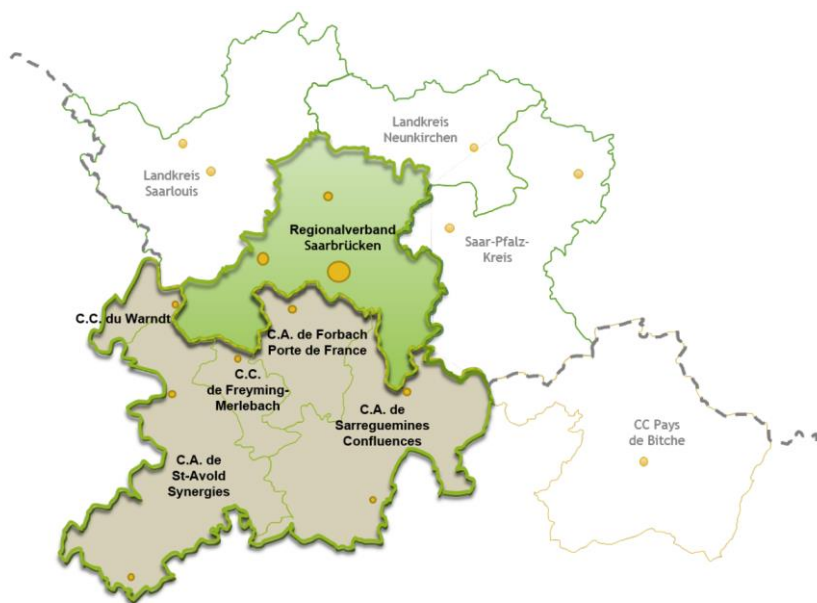


Projects of the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict up to 2027



Uwe Conradt
 Vice-President of the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict and Mayor of Saarbrücken

"The border had practically been erased"

Historically, the interconnectedness of Saarland and the Moselle is unique in Europe. Nearly 11 years ago, the ambition of stakeholders and citizens in this cross-border territory led to the setting-up of the "SaarMoselle Eurodistrict" EGTC in order to develop a cross-border conurbation through a joint vision in the areas of urban planning, mobility, interculturality and bilingualism, economic development, tourism and healthcare.

In this area in which awareness of a physical border had practically disappeared, the measures that have been taken at national level in response to the health crisis appear disproportionate and uncoordinated.

In the past few years, the Eurodistrict has successfully contributed to the development of cross-border cooperation in healthcare, and this topic is more than ever a central component of its future action. The adoption of joint strategies aimed at stimulating the economy and supporting culture when we come out of the health crisis would be beneficial for cooperation and constitute a useful basis for future-oriented cooperation projects. The SaarMoselle Eurodistrict has reaffirmed its commitment to stepping up Franco-German cooperation so that the joint development of our Franco-German conurbations, where Europe has long been experienced as a daily reality, can continue to serve the well-being of the citizens who live there.

The Eurodistrict is in the final phase of the process of drawing up its new territorial strategy. The issues it addresses are varied, and in the special context of the pandemic, cross-border cooperation has taken on particular importance, notably in the area of healthcare.

Thus, one of the key projects led by the EGTC is the healthcare cooperation project "GeKo SaarMoselle", co-funded by the European programme Interreg VA GR, which aims to strengthen networks of healthcare players and to support them in developing projects, in order to facilitate access to healthcare services on both sides of the border. Through this project, the Eurodistrict helped to set up a Franco-German testing centre in March – a pioneering initiative in response to the pandemic.

Another topical issue within the territory of the Eurodistrict is that of mobility. The health crisis has shown the usefulness and fragility of cross-border transport services,

and political will is needed to ensure the continuity of services for users. In the forthcoming programming period, the Eurodistrict aims to develop and secure the long-term future of the network of cross-border public transport.

