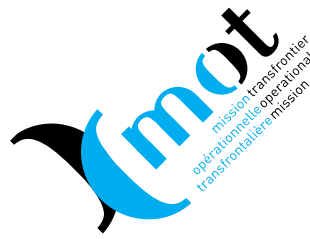


No. 165 / FEBRUARY 2021

CROSS BORDER NEWS



P. 2

Events

The MOT's contribution to the 4D Bill
In Brief

P. 3

Europe news
France news

P. 4

Press review
Publications

Borders Forum: proceedings are online

On 9-10 November 2020, the Borders Forum brought together over 700 participants online, around many prominent figures, including ministers and elected representatives, from local to European level. Held in the middle of the second wave of the pandemic, it was a chance to highlight the impact of the health crisis on cross-border territories, whose challenges in many areas have now been exacerbated. To access the political declarations and the eight roundtable discussions, [click here](#). This 50-page document is in both French and English.



The MOT's first entirely digital general assembly

Cross-border players – always on the front line!

The MOT's network met via video-conference on 4 February, with nearly 100 participants representing virtually all of its members, to discuss its work programme and priorities for the coming year.

The MOT's President, Christian Dupessey,¹ underscored the major impact of the crisis in cross-border territories, which remain on the front line, with however a recent advance that should be highlighted: the recognition of cross-border living areas in the latest border restrictions put in place in France. But cross-border players remain mobilised, and the MOT network will continue to work in 2021 to ensure that their specificity is taken into account. The members stated that this support should be set out with greater clarity in national and European policies: the recovery plan, State-Region plan contracts, recovery and ecological transition contracts, European

programmes, etc.

Several French MPs² stressed the need to reinforce the cross-border dimension in the 4D "decentralisation, deconcentration, differentiation and decomplexification" bill. In this context, the MOT has drafted and today is publishing its contribution to the draft legislation, based on a broad consultation of its network.³

Other European priorities were highlighted, such as the draft regulation on the ECBM, which still lacks support, the Conference on the Future of Europe and preparations for France's presidency of the EU, in which cross-border cooperation should occupy an important place. The MOT will step up to these challenges: 2021 must be the year in which France shows the way in cross-border cooperation!

The members approved the triannual and

annual work programme,⁴ drawn up in close collaboration with them. In addition to the issues already mentioned, they highlighted priority projects and areas such as mobility, major rail corridors, homeworking for cross-border workers, cross-border citizens' dialogue (see the Alliance⁵), Brexit and implementation of the Franco-German Aachen Treaty, etc. An amendment to the association's statutes and the annual budget were also approved.⁴

¹ Mayor of Annemasse and President of the Metropolitan Pole of the French Genevois.

² French MPs present: Christophe Arend, MP from the Moselle Department, Sylvain Waserman, MP from the Bas-Rhin Department, Virginie Duby-Muller, MP from the Haute-Savoie Department.

³ More info

⁴ More info for members in the Members Area on the website (see the PowerPoint presentation, in French). View the triannual programme (in French).

⁵ More info

Events

Webinar “Comparative perspectives on cross-border data”, 4 February 2021, online. Organised by the SIG-GR and GeoRhenia. Bringing together nearly 200 people, it was an opportunity for the MOT, together with the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), to present the European and transnational context with regard to cross-border observation. [More info](#)

Beyond Borders Breakfast Debate #1: “Public service cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic”, 9 February 2021, online. Organised by the Border Focal Point Network and the European Commission (DG REGIO). A series of events launched on the DG REGIO’s Futurium platform. With a contribution from Jean Peyrony. [More info](#)

Call for contributions for the international symposium “Cross-border work in Europe: regional practices and realities”, 5-6 May 2022, in Luxembourg City. Call open until 30 June 2021. [More info](#)

The MOT’s contribution to the 4D Bill

In 2020, the French government put the so-called 4D Bill – on decentralisation, deconcentration, differentiation and decomplexification – on the political agenda. This is good news for cross-border territories.



