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The Upper Rhine, a cross-border development area

"Alsace has the good fortune to benefit from the culture of the two countries that have been the driving forces of European unification, France and Germany. Proximity with Switzerland gives this area a particular and trinational dimension. The Upper Rhine has seen a thousand years of technical and artistic innovations. We are in a natural, cultural and economic space, as large as some European countries, which is an advantage in the present competition between regions at European level, and which has gradually become a day-to-day reality, a shared living area, for its six million inhabitants.

The Upper Rhine Trinational Metropolitan Region, established on 9 December 2010, marks an important step in this cooperation: its strategy is aimed at intensifying the economic and scientific development of the Rhineland space. The regional authority supports all the initiatives, and in particular the clusters, that speed up the transformation and competitiveness of our economy.

Going beyond the common values of Rhineland humanism which can forge a community of interest, we also want to support synergy between economic players and socio-professional categories on either side of the borders. For example, our competitiveness clusters operate in networks with companies and research centres located throughout the Upper Rhine basin.

So in each case it is a territorial approach, which is developing and contributing to build the international image of our region. And I am sure that joining the MOT recently will enable us to compare our experiences with other border regions."

Research and innovation in the Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region

Seven cross-border projects of excellence selected

On 4 July 2012, seven cross-border projects of excellence obtained funding at the official ceremony of the Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region Offensive Sciences.

The Offensive Sciences is a unique initiative in Europe supporting outstanding cross-border projects in research and innovation, through co-funding granted by the Länder of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, the Alsace Region* and the EU. The seven projects, with a combined budget of 10 million euros, were selected by an international jury from 36 submitted proposals.

With projects submitted in areas including material science, chemistry, medicine, life sciences, energy, the environment and culture, this initiative is an indicator of the richness and diversity of research

activities in the cross-border territory. The projects stand out by their innovative character and their high scientific value. Their duration is three years.

The objective of this first call for projects, organised jointly by the Interreg IV Upper Rhine programme, the Alsace Region and the Länder of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, was to encourage Upper Rhine researchers to make best use of the potential for research and development by cooperating at cross-border level.

* The Alsace Region joined the MOT in June 2012.

[Further information](#)



EVENTS

SEPT.-OCTOBER

European Cooperation Day
Organised by Interact, 21 September

Open Days 2012, 8-11 Oct. in Brussels
Three workshops to note on 9 and 10 October:

- MOT workshop: What integrated local development tools for building cross-border territories: good practices and prospects for the 2014-2020 period (9 Oct.)

- ADF (assembly of French departments)/CEPLI (European confederation of local intermediate authorities) workshop: Cooperation today to build Europe tomorrow (10 Oct.)

- EGTC Platform workshop (9 Oct.)

For information about the other workshops of interest for cross-border cooperation: [click here](#).

Final conference of the MOT Europ'act project: Cross-border territories, regional and national policies: what coordination for 2014-2020?, 24 October, Paris (see next page)

NOV.-DECEMBER

AEBR annual conference: Cross-border labour market mobility, 8 and 9 November in Berlin

European conference on Metropolitan border regions in Europe, 19 and 20 November in Luxembourg-City (see next page)

European seminar on monitoring of cross-border territories
MOT-FNAU-DATAR-ADUAN
10 December 2012 in Nancy

Further information and more events at <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu>

The founding act of "Greater Geneva"



On 28 June, the French, Genevan and Vaud partners met for the signature of the "Grand Genève 2012" (Greater Geneva) conurbation project.

Following on from the 2007 Charter and the work done over the last five years, they committed themselves to the documents that will contribute to shaping this cross-border conurbation, encompassing 918,000 inhabitants, in the coming years.

To achieve the defined objectives, the partners wanted to set up a new political, economic and consultation organisation, with the signature of the bye-laws of a local grouping for cross-border cooperation (LGCC), a legal entity which will ensure continuity of the conurbation governance

and replace the conurbation project steering committee with effect from 1 January 2013.

