

## The Léman Express – "a real transport revolution"

The launch of the Léman Express on 15 December 2019 is "a real transport revolution", according to Greater Geneva's elected representatives. Made possible by a new 16km central section of track between Cornavin, Eaux-Vives and Annemasse (CEVA), what is now the largest cross-border regional rail network in Europe links up two Swiss cantons and two French departments. It has taken eight years and €1.8 billion worth of investment to complete.

With 230km of track, 45 stations and 240 trains per day, 50,000 passengers are expected to use it every day. The impact on the environment and daily life is at the heart of the infrastructure project. At 30 September 2019, there were 85,200 cross-border workers in the Canton of Geneva, who mainly travelled to work by car on roads that are heavily congested in the

morning and evening. Thanks to the Léman Express, it is anticipated that road traffic across the whole territory will be reduced by 12%. The new rail service also aims to improve citizens' quality of life, with passengers making the daily trip between Annemasse and Geneva saving 45 minutes a day. The Léman Express is also reshaping the urban environment, with new neighbourhoods and mobility hubs around the stations of the CEVA line. In Annemasse, a whole area has been transformed and redeveloped, with a new multimodal hub, and a 19-hectare eco-neighbourhood with new housing and retail spaces around the station. In the tourism sector, the expected impact is just as great, with the Chamonix and Saint-Gervais valleys becoming much easier to reach, especially from Switzerland.

[More info – Map of the network](#)

### Michel Charrat

President of the European Cross-Border Grouping



### Greater Geneva at last!

On 15 December 2019, the simultaneous arrival of the Léman Express and the tramway in the heart of Annemasse marked the culmination of the development of one of the most dynamic conurbations in France and Switzerland. With this new infrastructure, the Canton of Geneva, the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois and part of Vaud Canton (Nyon) are entering a new era – Greater Geneva is at last coming of age!

Other projects are contributing to this transformation of the region. New high-quality bus services and new cross-border bus routes, the Saint-Julien to Palettes tramline, the creation of cycle paths, and so on. The goal remains ambitious: reducing to 50% the share of private vehicles in transportation and cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 40%.

But Greater Geneva's ambitions should not be confined to transport issues. A conurbation of this size faces major challenges. It needs to maintain social balance while supporting the economic dynamism that creates jobs. It needs to harmonise spatial planning, promote sustainable mobility, and of course make a success of the energy transition. All of these challenges can only be met if there is a strong commitment from elected representatives on both sides of the border. It is interesting to note that, in spite of reduced political collaboration over the past decade, both the French and the Swiss have succeeded in providing the region with ambitious transport infrastructure. Future developments will only be achieved with much closer coordination. Elected representatives on both sides of the border will need to work together to make Greater Geneva ever greater and more permanent.



## EVENTS

**“Let’s talk together about the value added of European programmes for our border territories! Taking stock, outlook and ambitions”**

- 3 February 2020, in Metz  
- 10 February 2020, in Charleville-Mézières

Within the framework of the Grand Est Region capitalisation study funded by the technical assistance programme Europ’Act, the MOT and the Euro-Institut are helping to facilitate two seminars with players involved in cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region and in the Franco-Belgian Ardenne.

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

**Europ’Act regional conference on cross-border and maritime cooperation**, 10 March 2020 in Marseille, organised by the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Region. [More info \[FR\]](#)

**2020 MOT’s general assembly and annual conference** 26-27 May 2020, in Colmar, at the invitation of the Haut-Rhin Department. More info soon

[All the events](#)

# Cross-border strategies being drawn up in cross-border urban areas



The MAPTAM Act\* enables border metropolises to draw up a Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy. Lille, Strasbourg and Nice have taken up this opportunity and have been working since 2018, with support from the MOT, on formulating a strategy to structure their cross-border policy. Other territories have followed suit such as the Basque Country Conurbation Community.

In the case of Lille, Strasbourg and the Basque Country, the MOT has supported the urban planning agencies in the area of cross-border governance. In the case of the Nice Côte

d’Azur Metropolis, its work covers the whole of the strategy: territorial assessment, points of view of French and neighbouring-country players, and breaking the strategy down into territorial levels (local, conurbation-wide, Euroregional and macro-regional) and concrete actions.

To date, most of the strategies have been approved by the relevant executives: for the Basque Country on 14 December, Nice on 16 December, and Strasbourg on 18 December.

With its cross-cutting overview, the MOT accompanied representatives of the three

metropolises and the Basque Country Conurbation to an initial work meeting with DG REGIO held on 19 December in Brussels. In addition to the sharing of experiences between the different conurbations, the meeting addressed: the role of European cohesion policy programmes with respect to cross-border urban areas, the place of cities and cross-border entities in these programmes, links with macro-regional strategies and other policies, and reflections about cross-border urban governance.

\* *The Modernisation of Territorial Public Action and Affirmation of Metropolises Act of 27 January 2014.*

## Revitalisation of inner cities in the Greater Region

On 21 November 2019 the UniGR – Center for Border Studies held in Esch-sur-Alzette, in Luxembourg, its fourth Greater Region Forum, on the topic “Revitalisation of inner cities in the Greater Region”.

