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Drawing upon a rich and eventful history, the conurbations of Charleroi and Maubeuge are today deciding, by signing a cooperation agreement, to unite their efforts and increase their attractiveness. This is more than just a marriage of convenience. It confirms the close and constant links bringing together these two industrial areas. It prepares a future based on creativity, opens up to new recognition and affirms a clear positioning between the major European metropolitan centres at the heart of the European pentagon.

This cooperation concerns the daily life of the citizens, and in the first place employment; it develops resources and looks for economic, social and environmental added value. It aims to make the cross-border situation a resource and encourage the feeling of having a common future. The priorities demonstrate the shared ambition of the stakeholders to encourage mobility, exchanges and collective projects.

This innovative agreement is intended to lead to the creation of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, or EGTC. Charleroi and Maubeuge, closely-related cities, have the firm intention to take this path of the future and be pioneers of European construction, so desired and so necessary. This signature manifests the unflinching determination of the elected representatives to move forward into a new era.

Maubeuge and Charleroi strengthen their links

On 17 November in Charleroi, the Agglomération de Maubeuge-Val de Sambre and the Intercommunale de Charleroi signed an agreement setting up a “cross-border cooperation platform”.

The cross-border space extends along the river Sambre between Maubeuge and Charleroi on the French-Belgian border. Its common history, stretching back to the time of the great abbeys, continues today through economic exchanges and the repercussions of the restructuring of the Sambre industrial area.

This signature is the result of cooperation supported by the Interreg programmes and backed by strong political determination of the presidents of the two institutions.

The objectives are to bring territories and populations on either side of the border closer together, ensure balanced development of the cross-border area, and establish a consistent political dialogue. The platform is

also intended to boost and define joint action programmes, assimilate the 2014-2020 European priorities and prepare the formation of an EGTC.

The priorities are economic development, employment and training, infrastructure and transports, the environment and tourism. To ensure the success of this cooperation, the platform intends to be pragmatic by setting up cross-border bodies such as a standing conference, an executive office, a technical coordination unit, and thematic working groups. The initial priorities will be infrastructure and transport (through the RN54 project), along with economic development and employment, in view of the unemployment rate in the two territories.



The cross-border cycle track along the river Sambre between Maubeuge and Charleroi

EVENTS

DECEMBER

Conference – “Être travailleur frontalier aujourd'hui : réalités et enjeux” (Working across the border today: realities and issues)

6 December 2011 in Longwy (France)

International Conference “Future cohesion policy: strengthening territorial cooperation”

8 and 9 December 2011 in Bratislava (Slovakia)

Conference organized by the INTERACT programme

Conference “Crises et redéploiements des territoires en Europe” (Crises and redeployments of territories in Europe)

12 and 13 December 2011 in Nancy (France)

Event organized as part of the CoesioNet project (network of studies and research on cohesion and territories in Europe/CERI-DATAR)

4th Intermodes Conference: the actors engaged in passenger transport intermodality

8 February 2012 in Brussels (Belgium)

Registration fee: €410

Note a round table entitled “Cross-border regions: actors of an intermodality that has an economic and social purpose”.

Further information:

www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

Future visions for a trinalational space



On 3 November, 400 persons from very varied professional sectors participated in the first forum of the IBA Basel 2020 international architecture exhibition. The MOT took part as an “external expert”. Forty-four selected projects for building the future trinalational Basle metropolis (CH/FR/DE) were officially presented at the forum.

From 2010 to 2020, the towns and municipalities of the Basle trinalational conurbation are organizing this exhibition, which has a long tradition in Germany. One of the best-known instruments in urban and regional development in Europe, this is the first time it has been organized on a

cross-border level.

Its goal is to impart impetus and promote the emergence of projects aiming to strengthen cross-border development around Basle, while involving civil society. The projects concern construction, architecture, urban development and spatial planning, as well as culture and economic development. The cross-border aspect was the determining factor in the selection of the first projects. According to IBA programme director Martin Jann, “we received around a hundred applications [...]. Some were not selected, because their cross-border or trinalational aspect did not appear obvious.”