The idea of increasing decentralisation and deconcentration offers them interesting possibilities given that they border countries that have a higher degree of decentralisation and deconcentration. In addition, affirming the principle of territorial differentiation should enable adaptations on a case-by-case basis for the implementation of specific projects that benefit the inhabitants and environment of the territories concerned, and more generally give greater room for manoeuvre in terms of cross-border cooperation. In order to explore how the 4D Bill

might address the needs of French border territories, and in order to draw up concrete proposals to be included in the law, in late 2020 the MOT launched a process of consultation and mobilisation of its network. This resulted in a contribution by the MOT that was submitted to the Minister for Territorial Cohesion and that set out four major principles: the need to define a “cross-border interest” inspired by the principle of subsidiarity and setting forth in a competence the cross-border actions to be taken on; the need to act at the level of functional areas, including when they are cross-

border ones; the need to draw on standards in neighbouring countries, along the lines of the reflections under way in the Franco-German dialogue and at European level (the ECBM); and the importance of fostering cross-border interministerial coordination at national level. This bill, which is eagerly awaited by many territorial authorities, associations of local authorities and the MOT network, is now under consideration by the French President. If his decision is favourable, the MOT will continue its mobilisation during the legislative process. [Access the MOT’s contribution.](#)

Nova Gorica and Gorizia – two border towns to be a single “European Capital of Culture” in 2025



On 18 December 2020, the border towns of Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy) were designated “European Capital of Culture 2025”. This 100% cross-border candidacy represents a historic milestone for this competition: for the

first time, the candidacy and the joint urban and cultural development project were steered by an EGTC in all of the phases of this long process.

Drawing on its experience of overcoming administrative obstacles between the two countries’ systems, the “EGTC GO” will coordinate the planned cross-border investment, designed to foster a genuinely “borderless” conurbation. The ITI method (integrated territorial investment), tried out successfully within the framework of the 2014-2020 Italy-Slovenia Interreg programme, will be used to achieve this.

[The GO!2025 website - GO!2025’s candidacy](#)

Survey aimed at the inhabitants of the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict

In collaboration with the MOT and the Euro-Institut, the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict is currently working on its Strategy 2030, which will set out its role, its organisation and its themes for the coming years. One of its goals is to involve citizens more, as cross-border cooperation is aimed at one thing above all: making daily life and coexistence the border region easier and more enriching for its inhabitants. That is why the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict has launched an online survey (until 31 March) aimed at understanding citizens’ perception of cross-border cooperation in the territory and their wishes. [More info](#)

Launch of the “Borders” literary prize

On 2 February, the University of Lorraine and the University of the Greater Region, in collaboration with the UniGR-Center for Border Studies, launched the first edition of the “Borders” literary prize, dedicated to the universe of the writer Léonora Miano. An unprecedented academic initiative, this prize links together geography, literature and intercultural communication. It will reward the best novel published in 2020 addressing the theme of borders. The MOT is an associate partner of this initiative. [More info](#)

Restrictions at France's borders: cross-border living areas finally recognised

Since 31 January 2021, anyone entering France, including from other European countries, must be in possession of a negative Covid test obtained within the previous 72 hours. However, this obligation does not apply to the inhabitants of cross-border living areas (for journeys lasting less than 24 hours) or to cross-border workers.

When checked, border area inhabitants must show proof of residence, proof of identity and, where relevant, a certificate from their employer.

This represents a major advance for cross-border cooperation and a recognition of cross-border realities.

European study carried out by the MOT on behalf of DG REGIO

What have been the impacts of border restrictions on citizens?

At a time when we are seeing fresh border closures, the MOT is proposing to take a step back and to analyse the first phase of the crisis and its impact on cross-border living areas.

In July 2020, the MOT was tasked by DG REGIO to conduct an empirical analysis of the effects of the restrictions imposed by governments in the first wave of the pandemic (March-June 2020) on the inhabitants of border regions. In order to carry out this assignment, the contributions received by members of the MOT network were analysed and, with the help of its European partners (CESCI and the AEBR), more than twenty players on

other European borders were questioned. The resulting study, entitled "The effects of COVID-19 induced border closures on cross-border regions", is now available. It comprises two volumes:

- The first comprises four chapters: a mapping of the measures taken on national borders* both during the lockdown phase and the easing of the lockdowns; an analysis of the very concrete impacts of these measures on the daily lives of the inhabitants of border regions in several areas (mobility, employment, public services, economic activity and social, family and cultural activities); an analysis of the

role of cross-border structures and agreements during the pandemic; and lessons to be learned from this crisis that has penalised border territories, and recommendations for the future.

- The second volume consists of a collection of 20 case studies on 20 different borders. Particular attention is given to citizens' acceptance of the restrictions.

