

**Michel Pélieu**President of the "Pyrénées-  
Pirineos" European Grouping  
of Territorial Cooperation**"The Pyrenees have long bound us together"**

For the Bigorre, the Basque Country, the Béarn and Aragon, the Pyrenees do not constitute a border. This mountain territory has long bound us together. We wanted to set up the "Pyrénées-Pirineos" European Grouping of Cross-Border Cooperation, which is the fruit of a shared vision and joint action for the central Pyrenees. It was created from the merger of three EGTCs that already linked the Hautes-Pyrénées and Pyrénées-Atlantiques Departments, the Province of Huesca and the Autonomous Community of Aragón. Thanks to this new decision-making body, we will manage more effectively the POCTEFA funds which support our joint cross-border infrastructure and territorial innovation projects. We can also look for new sources of funding in order to continue the sustainable development of our fragile mountain environment and to promote the Pyrenees as a tourist destination. Together, we constitute a major and very beautiful destination for international travellers and this considerably enhances our attractiveness and our ability to win new customers. Together, we are home to a unique collection of the Pyrenees' most important sites (Gavarnie, Ordesa, Ossau and so on), a shared heritage in the form of an unspoilt natural environment, high-quality farm and artisanal produce, shared cultural practices and a long tradition of exchanges and sharing. In short, we cultivate the art of living together. Beyond its attractiveness purely in terms of tourism, our territory has a geographical cohesion, a shared history, common cultural terms of reference and above all a strong emotional identity.

## The "Pyrénées-Pirineos" EGTC: Aragon and French territorial authorities join forces

Since 19 October 2020, a single European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) has brought together Aragon, the Province of Huesca and the Hautes-Pyrénées and Pyrénées-Atlantiques Departments.



In the central Pyrenees, a new stage in cross-border cooperation was reached with the setting-up of the "Pyrénées-Pirineos", EGTC, headed by Michel Pélieu, President of the Hautes-Pyrénées Department, one of the four founding territorial authorities. This new legal structure merges three cooperation bodies: the Espace Pourtalet EGTC, the HP-HP EGTC and the Aragnouet-Bielsa Tunnel Consortium. Michel Pélieu, Jean-Jacques Lasserre, his counterpart in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Miguel Gracia, President of the Huesca Diputación Provincial and José Luis Soro, Regional Minister for Territorial Planning, Mobility and Housing in the Gobierno de Aragón, have approved this new decision-making body, which will enable the implementation of ambitious operational projects and further raise the profile of the central Pyrenees at European level.

**Five areas of development:**

- Promoting and marketing the Pyrenees as a tourist destination.
- Developing rational and innovative integration of local and tourist-oriented transportation.
- Supporting the development of the Pyrenees area and its foothills within the framework of a territorial project incorporating the sustainable management of its cross-border infrastructures.
- Integrating the mountainous territories on both sides of the Pyrenees in keeping with current objectives: maintaining the population and adapting to the climate, economic and social transitions.
- Bringing together and involving territorial authorities, their groupings, grassroots organisations and economic and social partners by supporting and encouraging cooperation and development projects in the territory.

## Events

**Beyond Borders Breakfast Debate #1: "Public service cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic"**, 9 February. [More info](#)

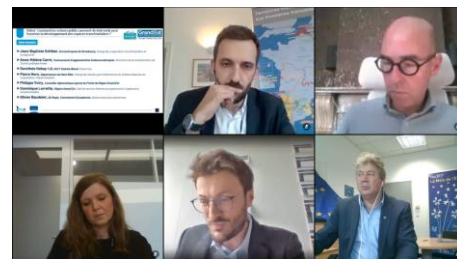
**Kick-Off meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> European Week of Regions and Cities** (11-14 October 2021), 28 January. [More info](#)

**"Does the Covid-19 pandemic open new possibilities for cross-border cooperation?"**, 15 January, organised by the European Parliament working group chaired by Anne Sander and co-run by the MOT. [More info](#)

**Plenary assembly of the Lake Geneva Council: "Cooperating within the Lake Geneva area: a summary of the current issues"**, 3 December 2020, with the address given by Christian Dupessey, the MOT's President. [More info](#)

**41st National meeting of urban planning agencies**, 1 and 2 December 2020, in Brest, 1 et 2 décembre 2020, à Brest. [More info](#)

## Supporting the development of cross-border projects along the Grand Est Region's borders



On 9 October 2020, the final conference relating to the study "Analysis of the contributions made by the 2014-2020 cross-border cooperation programmes in the Grand Est Region", led by the Region within the framework of the European programme Europ'Act and coordinated by the MOT and the Euro-Institut, brought together in the form of a webinar around one hundred participants.

