

5th meeting of the strategic cross-border committee on observation

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Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, Paris

Key points and decisions taken



Premier ministre



Liste des participants

Brigitte BACCAÏNI, CGET

Mélanie CHAROTTE, CGET

Olivier DENERT, MOT

Tom LEEUWESTEIN, Ministry of the Interior and Relationships with the Kingdom (NL)

Marion MAUVOISIN, CGET

Jean PEYRONY, MOT

Jean RUBIO, MOT

Katharina ERDMENGER, Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (DE)

Gilles TOUTIN, CGET

Nathalie VERSCHELDE, European Commission, DG REGIO

Introduction

It has been an extremely fruitful year as can be seen from the number of works produced. Thanks to the regular presence of DG REGIO, the visibility and pertinence of the CSC have been enhanced. The Commissioner for Territorial Equality is convinced of the usefulness of these works and now it is time to address their follow-up.

1. Returning to the workshop of 19 May 2015 in Luxembourg on cross-border obstacles

This workshop organised within the framework of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union has shown the importance of the connection between the CGET and the administrations that are in charge of planning in neighbouring countries. The permanent coordination on issues related to spatial planning between France and its neighbouring countries has been very useful and joint reflection should be conducted on the linking of public policies between France and the bordering countries.

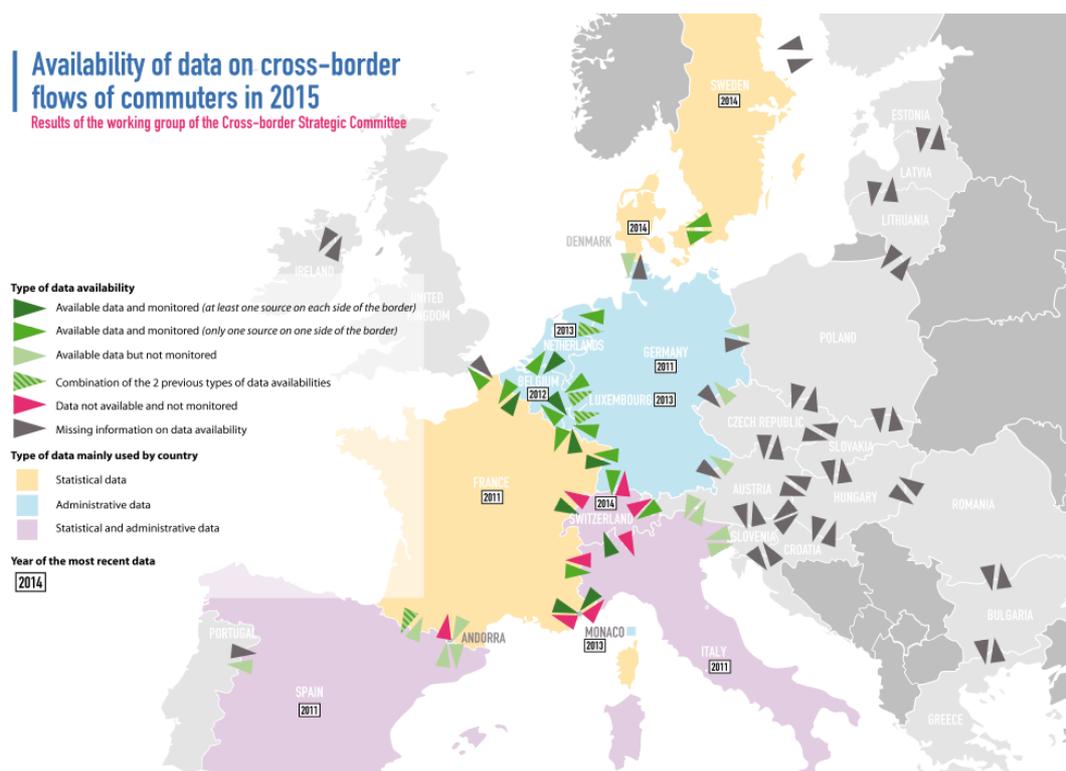
The workshop of 19 May brought together more than 80 people representing European diversity. It succeeded in presenting the works carried out by Luxembourg on the legal obstacles to cross-border cooperation. This work is a political introduction to the reflection on the development of a piece of European legislation. This workshop has helped begin deliberations based on very concrete, locally generated elements. This positive Luxembourg initiative aims to advance the debate at intergovernmental level.

