

microtechnology, are both great and underexploited. Projects to encourage cross-border networking do however exist, particularly in the area of innovation by SMEs (INNOVARC). Thus, between companies, the border remains quite clearly marked.⁴⁰

- ✎ **In Greater Geneva**, cross-border exchanges are more longstanding and diverse, in particular due to the presence of an interdependent metropolitan economy (as a city whose centre is separated from the surrounding area by an international border). These exchanges are, however, hard to quantify, as no precise study has been carried out to record them. Despite this, the border remains strongly present in the people's minds, as observed by the public authorities and consular chambers. This is due to the customs and administrative difficulties involved in crossing the border (payment of VAT, customs duty formalities, a general feeling of administrative complexity on crossing the border).

That said, economic exchanges do take place, often with the decision-making centre in Geneva (internationally, Switzerland has a positive image, it is the centre of the metropolis, etc.) and the place of production located in the French hinterland (more space available for activities requiring larger premises). "Bi-location" (being located in both countries) does exist, but remains marginal.

Going from Switzerland to France, services and construction firms often cross the border in order to accompany their Swiss clients who move to France (where property is more affordable), or to offer identical retail services to those in Switzerland but at lower cost.

- ✎ For example, Migros, the Swiss retailer is established in France with a clientele of French residents as well as Swiss residents who cross the border to shop in France (in 2012 "consumer tourism" represented 1.5 billion Swiss francs for the Cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel, Jura and Vaud⁴¹), or to benefit from access to the EU market (bi-location), or specific facilities (research, university partnerships – often benefiting from French research tax credits).

Going from France to Switzerland, crossing the border is often motivated (particularly in the case of SMEs) by the simplicity and stability of administrative, social and tax rules in Switzerland (simplicity comes far before social security costs as the main motivation⁴²), as opposed to the shifting rules (frequently changing) in France. The smallest businesses are more likely to set up completely in Switzerland, while larger ones retain a degree of bi-location. Finally, the image of Switzerland is more favourable internationally than that of France for a company which, by setting up in Geneva, is still only an hour away from Lyon.



Le Locle, Swiss town of 1422 inhabitants in the Jura Arc region (Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland)

⁴⁰ For more on this subject, see the study for the Trans-Jura Conference carried out by the MOT in 2013, in particular the territorial assessment section: "Stratégie transfrontalière de développement de l'Arc jurassien franco-suisse" (Cross-border development strategy for the French-Swiss Jura Arc region).

⁴¹ GfK study from 2013, commissioned by the Communauté d'intérêt du commerce de détail suisse (Community of Interests of the Swiss Retail Trade). In 2012, "consumer tourism" (purchases made by the Swiss abroad) represented 5% of the total turnover of the Swiss retail trade (96.8 billion francs in 2012).

⁴² 600 business managers were surveyed as part of the EUREX study "Avantages comparés pour l'implantation d'activités économiques en France et en Suisse (Genève/Vaud)" (Comparative advantages for the establishment of economic activities France and Switzerland), op.cit.