

Third meeting of the strategic cross-border committee on observation

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Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, Paris

Key points and decisions taken



List of participants

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Introduction: presentation of the statistical observation process for cross-border territories

A study carried out by the MOT and the FNAU (Network of French Urban Planning Public Agencies) at the request of the DATAR (now the CGET¹) made it possible to identify the difficulties in observing cross-border territories. Following this study and a seminar on the topic of observation in Nancy in December 2012, an initiative designed to prioritise a gradual and pragmatic process of improving and adding to the repository of data and indicators, which will ultimately enable a more precise understanding of cross-border issues, was launched. This led to the setting-up of a Cross-Border Strategic Committee (CSC) and a Technical Working Group (TWG)²

¹ DATAR – Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'attractivité régionale; CGET – Commissariat général à l'égalité des territoires (General Commission for Territorial Equality).
² This observation and sharing initiative around the issue of cross-border territories led in 2013 to the creation of a two-tier mechanism: at the political level, the cross-border strategic committee, and at the technical level, the technical working group.

whose first meetings were held in 2014. These two bodies make possible a shared cross-border observation culture by means of different actions:

- the creation of an online platform (Ariane group) in order to share information
- communication of messages to the European authorities (cross-border territories are dynamic and strategic)
- mobilisation of statistical bodies in order to raise their awareness of the issue of observation of these important territories and to create a network of these bodies.

The objective is to put systems in place in order to better observe these territories in the interest of effective public policy.

The present meeting of the CSC will address the following points:

- Organisation of contributions on observation at the seminar in Luxembourg on 19 May 2015 - Overview of the seminar

- Update on the organisation of the session on observation
- First contribution: designing a European map illustrating the availability of data on flows of cross-border workers
- Presentation of the INTERACT sectoral study on cross-border employment

- Update on the work of the TWG

- Update on the web exchange platform for cross-border observation
- Update on the first pieces of work sent by the members of the TWG
- UMS RIATE: presentation of the feasibility study for a cross-border database, presentation of the contents of a typology of cross-border territories in Europe

1) Organisation of the contributions on observation at the "obstacles to cooperation" workshop on 19 May 2015 in Luxembourg

1.1 Overview of the workshop

This action concerning cross-border obstacles being carried out under Luxembourg's presidency of the European Union may be continued under the Dutch presidency in the first quarter of 2016.

Since the 2009 Treaty, the European Union has been supposed to play a role in promoting social, economic and territorial cohesion. But these objectives are far from having been met. That is why Luxembourg wishes to reinforce the territorial approach in the EU's regulatory framework.

In this context, Luxembourg intends to carry out five actions:

- implementation of the territorial agenda
- the EU's territorial outlook up to 2050 based on an ESPON project
- work on removing the cross-border obstacles that still exist between border regions (regarded as Europe's "seams")

- increased visibility of structural funds (cohesion policy) by organising a formal council of ministers
- development of urban policy for small and medium-sized cities/towns and cross-border metropolitan regions

Regarding cross-border territories at local level, the idea is to develop a legal instrument that authorises a cross-border territory to apply a different law, taking the example of French legislation on the "right to experiment". This instrument would help to strengthen the competitiveness of these border regions and to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. The objective is thus to act on a small scale (use of contracts and agreements between States), by creating a time-limited "cross-border bubble".

The cross-border bubble should authorise the application of different legal provisions. But it should remain the responsibility of territories to design the legal instruments.

Use of the bubble could be based on the regulation on EGTCs:

- voluntary application
- request for authorisation from States to apply this provision
- requirement: the existence of an EGTC

First of all, it is necessary to draw up a positive list of the political areas in which this bubble may be applicable and those that would be excluded from it.

The Luxembourg presidency is proposing to launch a discussion about the "cross-border bubble" with a view to its application during the 2021-2027 period. The aim is to determine a number of points: the link with the territorial strategy, particular provisions of one or all of the partners.

