

Cross-border study on the Jura Arc

In 2013, the MOT conducted a large-scale study aimed at defining the priority areas for the development of the French-Swiss Jura Arc. This cross-border territory encompasses the Franche-Comté Region and the Swiss cantons of Bern, the Jura, Neuchâtel and Vaud. Led by the Franche-Comté Préfecture and arcjurassien.ch*, this initiative included a significant forward-looking dimension, starting with the production of a cross-border territorial analysis and resulting, on 19 December 2013 in Villers-le-Lac, in the presentation before the territory's elected representatives and stakeholders of a cross-border development strategy for the Jura Arc.

This strategy puts forward cross-border orientations in the areas of economic development, mobility (public transport), regional planning, environmental management and public services. It also sets out a vision of cross-border cooperation that takes into account the interaction between the different territorial levels (going from very local urban and environmental cooperation through to an overview of the region as a whole, by way of cooperation between networks of towns and between French departments and Swiss cantons). [...]

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**Association that groups together the four cantons.*



Cross-border bid to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site

The bid by the French-Italian cross-border area "Maritime-Mercantour" to be included on UNESCO's World Heritage List was officially submitted on 18 November 2013 in Breil-sur-Roya.

The six French and Italian partners made this application jointly. Alongside the Parc National du Mercantour, the other partners comprised the Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime, the Parco Alpi Liguri, the Parco du Marguareis, the Province of Imperia and the protected space of the Hanbury Botanical Garden.

An area of 200,000 hectares could therefore be protected by this global recognition which would make it possible to "further promote the protection of the cross-border ecosystem". UNESCO will make a decision over the next two years. This project is one of the very few cross-border bids and will be carried through in particular by the European natural park joint management structure that was set up on 23 May 2013 as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.

It may be noted that the MOT provided technical assistance for the operational establishment of this EGTC that brings together the Parc National du Mercantour and the Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime. Besides the cross-border bid to UNESCO, this first EGTC involving two European natural parks makes it possible to jointly manage the protected area and to carry out integrated projects: for example, the restoration of the Larche-Maddalena Pass and joint implementation of the European charter on sustainable tourism, etc.

More info on this territory on the MOT's website.

EVENTS

The MOT's next Annual General Meeting and conference-debate, on the topic "Cross-border networks: mutualising services and experimenting with Europe on each border", will take place on 18-19 June 2014 in Paris. More information will be available soon.

The BRIT* 14th international conference will be held from 4 to 7 November 2014 on the France-Belgium border (Arras, Lille and Mons) on the topic "The border, a source of innovation". A call for papers is open until 15 March 2014.

A federative theme: "Far from being fixed geographical features, borders are characterized by a dynamic play whose actors include the changes affecting the world while actively contributing to its transformation. While the 1990s were steeped in the ideology of a 'world without borders', the events of 11 September, among others, marked the beginning of an era characterised by the redirection of attention to the issues of security and territorial control. This 'resumption of borders' raises questions that we have to consider, especially in 2014, the centenary commemoration of the start of World War I."

Active participation of the MOT: it is proposed that the MOT network participate, particularly in four workshops concerning public services, representations of the border, innovation, and employment-training-education in cross-border contexts.

Please contact the MOT team concerning these workshops, as well as to inform us of your cross-border projects concerning the 1914 centenary.

**"Border Regions In Transition" is an international network bringing together researchers and practitioners.*

More info

Two questions to the Groupement transfrontalier européen on French-Swiss cross-border work

Michel Charrat, Chairman of the Groupement transfrontalier européen (GTE, European Cross-Border Grouping), an association that defends the rights of cross-border workers along the French-Swiss border, replies to our questions.



What are the impacts of cross-border work on the Greater Geneva region?

Today, one household in three in Greater Geneva is concerned by cross-border work, i.e. over 110,000 people, whether EU or Swiss citizens, who have chosen France as their place of residence and who contribute to Geneva's economic development. It should be recalled that the wage bill for these workers totals nearly 8 billion Swiss francs a year and that the tax contribution arising from this amounts to around 268 million Swiss francs, which is transferred to the Ain and Haute-Savoie departments in France. It is evident that our territories benefit from cross-border workers' activity, whether it be tradespeople, retailers or the services sector. Thousands of jobs are therefore directly generated by cross-border work.

What is the current situation for French-Swiss cross-border workers?