The first part was devoted to the presentation of the study and the recommendations drawn up during three co-drafting seminars held in early 2020. Speakers from all of the Grand Est Region's borders reported on the initiatives carried out within their institutions to support the

development of cross-border strategies, consistency in projects and greater participation by citizens. Parallels could thereby be drawn between the initiatives carried out in the Franco-Belgian Ardenne, by the Alzette-Belval EGTC, and those linked to the Strasbourg Eurometropolis and the drawing-up of the European Territorial Authority of Alsace's cross-border cooperation strategy.

The second part was an opportunity to have an overview of the operational mechanisms that are most successful in fostering the development of cross-border projects. Four sessions presented the tools that territorial authorities and public players can make use of to

encourage the emergence of projects (micro-projects, feasibility studies, thematic forums, etc.), help with setting up projects (support schemes and technical assistance), funding (cash advances, co-financing, integrated territorial investment) and capitalisation (information to the public, overcoming obstacles, resource structures). Here again, a wide range of the structures present along the Grand Est Region's borders shared their experiences in this area. These kinds of gatherings under the aegis of the Region should be stepped up in the future, to promote the setting-up and development of cross-border initiatives. Recordings of the conference: [part 1](#) – [part 2](#).

## Craftsmanship of mechanical watchmaking and art mechanics in the Jura Arc listed by UNESCO

On 16 December 2020, UNESCO added craftsmanship of mechanical watchmaking and art mechanics to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This listing gives recognition to an emblematic living tradition in the Franco-Swiss Jura Arc. The candidacy was regarded as exemplary by UNESCO in that it raises awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage in a cross-border space.

The craftsmanship of mechanical watchmaking and art mechanics includes the craft of watchmaking that is present along the Jura Arc, from Geneva to Schaffhausen and from Bienne to Besançon, but also the making of art automata and music boxes, which are characteristic of the Sainte-Croix region. In this Franco-Swiss area, a wide variety of craftspeople, businesses, schools, museums and associations promote and pass on these manual techniques that are both traditional and focused on innovation. While craftsmanship in mechanical watchmaking and art mechanics has first and foremost an economic function, it has also shaped the everyday social reality of the regions concerned. [More info](#)

## A Franco-Italian accelerator dedicated to SMEs

The first Franco-Italian accelerator has just been set up. Its aim is to help French and Italian SMEs to work together to grow internationally. Launched by Bpifrance, the CDP (the Italian Caisse des Dépôts) and ELITE, this tool is designed to support businesses in developing their links and the sharing of practices, stimulating innovation, fostering cross-border investment and managing the governance of a transalpine organisation and its intercultural implications. The programme, which starts in 2021 and will run for 18 months, plans, by 24 March, to select 20 French industrial SMEs and 20 Italian SMEs from various sectors. [More info](#)

## Greater Region – The future of cooperation in the fields of higher education and research

A declaration of intention on the future of institutional cooperation in the fields of higher education and research in the Greater Region was signed on 25 November 2020 in Saarbrücken, at a ministerial conference held under Saarland's presidency. At the conference, the ministers and representatives from the five partner regions took stock and discussed the consequences of the health crisis for cross-border cooperation between higher education and research institutions.