In the light of the pressure on the retail sector in the Greater Region, as well as in other cross-border regions, the discussions focused on the organisation of retailers in the face of this competition, on consumer behaviour and on possible avenues for co-development.

Invited to the roundtable, along notably with the Luxembourg Minister for the

Middle Classes and Tourism, Aurélien Biscuit, the MOT’s Secretary-General, recalled that the Greater Region territory constituted a kind of paradox of open borders – between encouragement and limitation of cross-border practices. He also raised the issue of the setting-up of infra-regional governance in the Greater Region, compared it to the situations in Basel and Geneva, and recalled that the issue of revitalising inner cities forms part of the “City Centre Action” programme that the MOT will support in the Grand Est Region in 2020.

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

## The SaarMoselle Eurodistrict is publishing a guide to support cross-border projects aimed at young people

This guide is targeted at those involved in young people’s services across the Eurodistrict: social workers, teaching assistants, youth workers and coordinators, members of associations, administrative staff in the field of young people’s services, teachers, etc. It aims to guide these players in the development and implementation of cross-border projects.

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

## Annual summary of the Greater Geneva Cross-Border Statistical Observatory

The Greater Geneva Cross-Border Statistical Observatory has just published its 2019 summary: “The Geneva cross-border area continues to see demographic and economic growth: demographic growth is strong in the Geneva cross-border area (1.6% annually between 2011 and 2016), and is significantly higher than both the Swiss and French averages (1.1% and 0.4% respectively). This large territory [...] is now home to more than a million people.” [More info \[FR\]](#)

## The low-carbon transition takes shape in Europe's straits

On 22 November 2019, the Pas-de-Calais Department hosted the closing conference of the PASSAGE project in Arras. The MOT took part in it.

Representing five European maritime borders and with a network made up of 11 partners, this project, co-funded by Interreg Europe, made possible over a four-year period considerable progress in taking on board environmental issues in cross-border straits.

The concluding day was a chance to assess the results of the project, notably regarding the identification and quantification of the environmental impact of flows in straits, but also to highlight the partners' capacity to foster coherent and coordinated management of cross-border flows and to generate innovative, low-carbon and competitive initiatives.

The conference was also an opportunity to announce the renewal for four years of the European Straits Initiative, which is aimed at giving a voice to and raising the specific issues of maritime borders in European and national policies.

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

## Meeting of the MOT network: an ambitious programme for 2020

The MOT network met on 12 December 2019 in Paris in the offices of the Caisse des Dépôts, around the meetings of the Board and the Steering Committee. The discussions were an opportunity to report on the findings of the questionnaire on "Communicating the needs of the MOT network to the national level", and to launch an ambitious work programme for the coming year, with a number of key projects:

- a general assembly that will be held on 26-27 May 2020 in Colmar, at the invitation of the Haut-Rhin Department;
- organisation of a Europe-

wide event: the first "Borders Forum", which will be held in Paris on 9-10 November 2020;

- continuation of the work of the MOT's Technical Committee, inaugurated on 6 November. Its objective: to bring together three times a year a small number of members representing the different borders in order to come up with proposals regarding the network's activities, to better involve members in them, and to prioritise actions ahead of wider meetings;
- the launch of thematic working groups for the network, jointly coordinated



with members;

- confirmation of the MOT's role within the framework of the enhanced Franco-German cooperation under the Aachen Treaty and its Cross-Border Cooperation Committee; possible duplication of this process on other borders, and the creation of networks of players and experiments along different borders;
- continued support at national level for cross-border cooperation and the MOT.

## Meetings of players involved in Franco-Italian cross-border cooperation: the Sud Region mobilises

In order to make a preliminary assessment of past Interreg programmes and to plan for the future, the Sud Region (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) organised, in partnership with the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Alpes-Maritimes, Hautes-Alpes and Var Departments, a series of three meetings with ALCOTRA and MARITTIMO project developers.

These three regional co-development seminars took place between 18 October and 12 November in Nice, Gap and Digne-les-Bains. They brought together over 100 participants representing a diverse range of players and structures (associations, businesses, local authorities, etc.) that have been involved in cross-border cooperation projects with neighbouring Italian partners.

The MOT, which is carrying out the capitalisation study on behalf of the Region, within the framework of the Europ'Act programme, was in

charge of facilitating these three participatory meetings, whose discussions in plenary sessions and workshops focused on the contributions made by and areas for improvement in the partnerships, the obstacles encountered in the implementation of projects, and the most promising topics for cross-border cooperation post-2020.

