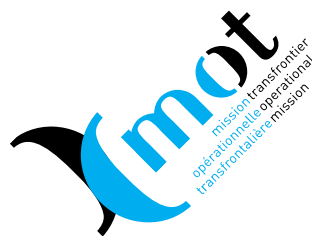


No. 168 / MAY 2021

CROSS BORDER NEWS



P. 2

Feedback on the MOT Network's
Working Groups
Events

P. 3

Europe news
MOT news

P. 4

Press review
Publications

A cross-border component in the '4D' bill!



Sylvain Waserman

Member of Parliament for the
Bas-Rhin, Vice-President of
the French National Assembly



Christophe Arend

Member of Parliament for
Moselle



Since 2018, the advances in Franco-German relations are major: the signing of the Aachen Treaty, the creation of the Franco-German Committee on Cross-border Cooperation (CCT) and the Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly. These democratic innovations, a first in Europe, are enabling us to identify territorial dissonances and to take action to harmonise our national legal frameworks. After 18 months of work within the CCT, in collaboration with local players, we have identified the "daily irritants" that hinder inhabitants and businesses in border areas. We have obtained the inclusion of a section dedicated to cross-border concerns, of all national territories, in the upcoming so-called "4D" bill [on decentralisation, deconcentration, differentiation and decomplexification] – proposed legislation encouraging the differentiation of territories, in order to remove the legislative constraints that can be eliminated.

It is the first time that a legislative text will address the subject and it is thanks to the contributions of citizens, who live cross-border lives on a daily basis, that we can promote this diversity of territories and show their wealth to the full.

Now is the time to join us in contributing to this project, by sharing the irritants you face every day.

The "4D" bill was presented during the Council of Ministers' session on 12 May. It will be subject to an accelerated parliamentary procedure, and its reading in the Senate is scheduled for July.

The text includes a cross-border component (art. 57, 58 & 59 of the bill) which provides for: consideration of cross-border health cooperation schemes in French regional health authorities' regional health plans; consultation of bordering foreign local and regional authorities in drawing up 'SRADDET' sustainable development and planning schemes; and the participation of said authorities and their groupings in the capital of local public corporations. This last measure is intended to support the development of "public services of common cross-border interest".

The MOT is pleased to see these issues being considered at this stage of the bill's drafting, and with the work accomplished with members, the

ministerial offices concerned and the MPs Sylvain Waserman and Christophe Arend in conveying feedback on obstacles. The MOT wishes to continue defending cross-border interests during the course of the parliamentary process to follow, and invites contributions from the MOT network on the obstacles still to be overcome.

In particular, the MOT is making the case for the establishment of a national cross-border coordination point, in order to process feedback on obstacles on each border – following the example of the work of the Franco-German Cross-Border Cooperation Committee (CCT) – via legislation or national policies, while liaising with the relevant ministries. Cross-border stakeholders have long been advocating for the need for such a facility*. [More info](#)

**More info in Jean Peyrony's article "Les principaux enjeux de la coopération transfrontalière", published in "Réalités Industrielles : Une série des Annales des Mines" in August 2020.*

Events

International Symposium: "Vers un mode de pilotage intégré du territoire transfrontalier ?", 3-4 June 2021, in Bayonne. [More info \[FR\]](#)

Cross-border rail connections: fostering cohesion between regions and their citizens, 10-11 June 2021. [More info](#)

Conference on the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation, 5 July 2021. [More info](#)

MOT General Assembly, 21-22 September 2021, in Morteau.

[All the events](#)

Feedback on the MOT Network's Working Groups

SINCE 2020, THE WORKING GROUPS OF THE MOT NETWORK HAVE BEEN BRINGING TOGETHER MOT MEMBERS AT REGULAR INTERVALS TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCES OF BORDER AREAS AND ENCOURAGE THE EMERGENCE OF PROPOSITIONS FOR ACTION. HERE WE PRESENT THE FINDINGS OF THE FIRST THREE GROUPS ESTABLISHED.

"Metropolitan Cooperation" Working Group:

Strengthening cross-border cooperation between universities



The efforts of this working group, facilitated jointly by the Greater Besançon Metropolis and AUDAB (the Besançon urban planning agency), have resulted in a position paper and a call made by the MOT and the CPU (French Conference of University Presidents) for strengthening cross-border cooperation between universities.

On the eve of France's Presidency of the European Union, the goal is to gain recognition for the importance of university cross-border cooperation in developing cross-border territories and building a Europe of education and innovation. The process is

taking place in the context of the preparation of the 2021-2027 EU programming period, and the new Interreg, Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ programmes.

Join Us!

The position paper proposes recognising the potential of cooperation between universities in cross-border territories, supporting their eligibility for the European Universities initiative of the Erasmus+ programme, encouraging the development of cross-border Smart Specialisation Strategies, and pursuing the Bologna Process (harmonisation of academic calendars, improving policies for supporting the mobility of students and researchers, and mutual recognition of qualifications).

