



Dr. Hans-Günther Clev

MOT new director-general



No-one can be forced to cooperate! It takes persuasion by showing the advantages of cooperation, going beyond the good conscience, one might have for contributing to a "good cause". That is a major lesson I have learned from twelve years of work in the field in cross-border cooperation. A principle that also proved its worth during the next five years, when I was in charge of the Rhineland-Palatinate Development Agency and a consensus had to be established between public - and private - sector partners on investment projects: impossible to force anyone to invest. The cross-border cooperation school of diplomacy proved very useful in that context.

Fully understanding the point of view of another, identifying the real needs of the members of an association or determining the shared interests of varied partners in a project necessitates an ability to project one's self into the other's perspective, which requires an open mind. This means much more than a willingness to enter a partnership or an ability to dialogue with others. It is also a condition for implementing joint solutions. For it is only if the cooperation does not produce any losers and if it generates advantages for all that it will last.

Furthermore, a good balance should be found between the relations of trust between partners and the need for transparency, between institutionalized cooperation and the practical work carried out together, or between the need to develop specific skills and the capacity to combine forces in order to work together. It is in this spirit that I invite you to move forward together, with MOT, on the path of cross-border cooperation, a prospect which gladdens me personally.

MOT general assembly in Collioure

The twelfth Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) general assembly was attended by almost 100 participants on 11 June 2009 in Collioure, within the Catalan cross-border area.

Invited by the Conseil Général des Pyrénées-Orientales and the Generalitat de Catalunya, MOT members, network members and partners, and representatives of many cross-border territories in Europe were able to share and discuss the projects and objectives of the MOT and EUROMOT. For the first time the general assembly was chaired by the new MOT president, Michel Delebarre, elected at the previous general assembly in 2008. Local political representatives present included Christian Bourquin, president of the Conseil Général des Pyrénées-Orientales, and Margarida Arizeta-Abad, deputy director of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

Jacques Houbart, MOT director since its establishment in 1997, announced to all the members his retirement with effect from 30 June 2009. A new director-general has been appointed by the Bureau: Dr. Hans-Günther Clev (see interview in the column to the left). The general assembly also elected a new treasurer, Marthe Steffann (Caisse des Dépôts), who succeeds Jean-Marc Garnier.

This 2009 general assembly was also the opportunity to welcome eight new members to the network: the Communauté de Communes Pyrénées-Cerdagne, the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, the Agence d'Urbanisme Nord Lorraine (AGAPE), the Association du Sillon Lorrain, the municipal councils of Thionville and of Villefranche-sur-Mer, Veolia Transport, and lastly the Association for the territorial and urbanzone development of Medgidia (Rumania/Bulgaria border). The MOT network



now has 56 members, including two on borders not involving France.

To guide this opening-up to Europe, the MOT Bureau has decided to set up a working group tasked with examining this development, particularly in terms of services rendered to members. An initial proposal is expected by the end of 2009. This group is open to any member of the network which wishes to participate*.

Within the framework of the services reserved for members, the launching of an extranet, intended to encourage exchanges within the network, was also presented. New resources available on line on the extranet and accessible only to members include documents relating to MOT bodies and the network, a legal collection consisting of practical information sheets and border information sheets, full text of MOT studies, and electronic press reviews on developments in cross-border cooperation.

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Conference in Figueres

In the context of its general assembly, MOT organized a conference on 10 June in Figueres on the topic "Local cross-border cooperation in the future European territorial cohesion policy".

In the first session, three accounts of cross-border sites (the Frankfurt on Oder/Ślubiice conurbation, the Catalan cross-Border area and the Ister-Granum Euroregion) highlighted the importance of relations with the local population in the setting-up of cross-border governance. Innovative experiments, for example in cooperation project funding, were also presented.

A round-table discussion then brought together representatives of the various levels involved in cross-border cooperation. On one hand, local

partners (regional and local levels) emphasized the need to introduce more practical tools, more appropriate for local situations, at national and European levels in order to facilitate project development. For its part, the European Commission underlined the wish for a strong European commitment to local cooperation. And at national level (represented by France and the Netherlands) the emphasis was placed on the usefulness of setting up instruments for observation of cross-border territories to improve communication of needs in the field to the legislators. The example of a "task force" developed in the Netherlands and tasked with systematic communication of cross-border problems to the national level (upstream of decision-making) was cited as an innovative experiment.



Conference on the future of Frankfurt-Słubice 2020

Last 4 to 6 June, as part of the URBACT “EGTC” (“Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations”) project, a conference on the future of Frankfurt-Słubice 2020², involving the local population, was held in Słubice, on the German-Polish border.

Seminar on the European dimension of cross-border cooperation

As part of the series of multi-disciplinary seminars on cross-border cooperation, a day-long seminar on the European dimension of cross-border cooperation was held on 19 June 2009 at the Council of Europe (Strasbourg). The MOT took part in this event, the objective of which was to analyze the contributions of the European Union and the Council of Europe to European territorial cooperation.

