

The MOT and its network in Reims

Invited by the Champagne-Ardenne Regional Council, cross-border cooperation stakeholders gathered on Wednesday 15 June in Reims for the MOT conference. They were welcomed at the City Hall by Jacques Cohen, Deputy Mayor of the city.

Introducing the proceedings, Jean-Paul Bachy, President of the Champagne-Ardenne Regional Council, took the opportunity to emphasize the progress in cross-border cooperation: "Border areas are no longer barrier areas, but rather vectors of mutual experimentation and enrichment". He also used the occasion to reaffirm the importance of acceptance of cross-border projects by the population, favoured by better visibility of cooperation.

The growth potential of border territories was mentioned extensively by the speakers. Described by MEP Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid as "a concentrate of Europe and a source of competitiveness", European territorial cooperation must be based on genuine economic development strategies, adjusted to the specific nature of each territory. Patrick Crézé, DATAR* Director and Deputy Head, repeated the need for appropriate tools in order to carry out "in-depth monitoring work on the territories, to inform cross-border strategies, such as that for the Upper Rhine". He added: "A very pragmatic approach is needed, consisting in working with the various participants and referring matters to national level where necessary". Stressing the added value of the cross-border territories, Philippe Suinen,

Director-general of Wallonie-Bruxelles International, wanted cross-border cooperation programmes to provide funding for more projects leading to innovation. For MOT President Michel Delebarre, "the territories that benefit most from building Europe are the territories separated by a border; overcoming this barrier, thanks to the European Union, opens up new prospects for them". The participants also underlined the importance of networking and of knowledge management in order to ensure transmission of what has been learned from cross-border experience, as exemplified by the Budapest platform. As summed up by Marie-Thérèse Sanchez Schmid, the future of cross-border cooperation is being played out on three fronts: "an ambitious budget, a stable architecture, and a strategic territorial cooperation integrated at European level" to meet the common challenges and attenuate the border effect through "improved governance".

* French interministerial agency for spatial planning and regional attractiveness

Michel Delebarre

President of MOT,
Former French Minister
of State, MP and Mayor
of Dunkerque



On the occasion of the MOT General Assembly in Reims, and during the traditional conference, cross-border cooperation stakeholders agreed on the need to implement strategies beyond the borders at all levels (European, national, regional and local). Two principal themes emerged from the discussions: first, cross-border cooperation is characterized by its cross-functional nature: it necessitates the development of synergies with all European Union policies, which must be adapted to the needs of local cross-border development; second, it requires multi-level governance. The cross-border territories and the European level are now mobilized. On 29 June the European Commission issued its proposal for the European Union's 2014-2020 multi-year funding framework. The allocation for territorial cooperation would be increased by more than one-third to 11.7 billion euros. The priority now is to involve the States on either side of each border to a greater extent. Cross-border cooperation needs their driving force. In France, the conclusions of the 2010 parliamentary commission remain fully pertinent, and the MOT will be attentive to their transposition into practical measures. The success of the European Union will be confirmed first of all in the cross-border territories.



EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2011

Co-organized by the Geography Department of the University of Geneva and the Alpine Geography Institute of the University Joseph Fourier-Grenoble I/UMR Pacte, the conference "Mobile borders" will take place from 6 to 9 September in Geneva and then Grenoble.

It will bring together 200 international university academics who have conducted research on border regions and on the dynamics of border opening and closing (debordering-rebordering) around the world.

Olivier Denert, MOT Secretary General, will speak on Friday, 9 September at the conclusion of the conference.

Registration is open until 15 August 2011. For further information see: www.pacte.cnrs.fr.

OCTOBER 2011

Organized by the EU Committee of the Regions and the European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy, in cooperation with the European Parliament, the EU Presidency and 206 regions and cities of 35 countries, the Open Days will take place from 10 to 13 October 2011 in Brussels.

Registration between 6 July and 28 September 2011 on the website: www.opendays.europa.eu.

Formation of the "Espace Pourtalet" EGTC



Handshake between the President of the Aragon Community, Marcelino Iglesias Ricou, and the President of the Pyrénées Atlantiques Department Council, Georges Labazée, in Sabiñanigo, for the signature of the "Espace Pourtalet" EGTC convention on 19 May last.

On Thursday, 19 May, the President of the Aragon Community, Marcelino Iglesias Ricou, and the President of the Pyrénées Atlantiques Department Council, Georges Labazée, accompanied by Marie-Pierre Cabanne, Vice-president for contractual development policies, and François Maïtia, department Councillor, delegate for cross-border cooperation, signed the convention and the statutes of the "Espace Pourtalet" European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, the first EGTC established under Spanish law and the second EGTC on the French-Spanish border. With a planned 10-year term, the new EGTC will be governed by the two local authorities. The

French-Spanish collaboration between Aragon and Pyrénées Atlantiques will take concrete form for the first time next winter with the winter maintenance project between Biescas and Laruns. The former customs building on the Spanish side of the border will become the "Espace Pourtalet". The centre for cross-border snow clearing of the Pourtalet pass in winter, it will be used as a cultural centre and rest house on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in summer. The EGTC will also work on other topics. Culture, economic development and tourism are already included in an initial territorial assessment phase in

the coming autumn to define the details of the structuring cross-border projects that have been identified. The registered office of the EGTC will be in Sabiñanigo. The first deliberative assembly will meet this autumn. The appointment of the presidents, the budget, recruitment and communication will be on the agenda so that this new operational project management structure for the two institutions can start working effectively.