Information about the workshop

Date and place: 19 May 2015 in Luxembourg (venue to be decided)

Number of guests: 80

Pre-programme:

9.00-10.30: Session on blocks to cross-border cooperation (15 MOT information sheets on obstacles to cooperation)

11.00-12.30: Session on observation (which the CSC is in charge of)

How to show the need for observation in order to implement good cross-border public policies and help to overcome obstacles?

14.00-15.30: Simultaneous thematic workshops (territorial planning/mobility, healthcare/social issues, jobs)

16.00-16.30: Summing-up/ Conclusion

1.2 Update on the organisation of the session on observation

1.2.1 How the "observation" session ties in with the others:

To some extent, the obstacles result from incomplete knowledge of the functioning of cross-border regions. The recent study carried out by the MOT for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais's General Secretariat for Regional Affairs (update of an initial French-Belgian parliamentary report) has made it possible to understand the functioning of cross-border cooperation through the qualitative and quantitative observation of obstacles.

The one-and-a-half-hour session aims to show how rigorous and coordinated observation of cross-border territories can contribute to removing certain obstacles through a greater understanding of how these territories function and the areas where there are blockages.

The MOT is assisting the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg with the workshop on 19 May and is to supply it with 15 information sheets on representative obstacles in order to design a time-limited "bubble" that draws on the "right to experiment".

The aim is to encourage the Commission and governments not to look at cooperation solely from a financial point of view.

1.2.2 Presentation of three cases (by way of example)

- *First example: Cross-border observation is in place.* It makes it possible to identify obstacles and assets with regard to cross-border exchanges, to measure their impact and to guide the decisions in the choice of an appropriate solution to be implemented; an example of observation with respect to healthcare issues could be used.

- *Second example: Obstacles and assets are known about more through experience than through statistical observation,* and measures of them are incomplete (information is not available on the right scale, definitions are different on either side of the border). Incomplete observation can lead to questionable choices; an example of cooperation in the area of employment could be used.

- *Third example: An example where observation cannot be carried out.* The potential for cross-border exchanges is there. There may be some data to measure their intensity, but observation is lacking and does not make it possible to understand the levers of and brakes on development; an example of cooperation in the area of housing/real estate could be used.

1.2.3 Political objective:

- Obtain the recognition that observation is indispensable to identify obstacles to the development of cross-border territories, a necessary step in order to remove these cross-border obstacles and outline a multi-level roadmap;
- Encourage the development of coordinated observation projects between countries that can be financed by INTERREG programmes, if they are linked to the border's reality and the programme's priorities (needs in terms of indicators, etc.);

- Coordinate national approaches at borders, such as that envisaged by Germany (cross-border MORO projects, international workshop in 2015);
- Promote the possibility of exploiting existing European surveys such as the "Labour Force Survey" (by increasing the sample size for big countries) and also national administrative data (France's Annual Declaration of Social Data, etc.); better coordinate statistical and administrative data;
- Have the work of the CSC/TWG validated within the framework of intergovernmental cooperation ("Territorial Agenda"), with the support of the Commission; next stage: the Dutch presidency in 2016;
- Consider an ESPON project on the subject."

1.2.4 Criteria for the examples to be presented in the "observation" session:

- Ensure that the examples are representative of Europe as a whole (1 example from France's border; 1 example from central Europe; 1 example from northern Europe. Refine the typology of examples linked to the UMS RIATE³). The MOT is proposing to identify territories and players.
- One example could consist of the representation of the case of data on cross-border flows and its illustration by a map showing the accessibility of the data.

