool for constructing our natural cross-border shared living area. With the increase in flows in our region, we needed to move up a gear regarding issues of mobility and sustainable management of the territory. The Greater Geneva conurbation project enables the Swiss and French partners to jointly draw up an action plan, and to seek funding from national and European authorities. It brings together the energies and ambitions from the different sides, and provides a flexible framework both for concrete actions and to discuss issues for the future.

How can social cohesion be fostered in the cross-border area?

While our region enjoys a

very favourable position in terms of jobs and quality of life, price levels and a highly competitive job market do not benefit all of its inhabitants. Until now, differences in wage levels and regulations between Switzerland and France have made it very difficult to develop common tools to foster cohesion. But many cross-border initiatives contain a cohesion dimension: this is the case for collaborations in the areas of security and culture.

What are the developments in Swiss federal policy in the areas of cross-border cooperation and cross-border investment?

In a federal country like Switzerland, competence for cross-border cooperation is exercised by the cantons. The Confederation supports

the cantons financially in their conurbation projects. Its funding crosses its borders with respect to projects that have an impact on the Geneva region such as the Annemasse and St-Julien tramlines. It also contributes to the co-financing of many Interreg projects for Greater Geneva.

What are the current cross-border issues in terms of Switzerland's bilateral relations with the EU?

The current discussion on the framework agreement with the EU has a direct bearing on the cross-border region. With 650,000 crossings of the border a day and 120,000 commuters, Greater Geneva can only exist within a framework of free movement of people and goods that is secure and stable.

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"[...] with the realisation of projects that will revolutionise mobility in the territory and which would not have come about without this cross-border cooperation. After the inauguration of the Greater Geneva Greenway last year, 2019 will be marked by the coming into service of the Léman Express, an extensive rail network that will cover the whole of the Lake Geneva basin across two French departments and two Swiss cantons, as well as the arrival of the Geneva-Annemasse tram. We are therefore particularly pleased to be able to help the MOT's members get to know this territory and its prospects, in this decisive year for Greater Geneva."

The territory of Greater Geneva

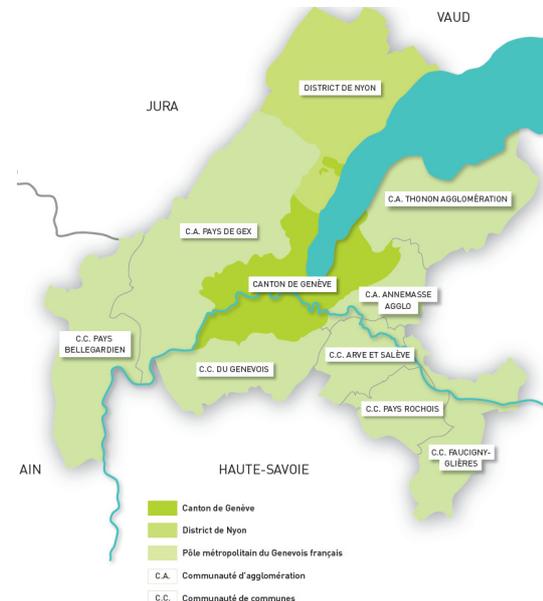
THE TERRITORY

- 2 countries, 2 cantons, 2 departments,
- 2,000 km²
- 209 municipalities
- 1 million inhabitants
- 550,000 jobs

MEMBERS

- Republic and Canton of Geneva
- Vaud Canton
- Regional Council of the District of Nyon
- City of Geneva
- Auvergne-Rhône-

- Alpes Region
- Haute-Savoie Department
- Ain Department
- Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois (comprising 8 groups of French municipalities)
- Associate members
- the French Republic
- the Swiss Confederation



IN BRIEF

European Territorial Authority of Alsace – towards a principle of differentiation

The French decree establishing the European Territorial Authority of Alsace through the merger of the Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin Departments was published on 28 February. The new authority will come into being on 1 February 2021. Deliberations on the draft law will begin in the Senate in the first week of April. Jacqueline Gourault, the Minister for Territorial Cohesion, who brought forward the draft law, explained [in a press release](#): “The future territorial authority, which will be within the Grand Est Region, will exercise the competences of departments, but will also enjoy [...] specific competences tailored to Alsace’s particular characteristics. **These new responsibilities thus anticipate the principle of differentiation of territorial authorities’ competences that is proposed by the Government as part of the constitutional revision.** [...] While respecting the competences of the Grand Est Regional Council and the Strasbourg Eurometropolis, the European Territorial Authority of Alsace will be the lead partner for cross-border cooperation in its territory. It will be responsible for drawing up an Alsace cross-border cooperation plan, which will contain an operational component relating to structural projects and a component concerned with cross-border movements.”

[Draft law and impact assessment \[FR\]](#).

Cross-border employment: the point of view of Michel Charrat, President of the European Cross-Border Grouping



The European Cross-Border Grouping (Groupement Transfrontalier Européen) is a non-profit association that represents 32,500 cross-border workers along the Franco-Swiss border.

[More info](#)

The employment situation in the Geneva basin would make many a French political leader green with envy. On both sides of the border, unemployment rates are low and the economic outlook positive. Around 120,000 people cross the border every day to go and work in neighbouring Switzerland. A huge flow that is not without some perverse effects, particularly in terms of transport and territorial development. A flow which, back in France, also generates substantial economic activity on the French side. In short, the cross-border phenomenon seems to be a win-win one for both sides.

However, over the past ten years, the rise of populism in Geneva has made relations somewhat tense. The Canton has put in place a cantonal preference, in spite of many condemnations from both sides of the border; then last July, the Swiss Confederation introduced “national preference light”.

The forthcoming arrival of the tramline in the centre of Annemasse and of the Léman Express will give a boost to the region. Let us hope that the improvement in transport links will ease relations between the populations. The work of Greater Geneva must go in this direction and it will be

considerable. Indeed, experts estimate that over the next five years, a quarter of Swiss workers will retire. They will therefore need to be replaced. Geneva has the good fortune to have, in neighbouring France, an extensive territory to accommodate its active population. But this development can only take place within the framework of a large-scale project coordinated on both sides of the border. Greater Geneva has an important role to play – above all, a strong political will to promote openness is needed if we wish to bring citizens together and foster social cohesion in our territories.

Greater Region Summit

At the 16th Greater Region Summit on 30 January 2019, the Greater Region Executives argued for “ambitious territorial cooperation and a Europe that listens to its citizens”. They presented their joint declaration, which summarises the work of Luxembourg’s presidency (2017-2018) and sets out their future orientations, outlining the objectives of Saarland’s presidency, which has just begun. [More info](#)

A new website for the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict

The Basel Trinational Eurodistrict brings together the three countries of the Basel conurbation with over 900,000 inhabitants. A member of the MOT since 2005, it was the first trinational Eurodistrict to be created in Europe. Its new website notably presents the territory’s cross-border projects, its governance and the funding mechanisms available to project developers. [More info](#)

The IMeG’s position on the ECBM

The “Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions” Initiative*, which works on developing cross-border cooperation along Germany’s borders, has just published a position paper on the European Commission’s proposal to create a “mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context”. [More info](#)

* Initiativkreis Metropolitane Grenzregionen (IMeG), a project of the “MORO” spatial planning programme of the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS).

Creation of a European Labour Authority

The European Parliament and Member States have reached an agreement on the creation of a new “European Labour Authority” to protect workers’ rights and launch cross-border investigations in the event of possible abuses. “More than 17 million workers living or working in another Member State are exposed to possible violations of their rights, either because of poor implementation of the EU rules, disinformation or lack of coordination among Member States.” [More info](#)

