

## Practical projects between Strasbourg and Kehl

A bridge between France and Germany, the Strasbourg-Kehl cross-border conurbation is at the heart of the Upper Rhine region and, more locally, of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, a cooperation body set up in 2005 which established itself as an EGTC in 2010.

Close cooperation has been under way for many years between the two cities, with a broad range of projects to meet the needs of the populations. A few examples:

- The aim of the ["EcoCités Strasbourg, métropole des deux-rives"](#)\* urban development project is to lay the foundations of a sustainable, attractive and inclusive cross-border metropolis, open to the Rhine and to Europe. Consistent with this project, the public transport master plan includes [the extension of the Strasbourg tramway](#) to Kehl to ease mobility on both banks of the Rhine. This cross-border line is scheduled to open in early 2016.
- The [redevelopment of the former customs areas](#), vacant spaces at the moment, which have high urban development potential. A cross-border

urban development competition was held covering "La Cour des Douanes" on the French side and the "Zollhofareal" on the German side, judged by a French-German jury. The winning teams were revealed on 18 January.

- The [Cross-border nursery project](#) meets the needs of the two cities for additional places in collective facilities for children from two and a half months to three years of age. An innovative structure in terms of both its architectural design and its teaching project, which will combine French and German approaches to early childhood, this facility will enable the two towns to face up together to the social issues of the territory, and to take action in close proximity to the local populations on both sides of the border.

\* Click on [the project names](#) for further information



**Roland RIES**  
Senator - Mayor of  
Strasbourg  
Honorary president  
of the MOT



**Jacques BIGOT**  
Mayor of Illkirch-  
Graffenstaden  
President of the Strasbourg  
Urban Community

### Boost the construction of Europe through cross-border cooperation

"On 24 and 25 April 2013, Strasbourg will have the pleasure of welcoming the General Assembly of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, an organisation of which it is a founding member and whose action is recognised well beyond the French borders.

At a time when Europe is giving rise to distrust and questioning, the cross-border territories are an essential factor in winning back the European project. For many years the city council and the urban community of Strasbourg have been firmly committed to the path of cross-border cooperation, a driver of their development and a vector of meaning for the citizens.

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty gives a special resonance to the cooperation actions undertaken in Strasbourg at various levels. The projects developed with the neighbouring town of Kehl are manifestations of this determination to construct a shared French-German services and employment area that answers the concerns of everyone living the cross-border life day by day. The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict has experienced a new phase since 2010 thanks to the establishment of the EGTC, transitioning from a cooperation approach to a co-decision approach. [...] [Continued on page 2.](#)



# EVENTS

## MAY-JUNE

ESPON 2013 Programme "Inspire policy making by territorial evidence"

Workshop "Stepping into the sea - New evidence on territorial development and the opportunities and risks for European seas and maritime regions"

15 May 2013 in Brussels

Transpact meeting: annual meeting of cross-border natural spaces

4 to 7 June 2013 in Roermond (Netherlands)

## Seminars on cross-border operational arrangements

The MOT is organizing five information seminars between June and November 2013 on operational arrangements for cross-border projects on French borders within the framework of the French Europ'Act assistance programme. Each seminar will cover one of the French borders.

The first seminar will be organised on the French-Spanish border. The place and the date will be posted soon on the MOT website.



Study co-funded by the European Union. Europe is committed in France with the European Regional Development Fund.

## The Frankfurt-Slubice cooperation centre



The Frankfurt-Slubice cooperation centre, on the German-Polish border, is a joint municipal institution of Frankfurt (Oder) (Germany) and Slubice (Poland), in which six bilingual persons (three German and three Polish) develop the cross-border cooperation between the two towns. In this context, two major projects on the German-Polish border were crowned with success in December 2012:

- On 9 December, a cross-border bus route was inaugurated at the Plac Bohaterów (Heroes Square) in Slubice. The five-kilometre route links Frankfurt railway station, the two town centres, the two universities and the

Slubice shopping centre, in thirty to sixty minutes. The keys to the project: for €1.40, the bus ticket is valid for the whole urban network, and the train ticket from Berlin to Frankfurt (Oder) covers the bus to Slubice.

- The cross-border assemblies of the municipal authorities, which meet at the Frankfurt (Oder) town hall, have decided to bring the cross-border populations together as the "first German-Polish twin town" with its own symbol. From this year, a blue and green "Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice Ohne Grenzen-Bez granic" logo has been introduced in the publications and websites through the Interreg IVA



Ohne Grenzen. Bez granic.

programme.