The objectives include welcoming more than 200,000 more inhabitants, creating 100,000 additional jobs in Greater Geneva as a whole, and building 50,000 housing units over the next ten years. The Geneva side undertakes to accept half the future arrivals and build 50% of the new housing, while the French side promises the creation of 30% of the new jobs on its territory. Organising cross-border urban planning, the project is also based on major transport projects (cross-border tramways, France-Vaud-Geneva regional express suburban trains, etc.).

www.grand-geneve.org

International knowledge cluster

In response to the necessity of rebalancing economic activity between the two countries, the "Cité internationale des savoirs" (international knowledge cluster) project, between Geneva and the Pays de Gex in the Ain department, plans the development of a 10-hectare site as a skills centre dedicated to knowledge transfer and innovation. An integral part of the cross-border economic and spatial planning strategy of the Cercle de l'Innovation and linked with the major facilities of the region (airport, CERN, NGOs, etc.), the centre will initially accommodate two training organisations, an NGO and a private property development programme.

The Communauté de Communes du Pays de Gex launched a competition in May 2012 for promoters and architects to start up the project.

The Bayonne Treaty extended to the Principality of Andorra

Since 1995, the Bayonne Treaty between France and Spain enables local authorities and their groupings on either side of the border to sign cross-border cooperation agreements and set up cross-border consortiums. For example, a consortium was formed to act as managing authority of the Interreg IVA Poctefa programme, involving all the members of the Pyrenees

Working Community except Andorra, which had not signed the Bayonne Treaty.

To remedy this situation, a protocol amending the treaty and including the principality was signed and ratified by Spain and Andorra in 2010. In July 2012, France completed the ratification of this protocol.

The protocol stipulates that "the participation of Andorra in the

system of cross-border cooperation between local authorities is put into effect through a body formed for this purpose by the Andorran authorities". This body, the Andorran Cross-border Cooperation Organisation (OACT), was established by Andorra on 18 October 2011.

Call for articles

The journal *Belgéo** has issued a call for articles for a special issue entitled "Modèles de frontières ; des frontières modèles?" (Border models; model borders?).

If you intend to submit an article, please let us know before the end of October. Manuscripts have to be submitted by 15 February 2013.

[Further information](#)

* *Belgian international geography journal*

TEIN network conference in Brussels



Conference on metropolitan border regions in Europe

A European conference on Metropolitan Border Regions in Europe, to which the MOT will contribute, is being held on 19 and 20 November 2012 in Luxembourg-City, organised by the Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions Initiative (IMeG), the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS) and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) in cooperation with the Luxembourg territorial planning authorities.

Conference languages: French, English and German.

[Further information](#)

On 10 July, the representation of the Land of Baden-Württemberg in Brussels hosted a symposium on "The future of European territorial cooperation: capacity building in cross-border territories".

Organised by the TEIN (Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network*) and its partners, the MOT and the AEBR, the event foregrounded the new challenges and achievements in the professionalisation of participants in cross-border cooperation, in the context of the new European cohesion policy.

It was attended by a hundred

participants and high-level speakers, including representatives of the partner networks and the European institutions: Commission, Parliament and Committee of the Regions.

All the speakers agreed on the fact that there is a very great need to reduce the barriers to cooperation, to reinforce the professionalisation of cooperation participants and to compile common operational know-how, while supporting relevant projects and promoting the role of the Euro-Institutes as catalysts of cross-border cooperation on each border.

To face these crucial challenges, and in order to define a complementary approach with the goal of capacity-building in cross-border territories, during the symposium the TEIN partners and its associate members (AEBR and MOT) signed an official charter of the network defining its goals and its operation, as well as the criteria of the cross-border research programmes and training courses.

**The TEIN comprises 12 institutes for research and training on cross-border practices, located in nine border regions in Europe.*

www.transfrontier.eu

Cross-border cooperation and "territorial diagnostics"

In France, the DATAR has started consultations with the regions to prepare the European operational programmes (OP) for the 2014-2020 period.

By the end of October, the prefects of the regions and the regional councils must jointly produce a "territorial diagnostic" in order to prepare the OPs and contribute to drawing up the partnership contract with the European Commission.

As the proposed general regulation stipulates, all levels of authorities are concerned: "For the Partnership

Contract and for each programme respectively, a Member State shall organise a partnership with the [...] competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities".

An important advance: the diagnostic includes "territorial data sheets" which, linking with the priority topics of the diagnostic, must incorporate, for each region concerned, a specific territorial entry for "inter-regional" aspects, making the distinction between "cross-border" and "inter-regional" matters.

