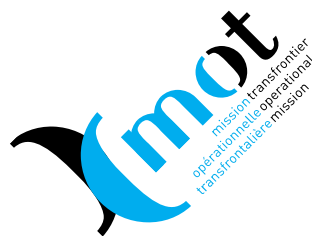


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SPECIAL DOSSIER - BORDERS FORUM, 9-10 November in Paris

Cross-border territories in Europe – focus for the first day

The MOT is hosting the first Borders Forum on 9-10 November 2020 in Paris: two days in which to demonstrate the central role played by cross-border territories in Europe, to persuade both European and national authorities to place them at the heart of their public action and to bear witness to France's ambitions on the European stage in this area.

Close-up on the programme for the first day, with Europe as the overarching theme

A year and a half after the European elections, the first day of the Borders Forum is being co-organised with the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions. Its aim is to reaffirm, at a time when the world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis, that European and cross-border cooperation is the right answer. Elisa Ferreira, the European Commissioner in charge of Cohesion, will speak at the opening as well as in the first roundtable: "Overcoming borders, a major challenge for the future of Europe". This discussion will be followed by a first highlight: the

signing of the [European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance](#), initiated by the MOT, the AEBR and CESCO, and supported by the European Committee of the Regions.

A second roundtable will then discuss the tools to be implemented for European cooperation and recovery, as well as the proposed European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM). It will be followed by a second highlight: the 2020 award ceremony for the EGTC prize given by the European Committee of the Regions. In the afternoon, the discussion "10 years of the EGTC Platform and 30 years of INTERREG - outcome and visions for the future" will shine the spotlight on EGTCs. After 30 years of Interreg cooperation, what role have they played? What do they expect of the European authorities, and Member States, to enable them to better act locally and on a daily basis, to serve their citizens?

Finally, the last roundtable of the day will focus on the Franco-German Aachen Treaty and the possibility of similar approaches elsewhere in Europe. [Programme and registration.](#)

Christian Dupessey
President of the MOT, Mayor of
Annemasse and First Vice-
President of Annemasse Agglo



The MOT's 23rd general assembly, held in Colmar, was an opportunity for rich discussions between representatives of territories that are sometimes very different and yet so similar in terms of their cross-border specificities. You have done me the honour of electing me as the MOT's President and I am conscious of the responsibility this represents. The border location of our territories is an asset and a source of opportunity, but they also have to deal with the limitations that a border can impose. Major challenges lie ahead and recent events have reminded us of these.

The global health crisis we are going through has highlighted the specific issues faced by our cross-border regions. We never could have imagined seeing such drastic closures of the borders. And yet it happened. This caused real disruption for our populations – because the borders in most of our territories have little meaning given how fully integrated the cross-border areas are in daily life. The economic impacts were obviously great for cross-border workers and economic players, but not only for them. Families and lives were quite simply cut in two for several months, and that should give us pause for thought. How can we ensure that the specificities of cross-border territories are taken into account concretely, legally and in terms of regulation? This is a major challenge that we need to address together in the coming months, and it is the purpose of the MOT's proposal to European and national institutions: to set up a European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance in order to put cross-border territories back at the heart of Europe's concerns. It is together, by sharing our experiences and speaking with one voice, that we will succeed in having our specificities recognised. I am committed to actively ensuring that this voice is heard loud and clear, and I look forward to seeing you on 9-10 November at the MOT's first Borders Forum.



This special issue highlights local territories and experiences that will be (re)presented at the Borders Forum.



EVENTS

18th European Week of Regions and Cities, 5-22 October, in Brussels. The MOT will help to run several of the workshops, and indicates on its website the workshops that deal with the cross-border dimension. [More info](#)

Europ'Act Grand Est final conference "Together, let's discuss the value added of EU programmes for our border territories: assessment, outlook and ambitions", 9 October in webinar format. Organised by the Grand Est Region and run by the MOT and the Euro-Institut. [More info](#)



First Borders Forum, 9-10 November, in Paris. The complete programme and registration are online. [More info](#)

A cross-border hospital faced with the crisis

At the "10 years of the EGTC Platform" roundtable, an emblematic example in Europe will be celebrated: the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital EGTC, with the participation of François Calvet, Senator for the Pyrénées-Orientales Department and President of its support committee.

At the height of the health crisis, this, the first cross-border hospital in Europe demonstrated the benefits and effectiveness of cross-border cooperation in the area of healthcare. The hospital distinguished itself in the way it managed the crisis thanks to a considerable asset: its dual nationality. It showed that cross-border movements in the area of healthcare are necessary.

The facility, which is co-administered by the Generalitat of Catalonia and the French Ministry of Health, falls entirely within the competence of cross-border cooperation: a

first in Europe. Located in the Spanish municipality of Puigcerdà, a few kilometres from the border, since its opening in 2014 it has considerably improved the provision of healthcare in a remote cross-border area. Since then, the health crisis has had dramatic consequences for hospitals and Cerdanya Hospital in particular, which had to deal with the closure of the Franco-Spanish border, a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff and of beds in intensive care units (ICUs) in patients' referral hospitals. In this context, having dual nationality proved to be a valuable asset in dealing with these obstacles.