Three major upcoming cultural events will mark 2013: "Europe Day" on 8 and 9 May, with forty cross-border workshops; the three-day joint town festival in July; and the European rock festival, "Przystanek Woodstock", to take place in the Polish town of Kostrzyn with the attendance of students from the two towns.

[www.frankfurt-slubice.eu](http://www.frankfurt-slubice.eu)

## Editorial continued from page 1.

"[...] We are now considering our conurbation and the development of our 360° metropolis. The reinforcement of the European status of Strasbourg thus necessarily involves laying greater stress on its cross-border dimension, by working on inter-municipal governance but also at metropolitan level with the Upper Rhine conurbations within the framework of the Network of Cities

and the Trinational Metropolitan Region. These different approaches bear witness to the richness and the deep roots of a cross-border cooperation that has become essential, bringing practical results materialising the construction of Europe in our territories. They constitute a unique opportunity to reconcile the citizens with the basis and the

advances of the European project, in order to give it a new lease of life. The next General Assembly of the MOT, in Strasbourg, will be the occasion to discuss these various issues in the context of the preparation of the forthcoming community cohesion policy and to boost the appropriation of cross-border cooperation by the citizens."

## A newsletter for the Basque Eurocity!

Bayonne San Sebastian Basque Eurocity has launched its newsletter. [Read the first issue.](#)



## Alcotra study

A study on knowledge management for the projects of the 2007-2013 Alcotra programme<sup>1</sup> was conducted by the MOT<sup>2</sup> between August 2012 and January 2013. The objective of the work was to conduct a qualitative assessment of the Interreg projects and manage the experiences after more than twenty years of the European programme, with a view to the new 2014-2020 programming period. [The complete study is now accessible in French to members in the Members' space of the website.](#)



1 Implemented in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur.

2 Commissioned from the MOT by the PACA region council and the department councils of Alpes de Haute-Provence, Hautes-Alpes and Alpes-Maritimes.

## The Euroregional Cooperation Grouping

On 1 March 2013, Protocol No. 3 to the [European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities](#) [the Madrid Outline Convention] concerning Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (ECGs), drafted by the Council of Europe, entered into force in Germany, Switzerland, Slovenia and Ukraine. It will enter into force in France on 1 May 2013.

The ECG, established voluntarily, enables legal persons governed by public law to work together to promote, support and develop, for the benefit of their populations, cross-border and interterritorial cooperation actions (without geographical continuity), on the territory of the member States of the Council of Europe.

Territorial communities and authorities belonging to a State that has ratified the protocol, and such States in their own right,



may become members of an ECG, on condition that the partnership includes a territorial community or authority located on their territory. Territorial communities and authorities of a State that has not yet ratified the protocol may become members of an ECG if they belong to a State bordering the State in which the ECG has its headquarters and if there is an agreement between the two States providing a legal basis for such participation.

The future members define the terms of operation of the ECG in compliance with the principles defined in the protocol: the tasks of the ECG must be in accordance with the competences of the members; the ECG cannot exercise police or regulatory powers; the member territorial communities or authorities of the ECG must have the majority of voting rights in the assembly; the ECG must be established on the territory of a member State of the Council of Europe that has ratified the ECG

protocol; the ECG is governed by the law of the State in which it has its headquarters, the members being able to opt for the legal form most suitable for their objectives. The members must also facilitate the implementation of the ECG decisions falling within their competences.

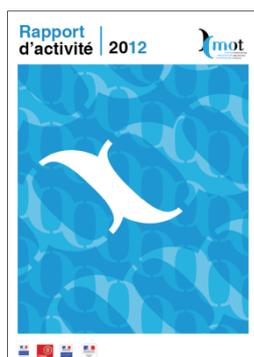
The establishment of the ECG, and any amendment of the content of the agreement establishing the ECG (list of members, name, headquarters, duration, object, tasks, geographical scope) must be subject to prior approval by all the States concerned.

The ECG is an alternative instrument to the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), and could, for example, be used on the Swiss border for associating within a single structure (possibly governed by Swiss law) all levels of competence, including the State level.

[Read protocol No. 3](#)

## The MOT has published its 2012 activity report

The MOT activity report for 2012, [available \(in French\) by clicking here](#), reports on intense activity, both at operational level, with studies and tasks in the field and many services to members, and at national and European levels, with support for the definition of a cross-border policy in France, preparation of the 2014-2020 cohesion policy, and European contributions for ensuring better consideration of cross-border territories.