Regarding the issue of health insurance, the European Cross-Border Grouping is determined to obtain from the French

Government a specific regime that is tailored to the needs of cross-border workers in Switzerland. We are also concerned to ensure that this new situation of cross-border workers receiving treatment in France does not trigger a serious crisis regarding access to healthcare for the whole of the population living in this territory. We are therefore calling for the ratification of a healthcare agreement between our two countries that will allow the establishment of a true cross-border healthcare map.

From 1 January 2014, the rates for taxation at source will be harmonised across the whole of Switzerland. Cross-border workers who are taxed at source in Switzerland are particularly concerned by rates C and H. The European Cross-Border Grouping, which is a member of the consultative commission on taxation at source in Geneva, has worked in collaboration with the Geneva tax administration on this question in order to arrive at a fair solution. Our major concern now is that the other cantons do not agree to the spouse's real salary being

taken into account, which will lead to cross-border households being overtaxed. That is why we have made a representation to the Ministry of Finance in France for it to question its Swiss counterpart on this issue.

The people of Geneva have elected to the Conseil d'Etat a representative of the Mouvement Citoyens Genevois (MCG), a movement that has a clearly anti-cross-border stance. While we respect the democratic choice of our neighbours, we will try to ensure that this does not affect cross-border policy in the region or the political and social construction of Greater Geneva.

[More info on the website of the GTE.](#)



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[...] Lastly, it puts forward ideas for reforming the governance of the cross-border structure, the Conférence TransJurassienne, with greater involvement from the different levels of government. These strategic orientations must lead to the setting up of concrete projects: the study therefore proposes around ten operational projects as a first step to implementing the cross-border strategy.

This strategy is the result of a long process during which the MOT met more than 100 stakeholders on either side of the border, ran four cross-border territorial workshops and produced an overview of the state of cross-border cooperation. This shared territorial analysis comprised a quantitative dimension (the territory, cross-border cooperation actions) but also a qualitative one (themes of

cooperation under way; the advantages, opportunities, weaknesses and risks for the territory analysed; the interplay of stakeholders, etc.). Lastly, the assignment addressed specific points of analysis, such as the positioning of French government departments and the internal organisation of cooperation and issues that are particular to Switzerland.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The conference entitled "Rencontres Amérique latine, Caraïbe, Europe de la coopération transfrontière"* organised by the European Commission and the *Université des Antilles et de la Guyane*, in partnership with the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network, the MOT and the AEBR, was held on 27-29 November 2013 in Martinique. This cross-disciplinary meeting gave rise to very fruitful discussions regarding good practices between players from very diverse territories.

**"Cross-border cooperation in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe"*

[More info.](#)

Marine straits - Important territories for Europe

Meeting with border region MPs

On 4 December, the MOT's Chairman, Michel Delebarre*, and the MOT team took part in a hearing at the National Assembly conducted by Philip Cordero, Chairman of the parliamentary study group on cross-border cooperation, along with numerous French MPs for border areas. The purpose of the hearing was to take stock of cross-border cooperation in the draft legislation on decentralisation, current issues for cross-border territories and the European outlook for cooperation. This exchange paved the way for the strengthening of the links between the MOT and MPs, with a view to greater account being taken of cross-border territories at national level.

**Former Minister of State, Senator, Mayor of Dunkerque and Chairman of the Committee of the Regions' Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform.*

At the instigation of the department of Pas-de-Calais and Kent County Council (United Kingdom), which are on either side of the Pas-de-Calais Strait – one of the busiest in the world – the European Straits Initiative has since 2009 brought together a network of 15 local authorities bordering 8 European straits from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean.



Straits warrant special attention as maritime and coastal activities are concentrated in them: maritime transport, fishing, port activities, tourism, environmental protection, etc., with a not insignificant function of linking land and sea. These territories, which are the focus for opportunities and risks, constitute veritable laboratories for the implementation of Europe's integrated maritime policy (IMP).

Moreover, while straits are often associated with the supra-governmental level (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Maritime Organisation), these areas also have the specific feature of being bordered by local authorities that belong to two different countries and that are involved in active cross-border maritime cooperation. As well as the IMP, Europe's territorial cohesion policy is targeted by this initiative, which is working to obtain greater recognition for straits in European

policy.

The Interreg IV C NOSTRA (Network Of STRAits) project, which is the first major project to come out of the European Straits Initiative, promotes cross-border and sustainable governance of straits across the whole of Europe. The MOT's new website addresses the cross-border issues relating to straits: see the section on "Maritime cooperation".