 Georges Labazée, President of the Pyrénées Atlantiques Department Council

"Pursue and intensify cooperation and build the Europe of tomorrow"

IN BRIEF

Inauguration of the Centre Européen de la Consommation

On 6 June the French-German association for protection and defence of the interests of consumers, Euro-Info-Consommateurs, became the Centre Européen de la Consommation, with a view to increasing its visibility and accessibility, particularly for the cross-border population. This was also the occasion to inaugurate new premises at Bahnhofspatz in Kehl.

New legislative provisions allow the formation of a groupement d'intérêt public (GIP) with a cross-border dimension

The French act of 17 May 2011 on simplification and improvement of the quality of the law has reintroduced cross-border or inter-regional cooperation GIPs, abolished in 2008 when national measures relating to the EGTC were adopted. These GIPs can sponsor cooperation projects or programmes and

be formed with foreign public corporations as well as with foreign private corporations fulfilling public service tasks. The act stipulates that "these corporations shall not hold more than half the capital or the votes in the deliberative bodies [...] unless they are established in a member state of the European Union". Note

that a foreign state cannot sign a GIP convention in which French local authorities are participants (CGTC [French general local government code] art. L1115-5), but may take part in the work of a GIP, with observer status.

The 2020 Territorial Agenda of the European Union

Meeting in Gödöllő, Hungary, on 19 May, the spatial planning ministers adopted a new territorial agenda for 2020. According to regional policy Commissioner Johannes Hahn, "the Territorial Agenda will make its contribution to all the sector policies", promoting balanced territorial development, giving priority to the specific features of the regions. It covers all levels of territorial governance, and includes emphasis on the issues of territorial cooperation.

Further information at: www.eu2011.hu/files/bveu/documents/TA2020.pdf

"A challenge for territorial cooperation"

On 23 June in plenary session, the European Parliament adopted the report on Objective 3 by MEP Sanchez-Schmid, "A challenge for territorial cooperation - the future agenda for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation".

Further information at: www.europarl.europa.eu

The MOT bodies meet in Reims

138 elected representatives and technicians, members or partners of the MOT, attended its General Assembly on Thursday, 16 June, in Reims City Hall.

At the General Assembly, Michel Delebarre, recently re-elected President of the MOT, reviewed the undertakings and the priorities of the MOT: provide quality services to its members, such as the now-operational 'service vouchers*' and the MOT technicians' platform**; reinforce its action in favour of cross-border local governance, for example through pre-operational assistance; continue the opening-up of Europe through experience-sharing and statements of views vis-à-vis the institutions; develop the partnerships with its correspondents in other European countries; and give greater weight to cross-border local authorities in the European debate. In the context of the follow-up to the French parliamentary commission report, Jean Peyrony (MOT Director General) reaffirmed the advisory role of the MOT to



central government and the deconcentrated services of the state and to the network of the Caisse des dépôts. In this capacity the MOT has been called upon to reinforce its role in monitoring cross-border territories. The Assembly was reminded that the transformation of the MOT into a groupement d'intérêt public (GIP) should complete the consolidation of the multi-level role of the MOT. Its new communication tools, logo and graphic charter were presented to the participants. Lastly, since last year the MOT has undertaken another major expansion of the geographical

scope of its work by signing partnership agreements in Eastern Europe and with the African Union.

During the General Assembly the members of the MOT Bureau and Board of Directors were elected for three-year terms. The MOT network now has 59 members, since it has been joined by the Agglomération Maubeuge – Val de Sambre in June.

* MOT newsletter Cross-Border Areas no. 28 – June 2010

** See article below

The lists of members of the MOT Board of Directors and Bureau are on-line in the Members' space of the MOT website: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

The MOT attends the African Border Day

Organized by the African Union Border Program and funded by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), the first African Border Day took place on 7 June last in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was attended by more than a hundred persons, most of them representatives of African states and of various organizations. Represented by its Director General, Jean Peyrony, the MOT contributed to the proceedings, focusing its

presentation on the European cross-border cooperation toolbox. The search for sources of funding for cross-border cooperation in Africa comparable with Interreg funding in the EU was seen to be one of the major concerns of the African Union. The African Union and the MOT signed a cooperation agreement in December 2010.