1.2.5 Pre-programme to the "observation" session:

11.00: Introduction and presentation of the Nancy initiative

11.15: Presentation of the three European examples, the European map of cross-border worker flows and the first findings of the UMS RIATE study

11.45: Roundtable: presence of representatives of governments, a national statistical institute, the Commission (Eurostat or DG REGIO) and a prominent border region elected representative

1.3 Designing a European map illustrating the availability of data on flows of cross-border workers

The aim is to produce a highly communicative map

Proposed typology for the key, to be simplified according to legibility and feasibility

- > Statistical or administrative data item
- > Inflow and/or outflow
- > Level (NUTS 3 or below)
- > Periodicity
- > Degree of comparability of data
- > Observation possible, partly possible or impossible

The first map of it that can be produced must any case represent

- The availability of the outflow (possibly of the inflow when it has not been communicated by the third country)
- The geographical level of data collection.

³ Unité mixte de service - Réseau interdisciplinaire pour l'aménagement et la cohésion des territoires de l'Europe (France's interdisciplinary network for the development and cohesion of Europe's territories).

Principle of the map:

- To see if the information is available (also show missing information)
- To see if the data item exists
- To show the level of detail of data
- To draw lessons from the map: cross-border employment is not an issue for all European countries; to go beyond the question of cross-border flows; to show the unrealised potential of the free movement of people
- The CGET is proposing to produce this map.

1.4 Presentation of the INTERACT sectoral study on cross-border employment

Contents

- Overview of long-term developments in the area of worker mobility in Europe
- Four case studies on the evolution of the labour market: two cross-border cases (the Greater Region, Italy-Slovenia), and two transnational ones (the Baltic Sea region and the Alpine region)
- Observations on what has been done in this area by the INTERREG programmes

Observations and conclusions

- Cross-border cooperation is more directly involved in job market integration in territories where there is cooperation through:
 - (1) the elimination or reduction of persistent obstacles to cross-border mobility
 - (2) the development of the labour force's capacity to utilise the potential of the cross-border labour market
 - (3) the creation of specific cooperation structures and networks.
- Transnational cooperation is more concerned with demographic developments in general (*brain drain – brain gain*, the attraction and retention of talent, employment of women and older workers, etc.)
- Problems of access to data and of terminology

Recommendations

Cross-border co-operation should work to:

- supply information about possibilities of cross-border employment
- overcome differences in national systems
- support vocational training and improve the skills and competencies that can help workers to access jobs across borders
- support the established territorial governance frameworks in order to foster the integration of labour markets and support their management.

Transnational cooperation should focus on

- the improvement of policies at national and regional levels in order to create more worker-friendly zones of mobility
- respond to the more complex implications of demographic developments
- greater integration of the labour market at transnational level
- identification of problems with respect to data and terminology

The INTERACT representative says that she is ready to look at a contribution from the programme to the CSC's process (e.g. translations into English) if this can enable more countries to get involved.

2) Update on the work of the TWG

2.1 Update on the web exchange platform for cross-border observation

The web platform dedicated to the CSC/TWG has been put online: <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/comite-strategique-transfrontalier/> but remains to be completed and added to.

2.2 Update on the first pieces of work sent by the members of the TWG

2.2.1 Gathering together information on data that exists or is missing on flows of cross-border workers (fill out two forms per border – inflows AND outflows)

The forms have been filled out by Luxembourg and Wallonia. Those regarding the other countries should be collected by the next TWG meeting.

2.2.2 Describing the current census method with respect to statistical data in each of the following countries: France, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Italy and Spain

Census methods in each of the CSC's member countries will be described and presented on the web platform.

Examples:

In France

Body: Insee. Demographic and Social Statistics Directorate (DSDS)

Periodicity: Census surveys been annual since 2004. Since end-2008, each year the data collection provides results based on the information gathered in the five most recent annual surveys.

In Belgium:

Body: STATBEL

Periodicity: Last census in 2011.

In 2011, there was an important new change in method, with use made of administrative databases and no longer a survey of all of the country's citizens.

In Luxembourg

Body: STATEC

Periodicity: At least every 10 years. Last census in February 2011.

In Spain

Body: INE

Periodicity: Census every 10 years. Last census in 2011.

2.2.3 Providing a census form for each of the following countries: France, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Italy and Spain

The first forms from Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain have been provided. The analysis of these documents will help to identify whether the information gathered (place of residence, place of work) makes it possible to calculate flows of cross-border workers.