Faced with the closure of the Franco-Spanish border, the hospital and the police, both Spanish and French, reached an agreement to set up a transit route to enable the free movement of medical staff and

patients. During the whole of the crisis period, ICU beds in the Ariège Valleys Hospital in Foix, on the French side, were made available for Spanish patients in a critical condition. In normal times, patients that need to be transferred are sent to hospitals in the patient's home country.

Access to protective equipment and to Covid tests was also facilitated throughout the pandemic thanks to the provision of PPE by the two health authorities (ARS Occitanie and Servei Català de la Salut), thereby ensuring uninterrupted supply and complete control of the situation. More than ever, the hospital's dual nationality has been an asset in managing this unprecedented crisis.

Learn more about Cerdanya Hospital's experience during RT#3 of the Borders Forum: [consult the programme](#).

Three questions to Vincent Gross, Delegate General of the Lorraine Corridor European Metropolitan Pole

What territorial and cross-border issues will you raise at the roundtable you are taking part in at the Borders Forum?

With over 105,000 cross-border workers working in Luxembourg (up by 5,000 every year) and crossing the border twice a day, a major reflection with our neighbour about issues of accessibility and mobility requires joint and balanced responses.

In addition, the Covid crisis has exacerbated the effects of globalisation, particularly with respect to the movement of goods and services: the logistics platform in Bettembourg, the terminus of the Silk Road, and the 23 weekly round trips of Cargolux, have meant that, in a certain sense, China has become the first country with which the Grand Est Region has a border.

For the Lorraine Corridor, we therefore need to develop the basis of a co-development project with Luxembourg that makes it possible for both sides to contribute fairly to a collective effort.

What has been the impact of the health crisis on your territory?

In order to manage the health crisis, it was decided to immediately close

the borders, except for cross-border workers. Luxembourg provided 50 face-masks to each cross-border worker while France was coping with a shortage of them. Luxembourg's wish to maintain income tax for cross-border workers working from home, for an unlimited period (with the approval of the French authorities) provoked some strong reactions. New rules that cover these kinds of remote working need to be put in place, in a rationale of co-development that benefits both the country of residence and the country of work.

What cross-border cooperation measures regarding movement were taken during the Covid-19 crisis?

Lorraine was one of the original territories for the construction of economic Europe: it has discovered to its expense that, without the development of European social and healthcare policies, the old nationalist reflexes risk weakening cross-border cooperation.

Even though there was available capacity, only seven Covid patients were received by Luxembourg and were mainly treated by French cross-border medical staff. During this time, high-speed trains were requisitioned to take patients to the west or south-west of France in order to ease pressure on hospitals in the Grand Est Region...

Learn more about the experience of the Lorraine Corridor European Metropolitan Pole during RT#6 of the Borders Forum: [consult the programme](#).

Video of the general assembly: "Plus jamais ça ! Les territoires se mobilisent pour plus d'Europe"

[See the video \[FR\]](#)

A new Board for the MOT

The general assembly elected the MOT's new Board. The new President, Christian Dupessey, is supported by ten newly-elected Vice-Presidents, who represent the network's member territories. [More info](#)

The MOT's activity report is online

[Click here](#) to consult it.

A special issue of the journal "Réalités industrielles" devoted to cross-border cooperation, with an article by the MOT

"Les annales des Mines" has devoted a whole issue to the topic "Work and cooperation across borders". Several members of the MOT network have contributed articles that focus on border territories. The article by Jean Peyrony, the MOT's Director, discusses the main issues involved in cross-border cooperation. [More info](#)

General assembly in Colmar

The MOT network's initial assessment of the crisis in cross-border territories: "Never again!"

The network of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) met in Colmar on 8-9 September, at the invitation of the Haut-Rhin Department, to elect its new President: Christian Dupessey, Mayor of Annemasse and First Vice-President of Annemasse Agglo.



Over two days, players in cross-border territories from all of France's borders, participating in person or remotely, shared their experiences during meetings of the association's bodies,¹ working groups² and a conference on the topic "Cross-border cooperation: impacts of Covid-19". Having gone through an unprecedented health crisis, accompanied by an often very sudden closing of their borders, they all emphasised "the shock" they experienced and "the urgent need" to put in place better cooperation between players with respect to cross-border issues.

Robert Herrmann, former President of the Strasbourg Eurometropolis, did not hide his emotion in handing over responsibility for this border that is dear to him: "This year has been marked by an unprecedented crisis that has revealed the interdependence of our territories. We must start from the territories, from the people who live Europe day by day, in order for it to move forward."

