

Thomas Zeller

President of the ETB,
Vice-President of the
Saint-Louis Conurbation
and Mayor of Hégenheim



The Basel trinationnal conurbation is a genuinely shared living area that is strongly interconnected. In designing our Strategy 2030, it seemed extremely important to us to set our goals in accordance with what matters to the region's population. What are the concerns of the inhabitants of our territory? How can their ideas inform our cross-border projects? As experts in daily life, the region's inhabitants, with their wealth of experience, know exactly which areas of cross-border cooperation need improvement.

In this very unusual year, it has been very difficult, even impossible, for the region's inhabitants to come together. It therefore seemed all the more important to give the population an opportunity to discuss the future of their common region. To enable them to discuss what works, but also the obstacles they encounter in their daily lives. And to enable them to put forward their ideas to build their future together. These discussions strengthen the feeling of belonging to a region that only realises its full potential when neighbours work hand-in-hand.

We have been excited by the interest that the population has shown in our citizens' consultation. Some 1200 people have shared their experiences regarding the cross-border obstacles they face and have sent to us their ideas for our fruitful coexistence across borders. It is now up to us to make good use of these many ideas and we are already looking forward to continuing a lively dialogue with the population.

Basel Trinationnal Eurodistrict (ETB):

Involving inhabitants in thinking about the future of their trinationnal region

The health situation threw up a major challenge – that of providing a suitable format for citizens' participation in the middle of a pandemic. In collaboration with the Euro-Institut and the MOT, the ETB developed a concept organised around a questionnaire and several virtual events. The aim was both to ensure broad participation from the population and to facilitate real exchanges between citizens from the three countries.

The large number of participants and very high proportion of responses to the questions posed attest to the great desire of the population to take part in the thinking about the future of the trinationnal region. Indeed, living in the border region is regarded as an asset by 88% of the people questioned. In order to fully benefit from the region's potential, citizens wish above all to see improved cross-border mobility and reliable cross-border

information. With 402 concrete wishes and ideas for diverse projects – whether it be bus services, a cross-border volunteering platform or a big post-Covid trinationnal celebration – the region's citizens have made promising suggestions for the future. In workshops preceding the main event, the citizens' forum, the participants themselves chose the themes that seemed particularly important to them for the future of the cross-border region. It was these themes that around 50 citizens discussed in trinationnal groups at an online forum with a view to proposing concrete projects.

The results of this participatory process will inform the discussions about the ETB's Strategy 2030 within its political and technical working groups. In these groups, the right interlocutors and the feasibility of project ideas will be identified.

[More info](#)



EVENTS

The MOT's general assembly in Morteau and La Chaux de Fonds: programme and registration available online

The MOT's annual event will take place on 21-22 September, in person and online, and is being hosted by the Doubs Urban Conurbation, a member of the MOT network. Around the association's meetings, a conference and field visits will be organised. The event is open to all! Registration open until 6 September. In French. [More info](#)

EGTC Platform, 30 September-1 October in Innsbruck

Rencontres européennes de la participation, 13 September in Amiens. Workshop co-organised by the MOT: "Writing a shared story at the level of cross-border territories: mission impossible?"

#EURegionsWeek

The MOT is running a workshop **"Breathing without borders: challenges to improve air quality in cross-border regions"**, on 13 October at 2.30 p.m. It will take part in the TEIN network's workshop: **"Citizens at the forefront of the development of cross-border living areas"**, on 14 October at 11.30 a.m. Registration opens on 30 August. [More info](#)

Conference on "Cross-border rail connections" on 10-11 June

The MOT, in partnership with the PAMINA Eurodistrict and with the support of the European Committee of the Regions, held a high-level event on existing and missing cross-border rail links.

Taking place within the framework of the [European Year of Rail](#), it enabled local, national and European rail and cross-border players to share experiences. It provided an opportunity to discuss the current challenges and obstacles regarding mobility in European cross-border territories, since no fewer than 13 EU countries were represented during the four roundtables.

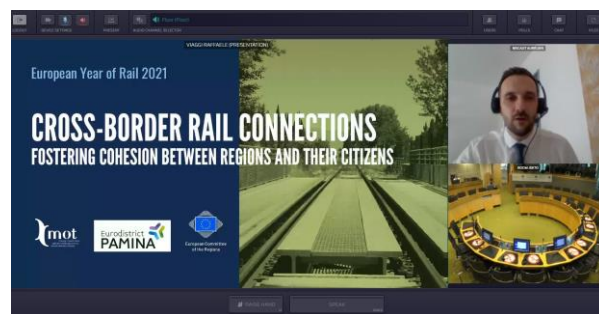
The morning of 10 June was devoted to the impact of the

Covid-19 crisis on cross-border rail transport. The first roundtable focused on functional urban areas with major commuter flows, such as the Øresund line (Copenhagen-Malmö) and the Léman Express. The second addressed small rail-lines that link less densely populated areas, with the focus on their needs and current economic models. The second morning was devoted to the missing links in Europe. First of all, the social, ecological and economic issues relating to certain missing links, such as the Colmar-Freiburg or Zaragoza-Canfranc-Pau lines were presented. Designed as a response to the previous one, the fourth roundtable brought together several

political decision-makers and strategic players, who set out the path towards a more connected and greener Europe. They all took this opportunity to reiterate their support for local players that wish to see an end to these missing links, and they all, like Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the AEBR, called for "enhanced cooperation to connect Europeans across borders".