[More info](#)  
[Download the declaration](#)

# EU NEWS

## Multiannual financial framework adopted and recovery package

On 17 December 2020, the EU Council adopted the regulation laying down the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2021-2027. Combined with the "Next Generation EU" recovery instrument, it will enable the EU to provide funding of an unprecedented amount of €1,800 billion to support the recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic and the EU's long-term priorities. The cohesion policy budget for 2021-2027 will amount to €330 billion (in 2018 prices). In addition, four of the five texts relating to 2021-2027 cohesion policy were adopted [...]. [More info](#)

## B-solutions initiative - the 4<sup>th</sup> call is open: [click here](#).

### Call from DG GROW

for border regions to participate in a pilot to overcome barriers to cross-border business activities: [click here](#).

## Public consultations on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health: [click here](#).

# EUROPE NEWS

## How should cooperation across Europe's borders look going towards 2050? Over to you!



Following the Covid-19 crisis in the border regions, and in the light of the scale of the coming transitions, a new impetus and long-term vision are needed more than ever to make these territories engines of solidarity and cooperation between Europeans.

What have been the impacts of the pandemic on cross-border cooperation? What are the desirable futures for Europe, democracy and cooperation? These are the questions that the [consultation on the long-term future of cross-border cooperation](#) is attempting to answer.

This survey, available in all of the EU languages, will serve as the basis for a resolution of the Committee of the Regions, which will put forward concrete proposals on the future of these local cooperation initiatives, and will constitute the CoR's contribution, as well as that of the members of the [European Cross-Border Citizens Alliance](#), launched on the MOT's initiative, to the Conference on the Future of Europe, for which France's presidency in 2022 will be a staging post.

Some proposals will be made within the framework of the current treaties, while others

may envisage their revision – which is the purpose of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

This participatory process will be concluded on 1 July 2021 with a major event in Brussels. Put the date in your diaries now!

In between now and then, several "Citizens' Dialogues" will be organised: don't hesitate to contact the MOT team to express your interest in co-organising an event aimed at the inhabitants of your territory!

[The consultation](#).

## Adoption of the New Leipzig Charter and the European Territorial Agenda 2030

On 30 November and 1 December, at the informal meeting of ministers responsible for urban development and territorial cohesion organised by the German EU presidency, two important documents for Europe's territories were adopted: the New Leipzig Charter and the Territorial Agenda 2030.

As intergovernmental documents covering policy areas in which the EU does not necessarily have competence, but supported by the Commission – they are in line with the Green Deal and the Just Transition Mechanism – they constitute common benchmarks for the coming years for European countries in the broad sense (including Switzerland), which is precious for players involved in cross-border cooperation. They will be able to draw on them to promote the [European Cross-Border Citizens Alliance](#) and to contribute to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Following on from the Territorial Agenda 2020 (adopted in 2011), the **Territorial Agenda 2030, subtitled "A future for all places"**, for its part sets out the priorities for countries in the area of territorial development for the coming decade. Noting the growing inequalities within and between European territories, and deeming that the territorial dimension of policies should be strengthened, the document stresses the need for close coordination between all levels of governance, and sets forth six common priorities (including the circular economy) within the framework of two overall goals: a Just Europe that offers future perspectives for all places and people; and a Green Europe that protects common livelihoods and shapes the societal transition.

The document particularly emphasises the issues of the interdependence of territories, functional regions, integration across borders and efforts to overcome obstacles to

cooperation. Following the MOT's intervention, it promotes cross-border co-development and the involvement of citizens across borders.

The Territorial Agenda 2030 will notably be implemented by means of pilot actions – six have already been proposed – to address the challenges identified and bring together different EU governments and territorial authorities. One of the actions will focus directly on cross-border issues: "Cross-border spatial planning – a zero carbon vision for the functional cross-border region", proposed by Luxembourg.

A document devoted to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda gives numerous cross-border examples.

### The updated Leipzig Charter:

Subtitled "The transformative power of cities for the common good", the New Leipzig Charter: [...] [Continued](#)



# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ Brexit: let it be !

Localtis/Banque des Territoires, 8 January

"A trade and cooperation agreement, reached in extremis on 24 December, avoided the "hard" Brexit that had been feared. However, the consequences, notably economic, are no less numerous. The Commission has set out a proposal for an adjustment fund of more than €5 billion to help business and territorial authorities to cope."