2.2.4 Drawing up the list of publications on cross-border observation and the list on cross-border employment (in preparation for the Luxembourg workshop and in order to enter them onto the web platform)

The lists have been drawn up by most of the CSC member countries and presented to the CSC. Unless the CSC decides otherwise, they will be posted on the platform on observation's website by the time of the next TWG meeting.

2.2.5 Drawing on the "cross-border obstacles" table to present an example of an obstacle on a border

Only Luxembourg has so far provided a list of obstacles. The other members of the TWG will be chased up individually before the next meeting.

2.3 UMS RIATE: presentation of the feasibility study for a cross-border database and presentation of the contents of the study on a typology of cross-border territories in Europe

2.3.1 Feasibility study for permanent observation of cross-border territories

The study's objective

An objective and scientific comparison of cross-border territories

Two essential aspects

- The institutional aspect: ensuring the permanent nature of the database: deepening cooperation between players (national statistical institutes, national geographical institutes, local players), ensuring that adequate financial and human resources are in place (political, legal and financial aspects)
- The methodological and technical aspect: ensuring the harmonisation of data: semantic, geographical and periodicity

Six summary information sheets produced

- Aims of the observatory: who or what is it for?
- Selection of variables, of the geographical level of data collection and of the base map
- Data and metadata model
- Data and metadata collection and base map
- Semantic, geographical and periodicity harmonisation
- Dissemination, day-to-day management and updating of the database

To access the report (in French): <http://www.ums-riate.fr/Webriate/?portfolio=etude-de-faisabilite-pour-la-creation-dun-observatoire-du-transfrontalier>

2.3.2 A socio-economic typology of the European Union's border regions (2000-2012) + UMS RIATE's 2015-2016 study for the CGET

Aims and objectives

A typology of the European Union's internal border regions to...

- ... improve the knowledge and evolution of complex territories
- ... adapt cross-border cooperation tools to territories' profiles

What indicators of cross-border integration to use?

- (1) Magnitude and evolution of **differentials** between border regions (gradients and territorial discontinuities)
- (2) Intensity and evolution of cross-border **relations**

Conceptual and methodological difficulties

- Factors that stem from **multiple dimensions** (border permeability, economic disparities, linguistic differences, degrees of political cooperation, etc.) operating at different levels
- **No simple cause and effect relationship** between opening-up of borders, changes in disparities and increases in exchanges
- **Access to data** (stocks and flows)

Choices made for the study "Typology of European border regions" (CGET, Territorial Observatory, 2015-2016)

- Bring out different types of European border contexts and their development since 2000 based on a small number of economic and social indicators available for a broad geographical range and timeframe
- Area covered by the study: EU-28 + 4 other countries
- Level of analysis: NUTS 2/3
- Which border regions? Two possibilities can be envisaged:
 - Normative criteria = *a priori* the NUTS 2/3 adjoining any international border within the area of study
 - Institutional criterion = regions of cross-border cooperation (issue of maritime borders to be resolved)
- Data:
 - on economic and social differentials: time series (2000-2012)
 - available in the ESPON regional database

Decisions taken

- The members of the CSC agree to contribute to the organisation of the session devoted to cross-border observation at the workshop on cross-border obstacles that will take place on 19 May 2015 in Luxembourg
- The members of the CSC agree to the creation of a webpage devoted to news about and content of cross-border observation
- The members of the CSC validate the lists of publications on observation and cross-border employment (drawn up by the members of the TWG) with a view to their being posted on the webpage
- The members of the CSC are in favour of the proposal to coordinate more closely with INTERACT
- The members of the CSC are considering mounting an ESPON project on the issue of access to cross-border data
- The members of the CSC ask that the TWG member institutions contribute to the different tasks requested with respect to the organisation of the workshop in Luxembourg

Date of the next CSC meeting

The next CSC meeting is due to take place in April 2015 (*date to be decided*)