[Watch the video "Plus jamais ça ! Les territoires se mobilisent pour plus d'Europe" \[FR\].](#)

[Read the press release \[FR\]](#) – [See all of the discussions on video.](#)

[Read the brochure "La crise du Covid-19 aux frontières : retours d'expérience du réseau de la MOT" \[FR\].](#)

¹ The association's bodies elected the new Board ([more info](#)), and approved [the activity report \[FR\]](#), financial report and 2020 work programme. [More info on the MOT's website \[FR\]](#).

² Three working groups: "Metropolitan Cooperation", "Cross-Border Governance" and "Territorial Solidarity". [More info \[FR\]](#).

Proceedings of the Besançon day event on Cross-Border Metropolitan Cooperation

[More info](#)

B-Solutions —

A compendium of 43 obstacles

The AEBR has published a [compendium](#) setting out analyses of the 43 obstacles and solutions identified over the course of the first two calls for proposals of the b-solutions initiative. [3rd call for proposals extended until 11/10.](#)

Covid-19 and Europe - Europe attempts to coordinate actions along borders

The diplomatic contact group of the EU Council, COREPER II, met in early September to discuss better coordination between Member States regarding internal borders, with "particular attention given to border regions". In this context, Germany has put forward a plan consisting of two lines of action: the first aims to step up contacts between cross-border territories and countries in order to avoid uncoordinated closures of borders; the second aims to harmonise procedures and criteria. [More info](#)

Covid-19 and cross-border workers End of the uncertainty around homeworking

In the context of the health crisis, all of the neighbouring countries have sought to encourage homeworking.

Good news for cross-border workers: the legal uncertainty regarding the social security system governing cross-border workers has been removed until 31 December 2020.

[More info on the website of Frontaliers Grand Est.](#)

PRESS REVIEW

COVID-19: Brussels seeks to avoid fresh chaos on borders

Le Figaro, 6 September

"Faced with the increase in cases of infection, the EU-27 are going to try to agree on common rules. Red, orange, green and... grey. These are the colours that European citizens who wish to continue to travel on the continent are going to have to get used to. Amid rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in Europe and fears of a second wave, Germany, France and the Commission have decided to take the bull by the horns to restore order in the decisions taken by Member States."

"Crash test" passed by cross-border cooperation

L'Alsace, 10 September

"At the general assembly of the Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière (MOT), held in Colmar, French and German elected representatives made their initial assessment of cooperation that had been seriously tested by the pandemic. 'There were provisional solutions, incredible solidarity and good will: that's good, but it's not enough. More needs to be done, between countries, at European level, but also at local level,' concluded Christian Dupessey, Mayor of Annemasse (Haute-Savoie), who on Tuesday took over from Strasbourg's Robert Herrmann."

The borders aren't closed!

L'Avenir, 18 September

"Cross-border traffic is part of the DNA of the citizens of Comines. When the border is shut down, it's a disaster! People were very stressed in Comines-Warneton and many other border municipalities on Wednesday, when the Belgian government announced that from Friday 18 September, at 4pm, the Nord Department was being designated a red zone."

A new cross-border cycle route

DNA, 11 September

"The new 'North Rhine Park' cross-border cycle route, around Lauterbourg and Wörth, was inaugurated on Tuesday 8 September in the Pamina Eurodistrict."

Switzerland will not be closed to cross-border residents

Dauphiné libéré, 27 September

"The vote on mass immigration is defeated by 63%. 'The Swiss people truly understood that bilateral agreements were profitable and that it was not the time to put themselves in the position of the British,' said Michel Charrat, president of the European Cross-Border Grouping. If the SVP vote had been accepted, the free movement of the nearly 200,000 daily French cross-border commuters to Switzerland could have been questioned."

Public transport – the last missing link?

DNA, 10 September - "After the T3 tramline that links Saint-Louis to Basel and is used by a million people a year, a new tram-line is going to be built, between Lörrach and the EuroAirport."

Covid-19: two countries, two sets of rules

Nice Matin, 21 September

"Residents living close to the border and French workers in Monaco know better than anyone: it's not easy to navigate the rules when you have to comply both with Monaco's health guidelines and their French version, depending on which side of the border you live, work, go out in the evening or the children go to school."

A huge European project

Sud Ouest, 13 September

"The Fort du Portalet project is part of the general upgrading of the Arles Way, on both sides of the Pyrenees."

The MOT's documentary portal: latest publications online

Strong growth in cross-border work: 115,000 of the region's inhabitants employed in Switzerland

Insee Analyses Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, No. 101, July 2020, in French

Economic and social impact of closing Borders

Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarra Euroregion, July 2020

Cross-border mobility in relation to training and employment

CESER Nouvelle Aquitaine, June 2020, in French

Bordering in pandemic times: Insights into the COVID-19 Lockdown

Christian Wille and Rebekka Kanesu, in "BORDERS IN PERSPECTIVE", UniGR-CBS Thematic, No. 4/2020

Interact resources on 30 years of Interreg: [click here](#).



This publications are available in the MOT's documentary portal. Specialising in cross-border cooperation, this contains over 4,600 documents and documentary references. [More info \[FR\]](#)

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