Lastly, the promotion of interculturality and bilingualism remains an important area for the border territory. Through its Interreg VA GR project "Babylingua", which plans to build and equip a cross-border crèche in Saarbrücken, the Eurodistrict seeks to strengthen cross-border public services and contributes to the work of the Cross-Border Cooperation Committee aimed at removing the main administrative and legal obstacles in the way of setting up such a structure. These projects, which are just some of the actions carried out by the Eurodistrict, point to the building blocks that need to be put in place to best serve the development and well-being of its inhabitants. [More info](#)

Events

Conference "Cross-border rail connections: fostering cohesion between regions and their citizens", 10-11

June 2021, online, organised by the MOT and the PAMINA Eurodistrict, with the support of the European Committee of the Regions. [More info](#)

Conference on the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation, European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance event, organised by the European Committee of the Regions., 5 July, online.

[More info](#)

MOT's general assembly, 21-22 September 2021 in Morteau (French-Swiss border)

Exhibition "Frontières : entre histoire et géographie", 17 April-4 July 2021, at La Roche Guyon.

[All the events](#)

26th Franco-Spanish summit: towards "a comprehensive cross-border strategy"



On 15 March 2021 the 26th Franco-Spanish summit was held in Montauban, the first to be held between the French President, Emmanuel Macron, and the President of the Spanish government, Pedro Sánchez. As well as an agreement on recognition of dual nationality and management of the Covid crisis, cross-border issues were at the heart of the discussions.

Moving towards "a comprehensive cross-border strategy"

"Two future projects for the Franco-Spanish relationship" were talked about in these terms by Emmanuel Macron: "We will soon embark on a comprehensive

cross-border strategy for our two countries, made necessary by the symbiosis between the territories on either side of the Pyrenees."* He also announced "the launch of consultations for a future bilateral cooperation treaty".*

Stepping up cooperation in many areas

The desire to pursue cooperation in different areas was flagged, for example in the area of healthcare regarding issues such as the free provision of medical care by healthcare professionals on either side of the border, recognition of their qualifications, enhancing the attractiveness of the Puigcerdá Cross-Border Hospital, and the

procedures involved in cooperation regarding emergency medical assistance. There was also focus on cooperation in the field of education: bringing education systems in line with one another, cooperation between campuses and training centres, and recognition of skills acquired by students during periods of mobility.

Other agreements were signed on issues such as electricity and rail connections, innovation, hydrogen, electronics, connectivity and the cloud.

* See paragraphs 31 and 32 of the joint declaration.

[More info](#)

Mountain shelters in the Pyrenees: setting up a cross-border cooperation structure

At the request of the French Federation of Alpine and Mountaineering Clubs, the MOT assisted – between April 2019 and November 2020 – the partners in the Interreg project "ENTREPYR II" in the choice and implementation of a cross-border legal structure to ensure the long-term future of cross-border cooperation regarding mountain shelters in the Pyrenees. This involved supporting the French, Spanish and Andorran partners in the process of setting up a joint structure – an association under Spanish law – whose main purpose is the promotion and cross-border use of mountain shelters in the Pyrenees between France, Spain and Andorra, as well as joint and sustainable development, by means of long-term cross-border cooperation between the managers, owners and caretakers of the shelters. [More info](#)

"Luxembourg in transition": a model for zero-carbon cross-border territories?

In December 2020, under the German presidency of the EU Council, a pilot action of the Territorial Agenda was approved, entitled "A vision for a zero-carbon cross-border functional region". Its aim is to promote and transpose in other European regions the project "Luxembourg in transition". Launched in June 2020 by Luxembourg's Ministry of Energy and Spatial Planning, the urban-architectural and landscaping consultation "Luxembourg in transition – Territorial visions for a zero-carbon and resilient future for the functional Luxembourg region" aims to gather together strategic spatial planning proposals and to produce ecological transition scenarios up to 2050 for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and its border territories. It draws on large-scale consultation processes conducted such as those for Greater Paris and Greater Geneva. [More info](#)