During this seminar the approach and works of the Cross-border Strategic Committee were also presented, notably the work carried out on cross-border flows of commuters and the creation of a webpage devoted to work on cross-border observation and on cross-border employment¹. European witnesses to observation took part in the round table (the CGET, the Öresund region, the German federal level and the CESC for Hungary).

To conclude, it was ascertained that public policies cannot be undertaken effectively without observation, which itself can be a form of overcoming cross-border obstacles. This is why linking the issue of observation and the issue of obstacles was addressed on the political level by Luxembourg.

The “thematic workshop” sequence (planning, transports, environment/ economic development, employment/health, social and medical) in the afternoon confirmed that the nature of the obstacles to be resolved is very diverse. Obstacles can be resolved at the local, state or European level.

2. Présentation de la carte européenne illustrant la disponibilité des données de flux de travailleurs transfrontaliers



Since January 2009, when the last study about cross border commuters was made at the demand of the European Commission, the consolidated number of cross-border worker flows on the European scale has not been updated.

¹ <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/activites-europeennes/comite-strategique-transfrontalier/>

Then, 7 years ago, there were over 800,000 cross-border workers in Europe, over 40% of whom were on French borders. This number has suffered a great increase (notably from France) but it is not possible to provide an exact measurement at European level.

The indicator on the flow of cross-border workers is the most important as it provides a measurement of the level of integration of cross-border territories. In fact, these flows have consequences on different territorial aspects (for example impact on transport infrastructures, on initial training in a country, on the linguistic issue, on the choice of one's main place of residence, on other flows (health, trade, studies, etc.), on civic integration, etc.). The topic of "cross-border employment" is therefore extremely rich in implications and appears as a priority in relation to the other topics.

Since 2009, it became more and more difficult to access to recent data on cross-border commuters in Europe. Some countries have suppressed their national census; some others don't use their census to monitor cross-border flows.

At the European level, EUROSTAT collects data on foreign workers at the NUTS 2 level but they don't complete the information on the country of origin. However, some data exist sometimes at the NUTS 3 level. But to better adapt public policies to cross-border territories, there is a need of very precise and complete data at the local Administrative Unit scale (LAU1).

One of the works of the Cross-border strategic committee was to identify the availability of cross-border flows of commuters on as many European borders as possible. The result of this work is this map. This **map** shows the type of data mainly used by the different countries analyzed: yellow for statistical data; blue for administrative data and purple for both types data (statistical and administrative). On each border, you check the availability of data: a green arrow when data is available; red when data is not available (and dark grey when the information has not been investigated by the cross border strategic committee).

Moreover, on some borders you can use different sources for one direction of the flow (for example: outgoing flows from France to Belgium are monitored by the French statistical institute and by the Belgian Social Security. When at least one source on each side of the border is available, the arrow is dark green. At last, on some border data are collected but no exploited (for example from Spain to French border or Italian-Slovenian border).

3. Point on the next steps of the Luxembourg Presidency

- A declaration² by the ministers responsible for territorial cohesion and urban matters was signed in Riga (Latvia) on 10 June 2015 within the framework of the Latvian Presidency. Its main points shall be developed within the scope of the Luxembourg Presidency.
- A study was conducted by LISER on “Opportunities of cross-border cooperation between small and medium-sized cities in Europe³. It includes data on cross-border flows of commuters. This study was presented on June 30 last during the workshop in Luxembourg on “potential of small and medium-sized cities in polycentric cross-border regions”⁴.
- A meeting of the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP) shall take place on 9 September in Luxembourg. It shall address the issue of obstacles. It would be interesting to present the works on cross-border observation during this meeting.
- 15-16 September, Conference on 25 years of Interreg⁵ in Luxembourg (Esch-sur-Alzette) with a session devoted to the cross-border mobility of commuters.
- During the Open Days from 12 to 15 October in Brussels, Luxembourg shall organise a workshop on cross-border cooperation. DG REGIO shall organise a workshop on cross-border observation⁶ and a workshop on cross-border conurbations. MOT shall organise a workshop on cross-border cooperation and regional integration in the world. Registrations are open: www.opendays.europa.eu
- An informal meeting of ministers responsible for Territorial Cohesion shall take place on 26 and 27 November 2015.