Among the selected projects, “3Land” proposes the redevelopment of Basle's urban port on the Rhine, with new developments for housing, research, pharmaceutical activities and leisure spread over the three countries. The introduction of a shuttle service on the river between the city centre, the other districts and the municipalities of the Three Borders region should also encourage cross-border connections and sustainable mobility, as part of an attractive cross-border living environment.

Further information:
www.iba-basel.net

IN BRIEF

Towards a LCCG

The last partner to come to a decision on the subject, Nyon regional council has adopted the convention defining the future governance of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project. The convention gives the go-ahead for the creation of a Local Cross-border Cooperation Grouping (LCCG) to run the cross-border conurbation project.

www.projet-agglo.org

CEVA: ground broken



Ground was broken for this cross-border railway project between France and Switzerland on 15 November. “Geneva has been waiting for this missing link in the French-Swiss railway network for more than a hundred years. Genevèse, French, Swiss; citizens, politicians, protagonists in regional life: beyond divergences, we are here today to celebrate - at last! - the start of this project of the century”,

rejoiced Mark Muller, president of the Geneva Council of State. “I can assure you that the CEVA will in fact go to Annemasse, and will not stop at the French-Swiss border”, confirmed Jean-Jack Queyranne, president of the Rhône-Alpes regional council. “We have reached an agreement on the French side, and I confirm to you the commitment of the French government to this project”, he stated. The CEVA, which is

scheduled to come into service 6 years from now to interconnect the French and Swiss networks from lake Geneva to lake Annecy, and from the Jura mountains to Mont Blanc, is a response to the major development and growth challenges facing the whole of the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation.

www.ceva.ch

TEIN network meeting

The network of the Euro-Institutes in Europe, invited by the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh, held a meeting on 26 October as part of the TEIN project. The MOT is an associate partner of this project, which concerns cross-border training and research. It plans to produce educational toolkits, resources on territorial cooperation, a charter and a TEIN label. The project ends in June 2012, and ideas for pursuing the activities, with which the MOT will continue to be associated, were discussed.

Over the next two days the participants were invited to the conference "Cross-Border Training and Impact Assessment in Ireland and Europe" in Cavan. A toolkit for assessment of cross-border cooperation in Ireland and in Europe was launched at the conference.

<http://www.crossborder.ie/news/cross-border-training-and-impact-assessment-international-conference-date-is-27-28-october>

Changes in the MOT for greater "multi-level" effectiveness

Following the MOT board meeting on 23 November, the network members met to discuss the procedures for transformation of the association into a *Groupement d'Intérêt Public* (GIP, public interest grouping), looking forward to the next general assembly meeting scheduled on 4 April 2012 in Paris, during which the draft constituent convention should be validated. Since its establishment in 1998 on the initiative of local cross-border stakeholders, the Caisse des Dépôts and the French State, the MOT has become a multi-level governance tool on cross-border issues, with a



Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, MEP,
MOT meeting on 23 November.

membership of nearly sixty local, regional or national entities, operating as a centre of cross-border resources and expertise. In accordance with the conclusions of the Blanc-Keller-Sanchez-Schmid report, the bodies of the association have decided to transform the MOT into a GIP in order to reinforce its operational effectiveness, its financial stability, and its institutional visibility. The GIP will take over the tasks of the association and its present technical team. It will include in its partnership the local cross-border stakeholders and the representatives of the

French State, as well as any neighbouring states that wish to participate. This transformation will strengthen the strategic positioning of the MOT at the service of the local level and the national and European levels, the sharing of experiences and the upward communication of needs remaining its priorities. This change will also be an opportunity for the MOT to welcome new members wishing to join the GIP.

Further information in the members' space of the MOT website:
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

Conference "Regards croisés" (comparing views)

This one-day conference on 21 October in Avignon, organized by the CNFPT Paca and its inter-regional network of territorial and decentralized cooperation professions (in liaison with the TEIN project, and with MOT participation), was the opportunity for fruitful discussions between cross-border cooperation professionals. The conference presentations are available at: www.paca.cnfpt.fr/sophia/rpmcei

CoR draft opinion on the EGTC

The draft opinion of the COTER Commission of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the revision of the EGTC regulation has been posted on the CoR website. The document will be discussed on 5 December at the meeting of the Commission, in the presence of Michel Delebarre, rapporteur for the regulation.