Forum on Mobility in Lorraine: white paper adopted

Led by the Lorraine Corridor Metropolitan Pole and the Grand Est Region, on 16 March 2021 the "Grenelle des Mobilités" ("Forum on Mobility") published a white paper setting out "nine commitments over the next ten years designed to connect Lorraine to its neighbours". It constitutes a "roadmap for future major projects focused on mobility in the territory of Lorraine". The work was started in July 2019 within the framework of the "Grenelle des Mobilités en Lorraine". It takes account of the need to better connect certain territories, but also to improve transport capacity towards the neighbouring countries, primarily Germany and Luxembourg, while reducing road congestion and pollution. Rail links between Lorraine and Luxembourg should therefore see an increase in capacity. Since the start of the year, a permanent committee bringing together the Grand Est Region, the Lorraine Corridor and the French Government has monitored and overseen implementation of the projects. [More info](#)

Study on national networks of border regions: the MOT highlighted

This study, conducted for the German Ministry of the Interior by Professor Tobias Chilla, of Erlangen-Nuremberg University, confirms the need to take account of cross-border issues not only at local and European levels, but also at national level. It highlights the MOT for France and the CESC for Hungary, which enable these two countries to be the most active in the development of their cross-border regions. The report concludes that Germany has the potential to facilitate the creation of its own network. Germany's federal nature prevents the exact replication of the French or Hungarian model. However, the BBSR is already an institution with substantial resources on the cross border issue. A decentralised structure could be put in place modelled on those in Austria or Switzerland.

[More info](#)

Focus on the Franco-Italian project PROSANTE, and assistance from the MOT

Funded by the Interreg programme Alcotra, the "PROSANTE" project is dedicated to the creation of a cross-border healthcare network linking the hospitals in Briançon and Susa on the Franco-Italian border. Between 2018 and 2021, the MOT provided comprehensive assistance on the legal component of this project, which involves three partners: Briançon Hospital, the ASLT03* and the Piedmont Region.

In this cross-border territory where the two sides are very interlinked in terms of healthcare, the goal was to facilitate treatment pathways and to create a healthcare community for Franco-Italian practitioners and patients. The areas on which the MOT worked in this cross-border initiative were: medical



transport services, healthcare protocols, confidentiality of medical data and ad hoc interventions by doctors, etc. For each phase of its assistance, the MOT has acted at three levels:

- examining the possibilities for cross-border cooperation in the territory provided by the national and European frameworks;
- making proposals for changes to standards to establish long-term cooperation;
- initiating lobbying of the competent local and national authorities on either side of the border.

The assessment was made that cross-border healthcare arrangements are weak, and these shortcomings are visible on a daily basis in cross-border exchanges. The practitioners concerned work by specialism and

in response to the most pressing needs, in order to facilitate the mobility of health professionals and patients. But this way of working, which is laborious and patchy, is not optimal over the long term. Therefore, the efforts to improve the legal provisions in place and provide an overall framework for cooperation, notably by concluding a framework agreement on healthcare between France and Italy, started during the course of the project, will require long-term work. The MOT has put the groundwork in place, emphasising the crucial nature of such provisions and ensuring that the national and decentralised authorities and ministries concerned take ownership of them. [More info](#)

* *The Italian local healthcare unit.*

A webinar aimed at border region prefects

On 24 March, the MOT made a contribution in a webinar of the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) on cross-border issues, which was facilitated by its director-general, Yves le Breton, and the prefect responsible for cross-border matters, Christian Rock. Aimed at prefects and deputy prefects in border region departments, this webinar was designed both to enable the sharing of participants' experiences and to set out the technical assistance that the ANCT can provide with regard to these issues. Fully in line with this approach, the MOT presented its activities to support prefects and decentralised administrations, for the benefit of cross-border territories.

Adoption of the "Experimentation" bill

On 16 March, Parliament definitively adopted the draft legislation aimed at simplifying and developing local experimentation initiated by territorial authorities. As Jacqueline Gourault, the Minister for Territorial Cohesion, pointed out: "The aim is to make experimentation more accessible and more attractive, by reducing the obstacles to their initiatives." But simplifying this right to experiment "is not enough", we need "also to support" territorial authorities: "Placed under the aegis of prefects, these units that will be set up by regulation will be tasked with gathering proposals from territorial authorities." And the ANCT will carry out "legal work to support the wishes of territorial authorities or associations of local elected representatives". This bill constitutes the first step towards the forthcoming "4D Act"* , which will contain a section devoted to cross-border issues. [More info](#)

