

Press release

OPEN DAYS 2014: The MOT stresses the role of national support in overcoming obstacles to cooperation

14 October 2014

The 12th OPEN DAYS, European Week of Regions and Cities, took place from 6 to 9 October 2014 in Brussels, bringing together some 6000 people from all over Europe. There were many workshops on European territorial cooperation.

The MOT had a strong presence throughout the week, in particular by organising a workshop of the Budapest Platform, of which it is a founding member, on the topic "New generation cross-border cooperation: support at national level to overcome obstacles", attended by more than 100 persons.

Jean Peyrony, MOT director general and moderator of the workshop, introduced the proceedings by presenting the Budapest Platform network. Set up in December 2010 by the signature of the Declaration of Budapest, it is a European platform of national structures supporting cross-border cooperation (to date: PT, FR, NL, HU). Its objective is the sharing of experience and the implementation of joint projects at European level; it is open to any country that wishes to join.

The attending representatives of national structures discussed the measures undertaken by States in favour of cross-border cooperation:

Gyula Ocskay, CESC secretary general (Hungary), stressed the importance of integrated territorial tools for supporting cross-border cooperation at the Hungarian borders. He highlighted the necessity of simplifying the tools designed by the European Union, in order to contribute to enhancing the way strategies of the territories are taken into account in the programmes.

Nuno Almeida, general coordinator of the Strategic Cooperation Unit of Norte Portugal, explained the Spanish-Portuguese model for coordination of national strategies at the border. Cross-border relations between Portugal and Spain are enshrined in the respective partnership agreements, implemented jointly by the Autonomies on the Spanish side and the Portuguese state on the Portuguese side in the form of cross-border investment plans.

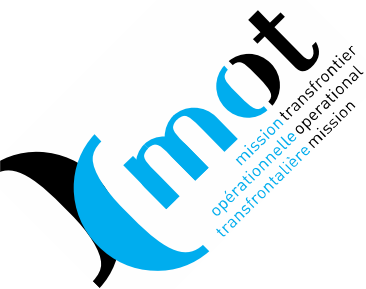
Tom Leeuwenstein, unit head at the Dutch Ministry of the Interior, discussed the necessity of inter-ministerial coordination and of coordination with the neighbouring States on each border in order to overcome the legal obstacles at Dutch borders, for example with regard to employment.

Volker Schmidt-Seiwert from the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development spoke about German federal support for cross-border cooperation in a context of sharing powers with the German Länder. Monitoring of border territories plays a major role in this.

[More info on the OPEN DAYS website](#)
(Workshop Code: 08C01
Date: 8th Oct., 9:00)

[More info on the MOT](#)

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Jean Peyrony, MOT director general, also highlighted the role of the national level in cross-border data monitoring at the French borders. In his opinion, coordinated involvement of the States at each border is indispensable for better understanding of cross-border challenges.

Jean-Claude Sinner, Government counsellor 1st class of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, presented the programme of the presidency of the trio IT-LV-LU, whose objective it is to make a leap forward in quality with regard to territorial cohesion and to urban policy. More specifically, the trio plans the development of a legal instrument for cross-border cooperation by 2020.

Agnès Monfret, head of the European Cross-border Cooperation unit at DG REGIO, encouraged the Member States to coordinate with each other on the basis of the treaty. She praised the “cross-border heroes” who move things forward and stressed the renewed attention paid to cross-border affairs by the European institutions.

In a lively exchange, speakers and participants discussed the different modalities of coordination between the States in the area of cross-border cooperation. The Luxembourg presidency in the second half of 2015, with support from DG REGIO, will be the next step in raising the awareness of the States and strengthening cooperation.