## ▲ The absence of a regional dimension in the agreement with London worries EU regions

Agence Europe, 8 January

"While welcoming the clarification provided by the agreement reached between the United Kingdom and the EU, the regions are worried about the impact of Brexit on their activities and the role given to them in the final agreement. [...] 'From the point of view of local and regional authorities, it is regrettable that their important role is largely absent from the agreement,' regretted the President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), Apostolos Tzitzikostas."

## ▲ What outcome for road hauliers under post-Brexit cross-border arrangements?

Euractiv, 12 January

"Road hauliers are already paying the price of the new post-Brexit border regulations."

## ▲ Europe – the hidden issue behind the pandemic

Les Echos, 18 January

"The worry about the variants is pushing France to use its borders as a tool to combat the spread of the virus, including in Europe. [...] The fight against Covid has also for the past year been a chance for Emmanuel Macron to show that Europe is useful."

## ▲ Cross-border workers go to the Grand Duchy for higher wages, but not only

L'Avenir, 15 January

"With half of its workers living outside its territory, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is indeed a unique case with respect to cross-border work."

## ▲ Demotte argues for the creation of a cross-border status

Nord Eclair, 10 January

"The President of the Eurometropolis, Rudy Demotte, has written to the French President, the Belgian Prime Minister, and to the Presidents of the two federal entities, with a view to creating a cross-border status. This status would relate particularly to the measures arising directly from the crisis."

## ▲ Christophe Arend, MP: 'In healthcare, we should act as a cross-border mode'

Républicain lorrain, 17 January

"The MP for Forbach is calling for ever more cross-border cooperation, particularly in the area of healthcare."

## ▲ Greater Geneva economy affected by Covid

La Voix de l'Ain, 1 January

"In a press release, INSEE's regional office, the Cantonal Statistical Office, the Franco-Geneva Regional Committee and the Cross-Border Statistical Observatory noted 'the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the Franco-Vaud-Geneva territory'."

## ▲ Why the border crossing points are closed

Médiabask.eus, 16 January

"While the closure of eight crossing points between the North and South Basque Country has surprised people, it has taken place within the overall framework of a strengthening of border controls announced in November and implemented in the Haute-Garonne Department last week."

## "Public inquiries and local democracy"

*Proceedings of the conference of the Compagnie Nationale des Commissaires Enquêteurs\* (CNCE) of 4 March 2020.*

This event was an opportunity to take stock and to set out a number of observations regarding the future of public inquiry procedures in France, the timeframes of which have recently been reduced. More generally, it focused on all of the forms of public participation that are being developed and that strengthen to local democracy. The MOT made a contribution to a session that looked at the forms of public participation used by our European neighbours. Close links between the cross-border dimension and public inquiries were highlighted.

\* National Company of Inquiry Commissioners.

<https://www.cnce.fr/consulter-document/26>

Access all of the publications on cross-border cooperation listed in the MOT's documentary portal [In French].

Enquête publique  
& démocratie  
de proximité

Colloque de la CNCE  
du 4 mars 2020

Compagnie Nationale des Commissaires Enquêteurs  
cnce

## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle  
Transfrontalière  
38, rue des Bourdonnais  
75001 Paris France  
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80  
mot@mot.asso.fr

Director of publication:  
Jean Peyrony

Production: Domitille Ayrat

Photos: All rights reserved.  
Page 1: CD65-Laurent Gaïts;  
Mickaël Louit.

Follow us on twitter:

@reseauMOT

Follow us on LinkedIn:

<http://bit.ly/2yK0XDP>

To subscribe to the newsletter:

[www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/en](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/en)

MINISTÈRE  
DE LA COHÉSION  
DES TERRITOIRES  
ET DES RELATIONS  
AVEC LES COLLECTIVITÉS  
TERRITORIALES  
Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

RÉPUBLIQUE  
FRANÇAISE  
Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

AGENCE  
NATIONALE  
DE LA COHÉSION  
DES TERRITOIRES

DGCL  
Direction générale des  
collectivités locales

MINISTÈRE  
DE L'EUROPE  
ET DES AFFAIRES  
ÉTRANGÈRES  
Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

BANQUE des  
TERRITOIRES  
ÉNERGIE CARRÉE NOS ESPACES