There are several examples of cross-border governance of straits, some of which have been in place since the 1970s (e.g. the Kvarken Council for the strait of the same name) while others have been established more recently, such as the Helsinki-Tallin Euroregio in 1999 in the Gulf of Finland and the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation in the Strait of Bonifacio in late 2012 (the International Marine Park of Bonifacio). This last example is particularly interesting

since it brings together the different players concerned by the strait, including the local authorities and the Government; this is essential when dealing with issues relating to the sea and coastline.



Straits that are partners in the NOSTRA project.



More info:
www.europeanstraits.eu
www.nostraproject.eu

Adoption of the multiannual financial framework and the legislative package for cohesion policy

On 19 November 2013, the European Parliament voted to adopt the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020, which opens the way to final approval by the Council. The amount allocated to European territorial cooperation totals €8,948.26 million (2011 prices). The next day, the regulations relating to the implementation of cohesion policy for 2014-2020

were adopted by the European Parliament, including the ERDF regulation, the new European territorial cooperation regulation and the regulation on the EGTC (article on the right). [More info](#)



Advances contained in the new EGTC regulation

On 20 November 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the new regulation relating to the EGTC. This regulation will help to clarify, simplify and improve the creation and functioning of EGTCs. The main advances are:

- the possibility for an EGTC to be set up by members from a single EU country and one or several non-EU countries;
- the expansion of the list of potential members to include undertakings entrusted with the

operation of services of general economic interest;

- a time limit for approval of an EGTC set at 6 months;
- facilitating access for new members;
- flexibility regarding the national law applicable: the law of the country in which the EGTC's registered office is located, the law of the country in which the EGTC's bodies operate and the national law applicable to its activities.

[More info](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ **Breda Pecan:**
“National boundaries are coming to be seen more and more as reservoirs of untapped potential, rather than as obstacles to cooperation”

Council of Europe, 3 December
“There has been an important and positive trend in European transfrontier cooperation in recent years – which is moving from a focus on informal exchanges to a preference for practical projects, which could be described as ‘cooperation platforms’,” stated Breda Pecan (Slovenia, R/SOC), Rapporteur for transfrontier cooperation of the Congress, at the conference on “Borders and governance” on 3 December 2013 in Strasbourg. She reiterated that [the report on “Prospects for effective transfrontier cooperation in Europe”](#), adopted at the 25th Session of the Congress in October 2013, proposes a Congress Action Plan “to pave the way for more effective international cooperation.”
[More info](#)

▲ **An Oïapoque-Saint-Georges border area map: a “first step”**

France-Guyane, 4 December
“A decree from the Ministry of the Interior dated 29 November endorses the creation of a border area map designed to help the inhabitants of the town of Oïapoque to cross into French Guiana – for a maximum duration of 72 hours.”

▲ **The first French-German service for job-seekers in Lorraine**

Localtis, 19 November
“A French-German service for job-seekers was inaugurated on 15 November 2013 in Sarreguemines in Moselle. The aim is to enable French job-seekers to gain easier access to the German job market, with unemployment rates in Germany being much lower.”

▲ **In Strasbourg, the Rhine Port quarter has undergone a huge facelift**

Le Monde, 24 November
“After several years of building works, the Rhine Port quarter in Strasbourg is starting to come to life. A wave of new residents will move into the newly-completed buildings along the bank of the river.”

▲ **Project to create a “house of mobility” for all**

Le Dauphiné libéré, 5 Dec.
“A unique place providing information and promoting transport networks for Greater Geneva [...] Deliberations are under way on the creation of a “house of mobility” in the Greater Geneva area.”

▲ **Taxation of cross-border workers in the canton of Vaud: Pierre Moscovici writes to his Swiss opposite number**

macommune.info, 3 December
“The European Cross-Border Grouping expressed its unhappiness to the Minister of the Economy about the move by the canton of Vaud to tax cross-border workers that live more than an hour and a half from their place of work. Pierre Moscovici has consequently written to his Swiss opposite number, Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf.”

▲ **The Forum d’agglomération* - a body where elected representatives and civil society meet**

Le Dauphiné libéré, 1 December
“At a time when the governance of Greater Geneva is only just being put in place, it is not so easy for civil society to make its voice heard, even if it has been assigned a small role in the relevant institutions via the Forum d’agglomération. The Forum began functioning on 25 September and brings together around 80 members of associations and bodies that are active on both sides of the border...” [** Conurbation Forum*].

▲ **The Pourtalet Pass: snow-clearing has begun**

L’Eclair des Pyrénées, 27 Nov.
“The French-Spanish snow-clearing effort has begun on the slopes of the Aragón and Béarn sides of the Pourtalet Pass. Yesterday in Sabiñanigo, elected representatives from Béarn and Aragón discussed how this effort should be organised.”

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