4. Presentation of the German approach to cross-border observation

Germany is launching a project on cross-border observation. A framework law on spatial planning has been adopted, which makes reference to observation. This federal law requires the BBSR to guarantee territorial observation on all federal territory, including cross-border territories. Within the framework of the single

² https://eu2015.lv/images/news/2015_06_10_EUUrbanDeclaration.pdf

³ http://www.dat.public.lu/eu-presidency/Events/Workshop-3/Opportunities-of-cross-border-cooperation-between-small-and-medium-cities-in-Europe-LISER-20150616_.pdf

⁴ <http://www.dat.public.lu/eu-presidency/Events/Workshop-3/>

⁵ <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/fr/agenda/2015/09/15-16-conf-interreg-25-ans/index.html>

⁶ L'UMS Riate, dont les travaux sont commandités par le CGET, et sont suivis par le CST dans lequel ils s'inscrivent, ainsi que la MOT interviendront lors de cet atelier.

market, the Federal State must have the appropriate data to be able to implement planning and employment policies.

The BBSR is thus launching the MORO project (a spatial planning model project) on the observation of cross-border territories. The goal is to establish a database for a permanent observation system. The BBSR has launched a call for projects in order to select 8 pilot regions in Germany that shall work on a cross-border observation system. A consulting firm shall assist each selected region. Different themes shall be identified. The outcome of the call for projects will be published in October. The project shall be completed by late 2017 with a closing conference to be held in Berlin.

Furthermore, the BRIT conference, bringing together researchers specialists in border studies from the whole world, is to take place between 17 and 20 May 2016 in Hamburg (Germany) and Sønderborg (Denmark). The call for papers is open⁷.

5. Presentation of the Dutch instrument dedicated to cross-border observation (preparation of the workshop of 10 September in Brussels)

As far as the Netherlands is concerned, there is a need for more cross-border observation at a European scale and a need to make better use of more comparable data. It is also necessary to find new instruments, besides the EGTC and INTERREG, in order to overcome obstacles to cross-border cooperation. There are a number of instruments, but their use requires involvement at the national level. Legislative obstacles must be resolved at the national level between neighbouring countries.

Workshop on 10 September 2015 in Brussels on cross-border observation

DG REGIO provides funds to finance a project on cross-border observation. The workshop on 10 September is to put forth one or two projects that could be the object of a European pilot project. The issue of the cross-border flows of commuters appears to be a topic of community interest. This would allow for the continuation of the TWG. The preparatory work for this meeting shall be carried out until 15 July together with the Statistics Institute of the Netherlands.

6. How to sustain the CSC/TWG instrument? (European programmes, \Eurostat ?)

The CSC partners shall work together on ESPON priority 2 within the framework of the LU, then NL and SK, Presidencies. A proposal could be made to promote pilot projects on knowledge about cross-border areas. An appeal should be made to European member states to convince them that such a project is well-founded (drawing the connection with the NTCCP meeting).

The ESPON yearly research programme could target these issues of cross-border observation. It will be available end of 2015, early 2016.

⁷ <http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//6/A/0/%7B6A0DFFC5-4431-4B15-9FCE-40E14BF02FF1%7DBRIT2016-CPF3.pdf>

As far as EUROSTAT is concerned, there is a connection between different national statistics institutes. But data must be provided. The holding of the urban audit still relies on the good will of the member states. For DG REGIO, the territorial dimension must be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the impact of European policies. There is a lot more information from NUTS 3. Even if the data is not published, it nevertheless allows for a comparison between two territories. There is a lack of political stimulus by the member states for financing fine-grained data collection.

7. Linking with the DG REGIO study on obstacles to cooperation

DG REGIO is now launching an 18-month-long project on an inventory of obstacles and problems specific to cross-border cooperation. This inventory will help list good practices and solutions to overcome these obstacles. 4 seminars will be organised with experts on cooperation. The first will take place on 9 September in Brussels. The Commissioner for Regional Policy shall submit obstacles to cooperation to public consultation on 20 September in Vienna/Bratislava. The Commission considers this a way to address cross-border cooperation beyond that of the threshold programmes.

8. National Council of Statistical Information – territories committee

The next session of the French CNIS territories committee shall address “cross-border statistics”. The CSC approach should be represented in this session by the sub-directorate for observation of the CGET and MOT. It would be useful to invite the BBSR to present the MORO project.