[The MOT and the CPU invite higher education and training institutions, border community authorities, and cross-border bodies to support this initiative by joining the first signatories. \[More info\]\(#\)](#)

"Cross-border Governance" Working Group:

Towards the creation of a cross-border status?

The creation of a "cross-border status" is an idea emerging within several cross-border regions, such as Eurodistrict Pamina and the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, whose two directors jointly facilitate the working group. This issue fuelled discussions within the MOT's "Cross-border Governance" working group at its first two meetings in 2021.

Following a position paper on the subject by the President of Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, Rudy Demotte, discussions initiated within Eurodistrict Pamina on the creation of a "pass to make citizens' lives easier", as well as the French-Swiss idea of a cross-border living area convention, the group's discussions focused on defining the building blocks of a hypothetical "cross-border status".

In February, the first session allowed discussions on the actual content of the concept of "cross-border citizens". It was followed by a second session in April, focusing on the concepts of "cross-border living areas" and "functional areas".

At this stage, a powerful idea emerged from the discussions: cross-border public services need to be central in recognising such a cross-border status.

A third session will be held in June 2021. Its goal will be to form conclusions and concrete proposals for bringing about recognition of a cross-border status. The meeting will also allow work on multi-level governance in border areas, which requires the competent authorities at different levels working together. Their commitment alone will ensure progress towards the structuring of functional areas at the heart of a formally recognised "status" for their inhabitants. [More info](#)

"Territorial Solidarities" Working Group:

For the consideration of cross-border living areas in times of crisis

Since holding a first session on 12 June 2020, the "Territorial Solidarities" working group has provided an important framework for discussing crisis management arrangements at borders. Beginning with the shock of the sudden closure of intra-EU borders in March 2020, the participants shared their accounts, from their different perspectives, of the place of local and national stakeholders in the management of the crisis, the coordination between them, and the action that has been taken in response. Both critical and encouraging observations were made, showing that beyond the instinctive reactions to protect and close off "border lines", it is above all in places where there was already a strong culture of working together that responses have been made at the level of "border territories".

In addition to analysing institutional responses, the group dedicated some of its time to discussing the impacts of restrictions on the sense of European belonging. Suddenly faced with the return of border checks and the halting of a number of projects, the inhabitants of these territories have been confronted both with mechanisms of national withdrawal, and with efforts to promote belonging to these shared living spaces. At a point in time when this crisis appears to have been at least partially overcome, the debate to bring about truly integrated cross-border living areas has been fully revived. A summary of this first year of discussions, marked by four work sessions between 12 June 2020 and 19 March 2021, will be published shortly. [More info](#)

Meeting between the President of the MOT and the Minister for Territorial Cohesion



On 29 April, the President of the MOT, Christian Dupessey, was received by the French Minister for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Governments, Jacqueline Gourault. It was an opportunity to address several key topics for the MOT: the "4D Bill" which will include, as confirmed by Ms Gourault, a cross-border component; the French Presidency of the EU during the first half of 2022; as well as the partnerships with the minister's office, the ANCT and the DGCL (Directorate-General for Local Government). We thank the Minister for her time!

Conference on the Future of Europe:

Advancing cross-border issues in the Europe of Tomorrow



The [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) was launched on 9 May. A local dialogue in Strasbourg marked the territorial dimension of the conference, and highlighted that local and regional authorities are essential in taking it beyond Brussels and the European capitals ([more info](#)).

The Parliament, the Council and the European Commission are proposing an unprecedented exercise in participatory democracy, with a series of open and inclusive discussions and debates, over the span of a year, led by the citizens of the 27 member states. [An interactive platform](#) allows anyone to participate in debates and organise events.

The Covid crisis has put border territories on the front line: more than ever, the issue of borders needs to be integrated in discussions about the

Europe of tomorrow!

With the [European Cross-border Citizens' Alliance](#), the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), in partnership with the MOT, AEBR, and CESCO, undertook a public consultation between December 2020 and March 2021 on the future of cross-border cooperation up to 2050 ([consult the results](#)). On the basis of the results, the CoR, supported by the MOT, the AEBR and CESCO, is drawing up a Resolution on the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation until 2050. Its adoption is expected with a vote on 1 July. It will serve as an official contribution from the CoR at the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The MOT invites stakeholders in cross-border territories to contribute towards developing a vision of what European cross-border cooperation should look like in the future, and to take

part in the Conference on the Future of Europe: **the cross-border approach must be strengthened!** Cross-border citizen consultations, that the MOT vigorously supports, will contribute greatly to this.

Preparations for France's Presidency of the EU

The Conference on the Future of Europe will deliver its conclusions during the France's Presidency, in the first half of 2022. The MOT, which is involved in the government's preparations (Minister Clément Beaune, ANCT), wishes to make known the expectations of cross-border territories, on the occasion of the 2nd Borders Forum which will be held in Spring 2022.