First meeting of the technicians' platform

As part of the annual meeting of the MOT, the Technicians' Platform took place on 16 June in the afternoon. The aim of this first meeting was to present the principles of the technical coordination of the network, through working groups and topical seminars. Questions of working method were discussed. The participants in Reims had the opportunity to express their views on topics of

interest for their sites, and the topics discussed may be the subject of joint work to be developed. On the basis of the discussions, the first topics to be covered will be selected, and a work programme will be drafted and proposed to the network for the autumn.

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Partnership between Lorraine and Belgium

La Semaine, 1st June

"A cross-border cooperation agreement has been signed between the hospital associations Alpha Santé for northern Lorraine and Vivalia for Belgium. [...] The formation of an Economic Interest Grouping (EIG) between Alpha Santé and Vivalia for acquisition and operation of medical imaging facilities is a practical example of the partnership".

▲ Intercluster convention for energy efficiency

DNA, 23th June

"On 20 June, in Fribourg, the Alsace Energivie competitiveness cluster signed a cross-border cooperation convention with four other Upper Rhine clusters that have taken measures in favour of climate protection: EnergieForum Karlsruhe, Green City Freiburg, Strategische Partnerschaft für den Klimaschutz e. V. and I-net Basel Greentech".

▲ 9000 businesses potentially concerned by a cooperation agreement

La Clau, 24th June

"[...] the main employers' associations in Perpignan and Girona have launched a 'cross-border employers' council' [...], intended to work sector by sector and encourage a job market based on 'domestic' mobility, [through the signature] on Wednesday of an agreement aimed at strengthening economic links".

▲ Geneva's Greens betting on a cross-border list

Le Messenger, 30th June

"It's official: in the next federal elections, Geneva's Green party will register a sub-list, 'The cross-border Greens', with the ambition of electing a cross-border national councillor".

▲ Euroairport. Flight over a nest of confusion

Journal des entreprises, 1st July

"The dispute opposing Swiss businesses and some of their French employees in the Euroairport economic zone is weakening the sector in Alsace. [...] The principle of territoriality adopted on 29 September last year by the social chamber of the Court of Cassation raises serious questions about a unique example of cross-border cooperation".

▲ Regional policy: a budget increase as window dressing

Euractiv, 1st July

"[...] the regional funding announced by Brussels [...] is at [...] unacceptable levels according to the French government. Paris 'regrets that the Commission in its proposal does not apply the same budgetary discipline and reform efforts to the other policies that it proposes for the common agricultural policy".

▲ European funds: 10 French regions escape the cuts

Les Echos, 5th July

"By keeping the status of 'regions in transition', for which 39 billion euros are allocated [in its draft budget] for post-2013, the European Commission [would enable] some ten French regions to continue receiving substantial grants".

▲ Tolls without borders between Perpignan and Barcelona

La Clau, 8th July

"[...] a revolutionary automatic toll payment system has been introduced on the A9/AP-7 motorway route. Following the signature on 1 July of an agreement [...] between ASF and Abertis Autopistas, one of its counterparts to the south, there is no border for the French and Spanish badges used by subscribers who want fast, automated passage through tollgates".

▲ A31: 2x3 lanes to Luxemburg

Le Républicain lorrain, 7th July

"As the French government has approved the widening of the A31 to the north, Luxemburg may review its position to ensure continuity after the border. The news was confirmed the day before yesterday in Thionville, on the occasion of the signature of a memorandum of understanding for the development of cross-border road links between Lorraine and the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg".

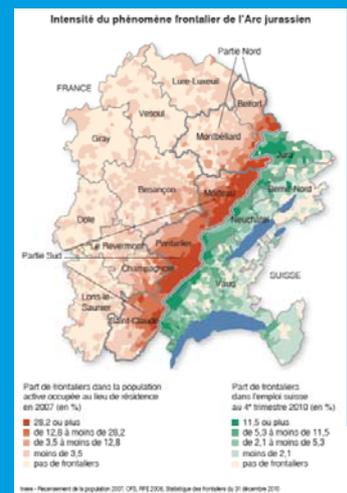
New publication

On 6 June the **Observatoire Statistique Transfrontalier de l'Arc Jurassien** published a report on "**Les travailleurs frontaliers franco-comtois dans l'Arc jurassien suisse**" (Franche-Comté border workers in the Swiss Jurassien Arc). Analyzed using figures from the 2007 population census, most Franche-Comté border workers reside in five employment areas located along the Swiss border (Belfort, Montbéliard, Morteau, Pontarlier and Saint-Claude). At the end of 2010, there were 33,400 border workers in the Swiss Jurassien Arc, occupying 6% of the jobs. Border workers tend to be young, and 63% of them work in industry. The study also notes constant growth of border employment in the Swiss Jurassien Arc over the last fifteen years.

Information:

www.ostaj.org/uploads/media/ProfilFrontaliers_OSTAJ.pdf

www.ostaj.org/uploads/media/Rapport_Profil_du_travailleur_frontalier_comtois_vf.pdf



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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Photos: Communication Service CG64

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