The conference, which was simultaneously translated into three languages (FR-EN-DE) thanks to the support of the CoR, was followed by over 200 people from different European countries, including many cross-border and rail players.

[More info – All the documents](#)



Berlin Franco-German Declaration and implementation of the Aachen Treaty

The latest Franco-German Council of Ministers, which met on 31 May 2021 alongside the meeting between Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel, took stock of the implementation of the Aachen Treaty and the substantial advances in Franco-German cooperation over the past few months. It was also an opportunity to launch new cooperation initiatives, notably in the areas of healthcare, culture and youth, as well as to prepare for the major upcoming international and European events. [More info](#)

Two documents were published on this occasion: the [Berlin Franco-German Declaration](#), which enshrines strengthened implementation of key bilateral projects; and a [second document devoted to implementation of the Aachen Treaty and to new projects](#).

It should also be noted that the Franco-German Cross-Border Cooperation Committee, established by the Aachen Treaty in order to "create enhanced decision-making capacity for cross-border cooperation involving all of the stakeholders concerned at all federal and administrative levels on both sides of the border" has launched a website. [More info](#)

Online survey - Franco-Belgian border: share your experience of the Covid-19 crisis

The health crisis put the inhabitants of border regions in an unprecedented position that placed a strain on all aspects of their daily lives. In this case, the daily lives of the inhabitants of the cross-border living area of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis were seriously disrupted. The concrete effects of these restrictions need to be analysed in greater depth to learn the lessons in order to act better in the future.

[In this context, your experience as a citizen, worker or entrepreneur living or working in this cross-border territory is indispensable!](#)

The contributions received will inform work carried out by the Lille Metropolis Development and Urban Planning Agency (ADULM) and the MOT, in partnership with the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis. [More info – Online survey](#)

MOT activity report:

Review of a year marked by the health crisis



The MOT has just published its activity report for 2020, a year marked by the closure of many borders, placing cross-border territories on “the front line” of the health crisis.

[More info](#)

4D bill: The MOT's proposals to strengthen the cross-border component

In anticipation of the reading of the 4D bill in Parliament, the MOT, on behalf of its network, has sent to the co-rapporteurs of the Senate's Law Commission on this legislation proposed amendments aimed at strengthening its cross-border component. The MOT intends to mobilise throughout the parliamentary process to enhance it, with the aid of this contribution. [More info](#)

Cross-border players come together to relaunch cross-border cooperation

Organised by the European Committee of the Regions in association with the other founding partners of the European Cross-Border Citizens Alliance (the MOT, AEBR and, CESCO), on 5 July the Conference on the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation brought together nearly 200 participants.

During the event, the participants reviewed the effects of the health crisis, while at the same time identifying the current and future challenges for cross-border regions and setting out a forward-looking vision for cross-border cooperation, as a driver of integration for the future of Europe.

The event took place several days after the adoption, at the CoR's plenary session, of a [resolution on the long-term future of cross-border cooperation](#), which will serve as its official contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe.

This resolution had been preceded by a broad consultation conducted by the

CoR, in which the representatives of border regions had cited cross-border transport and accessibility, as well as bureaucratic obstacles for citizens and businesses, as being the biggest obstacles faced by inhabitants in their territories.

The ECBM is regarded as being an essential tool to provide concrete solutions to these obstacles that are specific to the cross-border context.

Despite the lack of consensus at the level of Member States, this conference was an opportunity for DG REGIO to reaffirm its determination to pursue the negotiations on the proposed regulation, pointing in particular to the results of the “b-solutions” initiative,

which so far has made it possible to identify and respond to over 90 cases. As the MOT's representative, Jean Peyrony stressed the lessons to be learned from the recent crisis on national borders, from the level of “cross-border living areas” to the European level, by way of the national level, which is decisive in the coordination of border restrictions.