## Negotiations on the cohesion policy

The negotiations in progress between the European Parliament and the Council on the cohesion policy and the structural funds for the 2014-2020 period are difficult. For the first time, the Parliament rapporteurs have raised the possibility of a second reading in order to reach an agreement with the Council. Some major

disputed items (macro-conditionality, concentration of funds, performance reserve, etc.) have not yet been discussed. Commissioner Johannes Hahn hopes that a political agreement will be reached by the summer.

[Further information on the European Parliament website.](#)

# PRESS REVIEW

## ▲ Cross-border cooperation, base of the EU?

**Libération, 8 April 2013**

"Strasbourg Forum (video) Watch the discussion with Roland Ries (mayor of Strasbourg), Thomas Klau (director of the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations) and Sandrine Bélier (MEP Europe Écologie Les Verts). Moderated by Dominique Jung (Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace)."

[Click here.](#)

## ▲ The single council project that Philippe Richert and some other elected representatives dreamed of

**L'Alsace, 8 April**

"Alsace voters have rejected the single council, by voting 'no' in Haut-Rhin and by not turning out in sufficient numbers for a 'yes' vote in Bas-Rhin. Was the single council project that Philippe Richert and some other elected representatives dreamed of for more than twenty years too innovative? Or too complicated? The institutional layer cake has plenty of life left in it yet. The voters called a halt yesterday to the Alsace council project. It is true that a majority, 55.67%, voted 'yes'. But the double condition of this referendum was not satisfied: the 'yes' had to obtain 50% of the votes in each department, and the 'yes' vote had to represent 25% of those eligible to vote."

## ▲ A cross-border programme to develop 'eco-design' approaches

**L'Avenir, 26 March**

"The FRED (Fabrication rapide eco design) cross-border programme has just been launched. It aims to encourage the emergence and integration of eco-design approaches in small- and medium-size enterprises in the mechanical engineering sector in Wallonia, Lorraine and Luxembourg."

## ▲ A cross-border treatment plant

**DNA, 29 March**

"In Wissembourg, cross-border cooperation with Germany has given birth to a practical project: the construction of a waste-water treatment plant [...]. At the first site meeting on Wednesday, French and German elected representatives were pleased that, in this matter as well, the border is not an obstacle."

## ▲ Record attendance for the tenth anniversary of the cross-border workers fair

**Le Dauphiné libéré, 7 April**

"The balance sheet of the fair is completely positive for two reasons. The first was confirmed to us from the beginning of this tenth anniversary with a preview that met all our expectations and the satisfaction of all our invited partners. The second became evident on Friday evening, when we already reached a number of visitors equal to the total over all three days last year."

## ▲ "Don't let anyone undermine the Cuneo-Breil-Ventimiglia line"

**Nice-Matin, 8 April**

"This appeal, which may sound like a warning, was made by Liguria regional councillor Sergio Scibilia, president of the association 'Giuseppe Biancheri', at an important meeting which took place at Ventimiglia town hall on Saturday."

## ▲ MEP Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid: for railway transport

**Le Petit Journal, 21 March**

"Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid has been appointed rapporteur to the Committee on Regional Development for the recast of the directive on the interoperability of the railway system within the European Union. For the MEP 'The aim of this recast is to increase railway interoperability at EU level while maintaining an optimum safety level. In other words, increase the possibility for a locomotive or a wagon to run on any section of the EU railway system. Unfortunately, we are still far from achieving this, and the fragmentation between the Member States causes compatibility and cost problems for railway operators, in particular on cross-border sections.'"

## "A strategy of the future for Euregio Meuse-Rhin"

The future Euregional strategy EMR2020 was presented on 13 March 2013 at the second triennial conference of the Euregio Meuse-Rhin, held in Saint-Vith, Belgium.

The EMR2020 future strategy is the result of an intense process of participation and harmonisation within the Euregio, and aims to deepen and reinforce socioeconomic cooperation in the border regions. The strategy places the emphasis on practical solutions in the face of border barriers, for example in the areas of innovation, the employment market, culture and tourism, healthcare and security. In addition, the Euregio wants to make itself better known and to be closer to the citizens. "Implementation of the EMR2020 strategy starts today, within the framework of the German-speaking community presidency, and will represent the major challenge for the partner regions of the Euregio Meuse-Rhin until 2020."

<http://www.emr2020.eu>



## CROSS-BORDER NEWS

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