[Further information](#)

Two seminars in the autumn organised by the MOT

The MOT is organising two important events* in the autumn:

- **the final conference of the MOT Europ'act project:** "Cross-Border Territories, Regional and National Policies: What Coordination for 2014-2020?", on 24 October in Paris,
- **a European seminar on the monitoring of cross-border territories**, in partnership with the DATAR, the FNAU and the

ADUAN, on 10 December 2012 in Nancy.

[The programme and the registration procedures for the conference on 24 October can be downloaded from the MOT website \(click here\).](#) You can also find further information about the seminar in Nancy: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

** In addition to the MOT workshop on 9 October during the Open Days.*

PRESS REVIEW

European funds: the regions want to convert the try

Euractiv, 4 September

"The presidents of regions are waiting for a decision by the government, which has so far just made announcements. Several times the presidents of regions have received confirmation, from the offices of both the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, of the transfer of management of European funds from the state (prefectures) to the regional councils. In his first speech after the summer break, in Châlons-en-Champagne on 31 August, François Hollande returned to the topic: 'I intend to entrust [the presidents of the regions] with the responsibility for managing the European funds allocated to the development of their territory.'"

The mobility of European workers must be reinforced

Le Monde, 27 July

By László Andor, European commissioner for employment, social affairs and inclusion "It is easy to forget how important a freedom is once one has become accustomed to it. However, freedom of movement for workers is a fundamental principle of European integration. [...] If we intend to move towards a true European labour market, we must remove the obstacles to professional mobility. The wide gulfs separating countries and regions in terms of unemployment rates on one side and vacancy rates on the other show that we are not making sufficient use of the potential offered by mobility."

Handbook on the Europe 2020 strategy for cities and regions

Inforegio News, 27 July

"Following the adoption of the Committee of the Regions opinion on the role of local and regional authorities in achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Committee of the Regions has decided to publish a 'Handbook on the Europe 2020 strategy for cities and regions'."

Pôle Emploi: organising the cross-border network

L'Union, 28 July

"With its attendance at the Charleroi Show in October and the preparation of a partnership agreement with the Forem, Pôle Emploi is hoping to establish strong and lasting links with the Belgians. Objective: favour the geographical and professional mobility of workers."

Lille. The discreet charm of crossing the border

L'Expansion, 1 September

"Many French people cross the border each day to work, study or do their shopping in Belgium. Although shopping tourism is doing well, the tax status of cross-border employees has lost a number of its advantages."

The Pamina cross-border region on the road to 2020

Urbapress, 5 September

"The Eurodistrict Regio Pamina cross-border space between France and Germany is launching its 'Pamina 2020' initiative, a 'territorial action and cohesion programme' which will produce the development vision accompanying the funds that will be requested from the new 2014-2020 version of the European Interreg programme..."

An agreement to rehabilitate derelict mining land

Le Républicain lorrain, 29 August

"The Établissement public foncier de Lorraine and RAG Montan Immobilien have signed a cross-border cooperation agreement in order to continue the rehabilitation of derelict mining land."

UNESCO world heritage listing for the Mont-Blanc massif generates talk

Le Dauphiné libéré, 24 August

"For several years, the mayors of the towns around the Mont-Blanc massif have been in favour of an application to UNESCO recognising the mixed natural and cultural character of the heritage of the Mont-Blanc massif."

Special report on "microproject funds in Europe"

The Eurodistrict Regio Pamina has recently published the sixth issue of its special reports: "Fonds de microprojets en Europe : Contributions et résultats d'un séminaire d'experts" (Microproject funds in Europe: proceedings and results of an expert seminar).

"Give life to cross-border cooperation and bring Europe closer to its citizens... These are the essential objectives of the microproject funds discussed at the expert seminar. Funding of microprojects for the citizens through European funds is an increasingly important mechanism contributing to the strengthening of European integration at the level of civil society. The border regions in particular are playing a decisive role here. They are an interface between EU regional policies and civil society, and can at the same time draw substantial benefit from such funding instruments." [Extract from the preface]

For further information on microproject funds and to download the document:

<http://www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu/pamina/spip.php?article1717&lang=fr>



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