More info: [On the Conference](#)

- [On the local dialogue](#)

In French only:

- [Note de la MOT sur la Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe](#)

- [Note de la MOT sur la PFUE](#)

First national meetings of the Small Towns of Tomorrow programme

These meetings were held on 22 April 2021, organised by the ANCT, with the Minister Jacqueline Gourault and Minister of State Joël Giraud in attendance. All beneficiary towns were invited, and examples of territory projects were presented. Among these, several border towns were highlighted, including Saint-Jean de Maurienne and its valley in Savoie, Bouzonville and Sierck-les-Bains in Moselle, along with Hirson and the Thiérache in Aisne. The challenges of territorial revitalisation are also significant for cross-border territories! [More info](#)

Cross-border healthcare: two public consultations launched by the Commission, two seminars on French borders

- The European Commission has launched two consultations on the subject of cross-border healthcare in the EU. The first focuses on "[cross-border healthcare - evaluation of patients' rights](#)", and the second on "[digital health data and services](#)". Contributions can be made up to 26 and 27 July.
- On 17 May and online seminar was held: "Cross-border health cooperation in the Italy-France-Monaco region - Challenges and opportunities" organised by CERDACFF, in partnership with Région Sud, Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur and the MOT. [More info \[FR\]](#)
- Also on 17 May, a webinar was held, in the context of the [Frontem network](#), which allowed discussions on "Experiences of borders in the time of Covid-19". Jean Peyrony presented [the MOT's study on European borders](#) for the European Commission. [More info \[FR\]](#)

Eurodistrict Pamina takes stock after a year of crisis

"The effects of the health crisis are even more evident in cross-border catchment areas like those of Eurodistricts. [...] One essential criterion in cross-border cooperation is the reduction of inequalities, of differences and disparities between territories, given the proximity to citizens' experiences. Yet, for over a year now, we have been seeing increasing disparities in our cross-border territories."

[Read the press release \[FR\]](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ "Covid highlights border identities"

Le Monde, 30 April

"In the space of a year, Covid-19 has upset the balance in the Grand Est region, particularly in its northern and eastern fringes, open to Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland. Alsace, during the first wave, then Lorraine, during the second and third, saw the reappearance of a phenomenon that these territories had almost forgotten: the existence of borders."

▲ The Covid crisis acts as a catalyst for the cross-border zone

La Voix du Nord, 7 May

"There exists no border legal system, strictly speaking. There is a need for better regulation of these areas, where it is unclear which legislation should be applied, to complete the construction of Europe", insists [Loïc Delhuvenne, Director of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis Agency]."

▲ Metz Metropolis changes name and becomes Metz Eurometropolis

Le Républicain lorrain, 10 May

"This Monday 10 May, the metropolitan council is expected to adopt the new denomination for the community, which will become the Metz Eurometropolis. François Grosdidier wants to emphasise the European dimension of Metz."

▲ Opening in Metz of an information centre for cross-border workers

La Semaine, 14 May

"The Maison du Luxembourg, an information centre for cross-border workers and their families run by Metz Metropolis, will open its doors on Monday 17 May."

▲ "The French-German heat network takes shape between Strasbourg and Kehl"

Le Journal des Entreprises, 11 May

"Strasbourg Eurometropolis approves the establishment of the SEML [local public-private company] 'Calorie Kehl-Strasbourg'. This cross-border local public-private company [...] aims to build and operate a cross-border heat pipeline."

▲ The framework agreement is dead, the EU 'regrets', the SVP rejoices

Le Temps, 26 May

"Switzerland-EU – The Federal Council has put a stop to negotiations with the EU on an institutional agreement. However, it wishes to 'preserve the future of bilateral cooperation'."

▲ Italian trains in the Roya: the plight of cross-border workers

Nice Matin, 18 May

"They live in Italy, work in Tende in the hospital sector, and every day are subject to the constraints of train times that are unsuitable for their working hours. This weighs on their private lives."

▲ The cross-border convention renewed between culture stakeholders and operators

Sud Ouest, 14 May

"The Basque Cultural Institute (based in Ustaritz) and the Etxepare Basque Institute (San Sebastián) intend to promote the networking of culture stakeholders and operators."

▲ France and Suriname conclude a border demarcation agreement

Le Figaro, 4 March

"France and Suriname have finalised a border demarcation agreement which will facilitate the fight against trafficking and illegal gold mining in French Guiana."

The MOT's documentary portal: latest publications online

- **Pour une métropole transfrontalière : "la vie du citoyen métropolitain face au phénomène transfrontalier"**, 2nd stage of the Codev study, report by the Metz Metropolis Sustainable Development Council, March 2021
- **La frontière, espace de coopération. Illustration depuis l'Europe**, Thomas Perrin, in L'Information géographique, Vol. 85, March 2021
- **L'aventure européenne pour l'USMB** [Université Savoie Mont Blanc], special edition of the magazine Éco Savoie Mont Blanc, February 2021
- **L'avenir de l'Europe se situe dans ses régions frontalières : Le rôle pionnier de la coopération franco-allemande**, Julie Hamann, in DGAP Kommentar (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik), No. 2, January 2021
- **Guide 2021 - Déclaration fiscale pour les frontaliers franco-luxembourgeois**, 5ème édition, Frontaliers Grand Est, 2021



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

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