<https://toad.cor.europa.eu/CO/RAgendas.aspx?body=COTER-V>

Pamina mayors' day: developing local energies

On 20 October, the Regio Pamina Eurodistrict for the fourth time invited the elected representatives of the territory's municipalities to share their experiences of local policy and their ideas, with the aim of strengthening and initiating cross-border partnerships. This one-day conference brought together some 80 participants on the topic of renewable energies. Development in Germany, of wind energy in particular, provided input to the

discussions and showed the interest of expanding cooperation in this area. A MOT network working group on this topic will be organized in 2012, coordinated by the Eurodistrict. www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu



PRESS REVIEW

Health, energies and Saar to eliminate the border

Le Républicain lorrain, 6 Nov.

"The SaarMoselle Eurodistrict has held its assembly in Forbach. Energy, health, marketing, development of the banks of the river Saar: all these cross-border issues were discussed."

Inter-regional research awards

Le Républicain lorrain, 22 November

"The Lorraine region is launching the 5th edition of the inter-regional research awards, organized by the Greater Region higher education and research working group. These awards are intended to reward flagship scientific cooperation projects conducted by at least two laboratories in two partner regions of the Greater Region."

Border workers: what changes on 1 January

Nord Eclair, 22 November

"Since 2008 several amendments have been made to the status of border worker. From 1 January 2012 it will no longer exist in its present form. French workers employed in Belgium will be taxed at the source. The French-Belgian tax convention signed in 1964 has reached the end of its life. A substantial reform will be applied to the status of border workers with effect from 1 January."

Extra time for PAMINA21 until 2013

Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 16 November

"In 2012 and 2013, microprojects encouraging cross-border meetings of citizens in the Regio Pamina Eurodistrict will still be able to receive financial support."

In Alsace, the decline of the German language raises fears for jobs

AFP, 16 November

"The decline of the German language in Alsace would threaten tens of thousands of border jobs: that is the conclusion of a study that raises once again the still controversial issue of a reform of the teaching of the language of Goethe to the Alsatians."

The border retreats

La Tribune de Genève, 8 Nov.

"Oyonnax. Located 90 km from Geneva, this town in the Haut-Bugey district numbers some sixty border workers. Recently the influence of the Geneva conurbation has extended to reach this part of the Ain department, despite its distance from the border."

Gipuzkoa and Iparralde draw up a positive assessment

EITB, 22 November

"The Bihartean cross-border CCI (Chambers of Commerce) has drawn up a positive assessment after more than a year of operation."

French and Catalan paramedics working together

L'Indépendant, 15 November

"A three-day training course organized by the University of Barcelona and the Puigcerdà cross-border hospital [...]"

Improving the health and the quality of life of French and Italian citizens

Le Dauphiné libéré, 17 Nov.

"On 17 November in Embrun the launch seminar of the 'Star Bene-Bien être' project, which is part of the European Alcotra project, took place."

A tram between Germany and Poland

Ville et Transports Magazine, 16 November

"The city councillors of Frankfurt/Oder, Germany (population 60,000), and of Slubice, Poland (population 16,000) intend to set up a cross-border tram route which would connect their two towns by 2015. Co-funded by the EU, this link could carry 3,200 passengers per day."

MOT conference: proceedings published

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. During the MOT annual conference "Cross-border cooperation: from national strategies to territory projects", on 15 June 2011 in Reims, two principal aspects were identified: on the one hand, cross-border cooperation is characterized by its cross-functionality; on the other hand, it requires multi-level governance.

To download the proceedings (in English) of the conference: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/en



Minutes | Conference-debate
Cross-border cooperation: from national strategies to territorial projects



CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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38 rue des Bourdonnais
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Tel.: +33 1 55 80 56 80
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu
Director of publication: Jean Peyrony
Production: Domitille Ayral

Photos : Ville de Maubeuge, Benoît
Dorchies ; IBA, Hans Münchhalfen, DR

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