Conference on “Practical approaches towards effective European transfrontier cooperation”

This conference, organized on 6 and 7 July 2009 in Maastricht, at the invitation of the Province of Limburg (NL), member of the Euroregio Meuse-Rhine, will be held in the context of the drafting of the third protocol to the Madrid Outline Convention. Michel Delebarre will take part as first vice-president of the Committee of the Regions, MP and mayor of Dunkirk, and president of EUROMOT, as well as Dr. Hans-Günther Clev, MOT director-general. The conclusions of this conference are expected to contribute to the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. *Further information: www.vngi-events.com*

The “Pyrénées ariégeoises”: France’s 46th regional nature park

France’s 46th regional nature park was recently established by a decree published on 28 May 2009. Encompassing 40% of the area of the department (2,500 sq. km, 43,000 inhabitants), it has boundaries with two nature parks in Spain (Alt Pirineu) and in Andorra (Coma Pedrosa). The park’s charter includes a cross-border section, drafted in partnership with MOT.

The URBACT “EGTC” project, with MOT as lead partner, was launched in October 2008. It concerns the governance of cross-border conurbations³ and the sharing of good practices between them. One of the objectives of this project is to produce a local action plan for each of the partner conurbations. This local action plan consists in analyzing the needs and the ambitions of each cross-border conurbation in order to draft practical proposals for improving its system of governance.

This was the context of the conference on the future of Frankfurt-Słubice 2020 - the purpose of which was in fact to contribute to the drawing-up of this local action plan. During a little over two days, 150 participants divided into various working groups (administration, politics, economy, society, culture and education, research and training) imagined the cross-border conurbation as it might be in 2020. Dr. Hans-Günther Clev, the new MOT director-general, and Jean Rubio, MOT mission officer, took part, in particular in the “politics” and “society” working groups.

At the conclusion of this forward-looking exercise, the most highly-appreciated project was the “Viadrina cross-border urban republic”, the main feature of which is to present a highly voluntaristic and integrating vision of the cross-border conurbation, in which the two towns of Frankfurt/Oder and Słubice appear as a single city, with several bilingual schools, integrated public transport (trams), public facilities (cycle tracks), joint social centres and a joint employment agency.

Two major lessons can be drawn from this forward-looking exercise:

- First of all, the very marked determination of the local leaders to involve the civil society in the process of forming the cross-border conurbation. This determination, which was the main driving force behind the organization of the conference, will be incorporated into the local action plan. Moreover, the political leaders of the cross-border conurbation also wish to emphasize the importance of this participative approach at the next URBACT seminar, planned for the end of the year in Lille, which will be devoted to this topic.
- The other important lesson concerns the determination of the inhabitants and the politicians to construct a genuine cross-border identity for the territory: common name, website, joint information centre, joint marketing organization (in the form of an EGTC), and more. In addition, the question of bilingualism stood out as one of the major concerns of the participants.

¹ <http://urbact.eu/egtc>

² For further information about the Frankfurt/Oder-Słubice cross-border conurbation: <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/>

³ The six partner conurbations of “EGTC” project are: Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tourmai, Frankfurt/Oder-Słubice cross-border conurbation, Eurocidade Chaves-Verin, Ister-Granum EGTC, Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, Basle Trinational Eurodistrict.



Press review

- **A white paper on multilevel governance**, Le Courrier des Maires, 19 June
“The Committee [of the Regions] wants to open a debate on the distribution of competences between the EU, states and territories and the best way of involving territorial authorities in the formulation and implementation of Community policies...”
- **Cross Border Cooperation for Dynamic Labour Markets**, Swedish presidency of the European Union, www.se2009.eu
“A conference will be held [on 1 and 2 July in Kiruna (Sweden)] on the theme of how cross-border cooperation between public employment services, companies and education providers creates good conditions for job-seekers to move between countries and for employers to find competent labour...”
- **Lille in 2020 - The vision of politicians and decision-makers**, Le Point, 4 June
“The Lille metropolis dreams of being the capital of a vast French-Belgian conurbation...”
- **Saint-Louis/ETB management committee – 2020 development strategy**, Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace, 12 June
“Meeting in St-Louis under the chairmanship of MP and mayor Jean Ueberschlag, the management committee of the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict (ETB) defined its 2020 development strategy. It also examined the feasibility of setting up a microproject fund...”
- **Border worker flows in Geneva decrease with the crisis**, La Tribune de Genève, 17 June
“The number of border workers active in Switzerland, which has shown strong and constant growth for several years, is experiencing the economic slowdown head-on...”
- **Green light from German MPs for a bridge linking Germany and Denmark**, AFP, 19 June
“German MPs in the Bundestag have given their green light for the construction of a giant road and rail bridge linking Germany and Denmark over the Fehmarn strait in the Baltic Sea...”