* *Differentiation, decentralisation, deconcentration and decomplexification.*

An observatory of the territorial impacts of the crisis

This new observatory presented its preliminary findings at a webinar on 19 March, entitled "What is the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on territories' economic and social dynamics?", in which the MOT participated. The observatory is open to all types of expertise, including those from the territories, in order to make accessible the maximum amount of information to enable a better understanding of complex situations that may be very different from one territory to another. [More info](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Cross-border workers in the time of Covid

Le Figaro, 24 March

"The situation of the 400,000 workers who live in France and work on the other side of the border is very particular at this time of the health crisis, the statistician Bernard Aubry explains. We thought that the internal borders had been abolished, but that was without reckoning with unforeseen events, in this case the outbreak of a virus. [...] Each country had to take rapid decisions without considering the consequences they might have on the edges of their territory."

▲ Brexit adjustment reserve: France accused of selfishness

Localtis, 25 March

"The debates about the Brexit adjustment reserve are raging. [...] The main sticking point is the allocation key used by the Commission to allocate the funds, in accordance with the impact of Brexit on fishing on the one hand, and trade on the other."

▲ A joint laboratory for tourism

Nord Eclair, 15 April

"Picard Wallonia, West Flanders and the Hauts-de-France Region have joined forces to set up a cross-border laboratory for experimentation and innovation in the area of tourism."

▲ Between Moselle and Saarland, the absurd 'normality' of cross-border workers

Le Figaro, 2 April

"French workers employed on the German side of the border are protesting against the ridiculous decisions of Berlin, which in particular is demanding that they have three Covid tests a week."

▲ 'Let's give Eurodistricts appropriate competences'

Eurojournalist.eu, 1 April

"After a year of crisis and complicated management at the cross-border level, the President of the PAMINA Eurodistrict EGTC, Rémi Bertrand, and the Director, Patrice Harster, take stock of the crisis."

▲ Tax transfers: the Metropolis closes the subject

Républicain lorrain, 14 April

"The metropolitan council has adopted a motion aimed at making the Metz Metropolis 'a cross-border metropolis'. The demand for tax transfers and the idea of setting up a co-development fund have come back on the table."

▲ Greater Geneva – Around 100 jobs to be created on the border

La Voix de l'Ain, 12 April

"21 of the 85 new businesses set up in western Switzerland (in the border area) are foreign, and have set up in this area with the support of the DDE [Department for Economic Development]. [...] Among them, there are some French businesses..."

▲ Why cross-border workers are rushing to settle in Savoie

Le Dauphiné libéré, 15 April

"While the north of the Haute-Savoie Department has always attracted French people working in Switzerland, they now no longer hesitate to settle further from the border, as far as the north of the Savoie Department in some cases, faced with rising property prices in the Geneva area."

▲ Nice-Cap-d'Ail by the sea: to start in August

Nice Matin, 14 April

"The access roads into Monaco are gridlocked? Let's see if by sea could be a solution. This is the aim of the hybrid maritime shuttle between Nice and Cap-d'Ail envisaged by the Nice-Côte d'Azur Metropolis."

The MOT's documentary portal: latest publications online

- **Boosting cross-border regions through better cross-border transport services. The European case, Eduardo Medeiros, in "Case Studies on Transport Policy", Vol.9, Issue 1., 2021**
- **L'Atlas des frontières - Murs, migrations, conflits, Bruno Tertrais, Delphine Papin, 2021**
- **La frontière, espace de coopération. Illustration depuis l'Europe, Thomas Perrin, Cairn.info, 2021**
- **Cross-border workers in the Greater Region of Luxembourg and financial instability: a non-linear approach, Vincent Fromentin, Université de Lorraine, Ed. Taylor & Francis, 2021**
- **Situation du marché de l'emploi dans la Grande Région, Interregional Observatory on the Greater Region Job Market, 2021**
- **Cooperation perspectives for the Luxembourg Cross-border Functional Region, Programme ESPON, 2020**



Find all of the publications on cross-border cooperation listed in the MOT's documentary portal.

CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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