[A date for your diaries! A regional conference to present the study giving an assessment of and setting out the prospects for cross-border cooperation in the Sud Region will take place on 10 March 2020 in Marseille. It will be open to the general public. \[More info \\[FR\\]\]\(#\)](#)



## In 2020, the MOT is organising the first "Borders Forum"

When presenting its New Year's wishes, the MOT announced the organisation of a large-scale event: the first "Borders Forum", on 9-10 November 2020 in Paris. Its goal will be to highlight the developments in and growing awareness of cross-border issues and the role of these territories in European construction. The first day, co-organised with the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission, will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the EGTC Platform. The second day will be devoted to the territories along France's borders and the actions undertaken by France and its neighbours.



# PRESS REVIEW

## Alpine regions - the sacred union

Régions magazine, Dec. 2019

"For the first time, a European development programme – the strategy for the Alpine region [EUSALP] – is going to be co-chaired by central government and the Regions concerned. [...] And things are going to change even more, since following the German, Austrian and Italian presidencies, in 2020 it is France that will take over the presidency of EUSALP. With a first summit to be held in Lyon on 4 February 2020. And with an original form of presidency that asserts loud and clear the fluidity of relations between the representatives of central government and those of the territories involved in the programme. A collegiate presidency that will put the two sides on an equal footing, with a precise and co-designed work programme."

## An information point for cross-border workers in the Ardennes

L'Union, 6 January

"Every day, they cross the border to go to work. In the Ardennes, it is estimated that 3,500 cross-border workers travel mainly to Belgium (3,000 people) or to Luxembourg. A year and a half after the opening of the motorway, there is a major shift happening on the French side, leading local authorities and inhabitants to turn towards our Belgian and Luxembourg neighbours."

## Cross-border cooperation: setting up a co-development fund

L'Est républicain, 19 December

"A working group devoted to co-development between France and Luxembourg was created a year ago, following the last departmental session on the budget. Chaired by Valérie Beausert-Leick and bringing together the different political groupings in the departmental assembly, it enabled the holding of around 20 hearings to discuss the issue of cross-border workers (24,000 in Meurthe-et-Moselle, mainly in the north). Presented yesterday at the departmental session, the report drawn up by the working group recommends the setting-up of a co-development fund 'aimed at the municipalities and groups of municipalities and the border territories concerned'."

## Those windscreen discs and that are reinstating the borders

DNA, 29 November

"Across the Eurometropolis, the Crit'Air system controlling the use of vehicles based on how polluting they are has been introduced for episodes of high pollution. In neighbouring Baden-Württemberg, the European directives on air quality have also been transposed, but not in the same way."

## A map of bilingual doctors that can be consulted online

DNA, 24 December

"The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict and TRISAN have produced an online map of bilingual doctors practising across the Eurodistrict, as well as a guide to cross-border reimbursement of medical costs."

## Franco-German collaboration to solve problems of access to drinking water

DNA, 1 December

"The laying of a cross-border drinking water pipeline between Wengelsbach and Schoenau (Germany) has been decided on to address the problems of the quality of drinking water."

## Bidasoa Forum: good treatment in both parts of the Basque Country

Sud Ouest, 27 December

"How should we organise ourselves in the Pyrenees in the event of a disaster? This was one of the questions that was raised on Friday 20 December, in Biarritz, at a fourth day of roundtables."

## Historical atlas "Aller et venir, transports et mobilité dans le Pays de Genève"\*

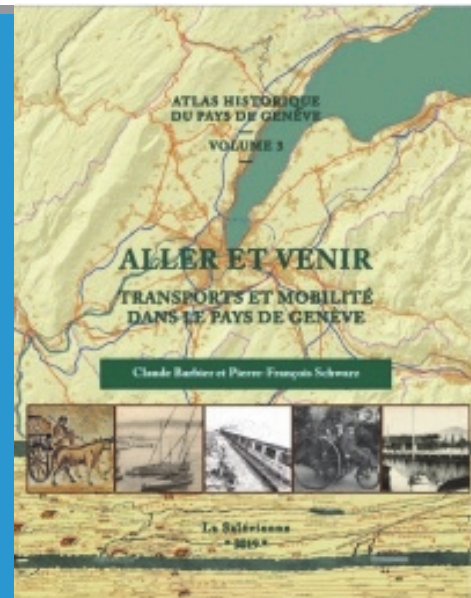
Claude Barbier, Pierre-François Schwarz, published by La Salévienne, 2019.

Waterways, air travel and land routes, the different modes of transport have constantly evolved over the years, always attempting to overcome geographical constraints. The launch of the Léman Express is a powerful reason to take an interest in means of transport in Greater Geneva.

This publication, which is the third volume of the "Atlas du Pays de Genève", allows us to learn about a history that transcends regional and national borders, the history of a whole – Greater Geneva – where the issue of transport remains crucial.

\* "Coming and Going – Transport and Mobility in the Geneva Area"

<https://www.genevoisfrancais.org/actualites/sortie-de-l-atlas-historique-aller-et-venir-transports-et-mobilite-dans-le-pays-de-geneve>



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle  
Transfrontalière  
38 rue des Bourdonnais  
75001 Paris France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80

Director of publication:  
Jean Peyrony  
Production: Domitille Ayrat  
Photos: All rights reserved.

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