[More info – MOT presentation](#)



Adoption of 2021-2027 regulations

On 23 June, the European Parliament adopted the five “cohesion policy” regulations including that on the Interreg programme. [More info](#)

The interministerial “Future of mountains” plan unveiled

On 27 May the French Prime Minister, Jean Castex, presented the interministerial “Future of mountains” plan. In an interview with the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT), Joël Giraud, Minister of State for Rural Affairs, sets out the major components of this large-scale plan that will mobilise nearly €650 million. He also presents the supporting programme “Future of mountains technical assistance”, which the ANCT and its five mountain range commissions are going to put in place to support around 60 territories in 2021 and 2022. We may recall that mountain areas represent more than 40% of France's borders. [More info](#)

Council Recommendation on the restriction of free movement and EC Communication on drawing lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic

- **On 14 June, the EU Council published a recommendation amending that of 2020 (No. 1475) on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.** It should be noted in point 15: “Member States should not require persons living in border regions and travelling across the border on a daily or frequent basis [...] to undergo a test or quarantine/self-isolation. If a testing requirement on cross-border travel is introduced in these regions, the frequency and type of tests on such persons should be proportionate [...]. If the epidemiological situation on both sides of the border is comparable, no travel-related testing requirement should be imposed.” [More info](#)
- **At the same time, on 15 June, the European Commission (EC) published a Communication** to the Council, European Council, European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled: “Drawing the early lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic”. It only deals marginally with the issue of border regions. [More info](#)

PRESS REVIEW

Interreg, European Court of Auditors still regrets shortcomings in implementation and monitoring

Bulletin Quotidien Européen, 1 July

"[...] It recommends better concentration of cooperation programmes; directing funding to projects on the basis of a meritocratic system using scores; and the use of indicators that measure the impact of cross-border projects."

France-Luxembourg: a story of big money

La Semaine de Nancy, 8 July

"The financing of French projects by the Grand Duchy, in return for the phenomenon of cross-border workers, is still progressing at a snail's pace. An intergovernmental conference was supposed to take place on 12 July to unblock a number of issues. It has been adjourned. The two sides were supposed to talk big money and taxation, and to discuss subjects such as teleworking, mobility, and the financing of crèches, car parks and even infrastructure. [...] It had been trailed as an important step in the development of cross-border cooperation initiatives between the two countries and to impact the future daily lives of the 108,000 cross-border workers in Lorraine."

Huningue and Weil: joint work on riverbanks

DNA, 23 June - "The banks of the Rhine at Weil am Rhein and Huningue have been developed in a coordinated manner thanks to the project Vis-à-vis."

Greater Geneva: 27% more cross-border workers unemployed, the hidden social bomb

Le Dauphiné, 10 June

"The French employment agency has communicated to Greater Geneva's relevant bodies figures for unemployment among cross-border workers. And they are very bad, with a rise of 27% year-on-year [...]. Unemployment among cross-border workers is also a problem for society as a whole. It is expensive for UNEDIC [France's unemployment benefits agency]: €566 million in 2018, before the Covid crisis."

Teleworking: the Metropolitan Pole believes in the 'cross-border living are'

Le Dauphiné, 2 July - "It is an interesting idea that has been proposed by the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois, set out by its President, Christian Dupessey, to resolve the issue of teleworking by cross-border workers. They have obtained an extension of the derogation that allows them to telework more than one day a week until 30 September, but over the long term nothing has been resolved."

88% of Haute-Savoie's inhabitants know Greater Geneva

Le Dauphiné, 1 July

"Greater Geneva corresponds to two elements that form the focus of the study [...]: a shared living area and a political construction."

'Small Towns of Tomorrow': full steam ahead!

La Maurienne, 10 June

"On the evening of Saturday 5 June at Modane town hall, the signature of the agreement to join the 'Small Towns of Tomorrow' programme took place. [...] One of the programme's strands is also enhancing attractiveness for tourists by means of local and cross-border development."

The Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi-Navarra Euroregion is offering grants to students

Sud Ouest, 1 June

"Among the levers to be used to make cross-border policies more effective, [...]".

The MOT's documentary portal: latest publications online

- **Guidebook on registering EGTCs**, European Committee of the Regions, *Spatial Foresight*, t33, 2021
- **An empirical approach to cross-border spatial planning initiatives in Europe**, Antoine Decoville, Frédéric Durand, in *Regional Studies*, April 2021
- **La frontière comme ressource pour la région métropolitaine trinationale de Bâle**, Christophe Sohn, IBA Basel, April 2021
- **Will reducing border barriers via the EU's b-solutions lead towards greater European territorial integration?**, Eduardo Medeiros, Martin Guillermo-Ramirez, Cinzia Dellagiacoma, Giulia Brustia, in *Regional Studies*, 2021
- **The Bottom-Up Approach: Experiences with the Impact Assessment of EU and National Legislation in the German, Dutch and Belgian Cross-Border Regions**, Martin Unfried, Lavinia Kortese, Anouk Bollen-Vandenboom, in *Territorial Impact Assessment*, 2020



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

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

Follow us on Twitter:
 @reseauMOT

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