



Press release presse

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BORDERS FORUM 2022 on 21-22 June in Paris and online *Cross-border territories: resignation or resilience?*

They represent 30% of the European population, 2 million cross-border workers (400,000 for France) and more than 30 years of cooperation through the Interreg programmes, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and bilateral treaties, such as the recent Franco-German Aachen and Franco-Italian Quirinal treaties. **The day-to-day transnational experience of both institutions and citizens makes cross-border territories veritable laboratories with respect to the challenges faced by an evolving Europe.**

On the front line during the Covid-19 pandemic, cross-border territories drew the lessons of the health crisis at first edition of the Borders Forum, in 2020. **At a time when border regions are again faced with a large-scale migration crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine**, it is above and beyond crises that the Transfrontier Operational Mission (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière – MOT), which initiated the event, wishes to recall the many potentialities of cross-border territories and to make the case for their strategic role in public recovery policies.

The second edition of the Borders Forum, co-organised with the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, will take place on 21-22 June 2022 at the Paris Cité Internationale Universitaire within the framework of France's presidency of the EU Council. It will support France's ambitions on the European stage and give expression to the expertise of border regions in the face of the demographic, health, climate, socio-economic and energy challenges – a source of peace since they bring European peoples together. **The programme is online and registration is now open** on the event's website: <http://www.bordersforum.eu>.





TERRITORIES AT THE FOREFRONT OF LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

. Ending the reflex to shut down.

The sudden closure of national borders at the start of the pandemic was a shock for cross-border inhabitants, both in their work and personal lives. It highlighted the economic and functional interdependencies, both of border areas and countries within the EU. *"Despite the considerable efforts undertaken over decades to facilitate cross-border mobility linked to employment and economic development, the Covid-19 crisis triggered an immediate reflex to close borders on the part of governments,"* regrets Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium and President of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

Since then, this shutting down has given way to a search for cohesion across shared living areas, towards a resilient cross-border framework. *"It is vital to durably consolidate European cohesion along national borders and to protect cross-border from the reflex to shut down with its harmful impacts,"* adds Karl-Heinz Lambertz.

. Making teleworking permanent.

Many cross-border workers have also become teleworkers. Because teleworking impacts on many areas, such as mobility, climate or the attractiveness of a territory, *"The important post-Covid issue is to make permanent the measures taken to facilitate teleworking. The MOT has shared the expertise of Greater Geneva in regulating teleworking during the pandemic and will continue to do so,"* underscores Christian Dupessey, the MOT's President, Mayor of Annemasse and President of the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois.





. Creating employment areas based on solidarity.

The pandemic highlighted even more acutely the imbalance in terms of hospital staff regarding wage differentials. *"France cannot continue to provide most of the training of healthcare professionals without being able to benefit from them in its own hospitals because they have been lured to the other side of the border. We cannot carry on as before."* emphasises Christian Dupessey. New equilibria need to be found with respect to training, jobs and economic activity, in order to create cross-border socio-economic areas based on solidarity. *"In the hotel sector, everyone will only benefit from the economic recovery if it allows a rebalancing of the distribution of jobs,"* underscores Christian Dupessey.

TERRITORIES IN THE FOREFRONT OF CONSTRUCTING TOMORROW'S EUROPE

. Europe of the ecological transition.

Given that climate does not stop at national borders, cross-border territories are well placed to tackle the climate challenges and to spearhead the ecological transition in Europe. The Borders Forum 2022 will give a lot of space to the role of these areas in the energy and ecological transition: How can resources be managed on a cross-border basis? How to prepare ourselves to address climate emergencies? What are the cross-border perspectives for the European New Bauhaus aimed at promoting the circular economy and sustainable innovation? Beyond the crises, what alliances can be forged to support the ecological transition?

. Europe of everyday life and cross-border integration

Mobility, education, healthcare, security, culture... public services adapt to the needs of the inhabitants who work, study, receive healthcare... on either side of borders. However, implementation of cross-border projects is still often hampered by differences in legislation and administrative cultures, meaning that elected representatives and players on the ground have to make extra efforts to arrive at the appropriate legal framework.





The Borders Forum is an opportunity to spotlight the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs). Versatile instruments, EGTCs have existed for 15 years and continue to proliferate, with 80 established EGTCs and 25 in the process of being set up, representing more than 1000 territorial authorities and 20 Member States. They involve administrative structures as well as citizens and businesses.

. Europe of solidarity

The MOT is dedicating a roundtable to the issue of migration linked to the millions of people displaced by the war in Ukraine. It will give players from cross-border territories and structures the opportunity to share their experience of managing the border in this specific context and of receiving refugees. The MOT supports the resolution of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which recalls that the process of European and cross-border integration is essential for promoting peace and security and respecting fundamental rights and freedoms.

About the Borders Forum

The Borders Forum is the meeting place for cross-border players. The first edition of the Borders Forum took place entirely online, in November 2020. It brought together more than 1000 participants from over 40 countries and highlighted the specificities of cross-border territories as well as the equilibria to be found on either side of borders..

ORGANISERS AND PARTNERS

Main organiser: Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)

European partners: European Commission, European Committee of the Regions, ESPON programme

Media partners : France Média Monde and France 24

Other partners : Res publica, BIG Network (Borders in Globalization)

Supported by the French National Agency for Territorial Cohesion.





About the MOT

The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) is an association that was set up in 1997 by the French government. Its role is to assist project developers, to promote the interests of cross-border territories and to create networks of players and experiences. It serves as an interface between the different stakeholders to help them find cross-border solutions at the right levels.

www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

BORDERS FORUM, 2nd edition - 20 and 21 June 2022

Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris

Access to the Konrad Adenauer Room (1st floor) from the entrance hall

17 boulevard Jourdan 75014 Paris

www.ciup.fr

Opening hours of the Cité Universitaire: 8:30AM - 4PM

Registration on www.bordersforum.eu

The event will also be broadcasted online.

CONTACTS PRESSE

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