Download:

- [Volume 1 – Volume 2](#) (in English)
- [Presentation of the study](#) (in French)

* By EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.



Citizens' participation: the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion and the Banque des Territoires launch the "Territoires en commun" platform

With the "Territoires en commun" ("Territories in Common") platform launched on 19 January, the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion and the Banque des Territoires wish to enable all territorial authorities to have access to technical assistance for cooperation and citizens' participation. The goal is to support territorial authorities and their partners – particularly state partners – in the appropriation of methods enabling the co-design of projects. The new platform aims to be a space for collaboration, sharing experiences, the promotion of good practices and mutual support between players at different levels (elected representatives, technicians, grassroots networks, civil society, etc.). On it can be found players datasheets, experiences datasheets and tools datasheets.

The MOT is inviting its members and all of the players involved in cross-border cooperation to contribute to it in order to highlight cross-border initiatives, projects and issues. The key element to underscore is citizens' participation, which has special significance in the cross-border setting. [More info](#)

The national strategy for protected areas: what account is being taken of cross-border territories?

On 12 January the French government adopted its new national strategy for protected areas up until 2030. The strategy sets out seven goals, with goal 5 mentioning cross-border territories: "Strengthening international cooperation to halt the biodiversity loss": "Combating the loss of biodiversity is a crucial international challenge. In this context, the French network of protected areas constitutes an essential tool to contribute to this effort, especially with respect to both regional and international cooperation, in the form of cross-border and regional cooperation initiatives [...]" [Continued](#)

Survey on cross-border public transport in Europe

The DG REGIO has launched a study to identify all existing cross-border public transport services and related legal obstacles. The contributions to this survey are crucial to ascertain the number of existing services and to gather information on the challenges that need to be overcome.

Please note: the survey refers to the situation prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Deadline: 9 March 2021.

[More info](#)

PRESS REVIEW

▲ Is closing the borders effective against Covid?

Le Figaro, 1 February

"France hasn't gone into another lockdown, but is closing its borders to non-EU countries, except for 'compelling reasons'. Is this effective, particularly against variants? Unlike the Chernobyl cloud, could it stop at the border? This question, which has divided politicians and scientists since the beginning of the epidemic, has its roots in a much wider debate about the utility of borders in general."

▲ AKTO launches the "1001 Frontaliers" app

Presse Agence, 7 February

"AKTO is launching a free smartphone app, "1001 Frontaliers" ("1001 Cross-Border Workers"), to help employees and students, but also employers, understand the codes and specificities in neighbouring countries, and to help cross-border recruitment processes run more smoothly."

▲ Cross-Border Worker Centre: information without borders

Républicain lorrain, 30 January

"Six months ago the Cross-Border Worker Centre opened its doors, in Briey-Haut, near to the town hall. [...] This centre is aimed at all cross-border workers who are seeking information about administrative, social or tax issues..."

▲ Tax on cross-border workers' short-time working in Germany

Républicain lorrain, 3 February

"The three LREM MPs in East Moselle, along with other parliamentarians from border regions, have written to Emmanuel Macron. Their aim is to alert the President [...] to the problem of calculating the German short-time working benefit (KUG) for cross-border workers."

▲ Twenty schools awarded the "Upper Rhine" label

DNA, 26 January

"With this year's motto being 'Together, let's transcend borders', Franco-German Day [...] was celebrated online on Friday 22 January."

▲ Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly

Euractiv, 22 January

"The Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly [met on 22 January] for its fifth ordinary session. Two years after the signature of the Aachen Treaty on cooperation and integration, what are the main advances in terms of Franco-German relations?"

▲ Pandemic: the cross-border territory seriously affected

Tribune Républicaine, 28 January

"The Cross-Border Statistical Observatory and INSEE have published a study looking at the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Franco-Vaud-Geneva territory. And the very least that can be said is that the health crisis has had a major impact."

▲ Homeworking in Monaco

Nice Matin, 10 February

"With an average of over 7,000 vehicles going in both directions between 8am and 9am and nearly 8,000 cars crossing the border between 5pm and 6pm, Monaco is far from seeing widespread homeworking. However, Pierre Dartout, the Minister of State, has vigorously insisted that remote working should become the rule."

▲ Counting on cross-border cooperation in the Roya Valley

Nice Matin, 7 February

"With the valley having endured first Covid and then Storm Alex, the regional councillor Laurence Boetti-Forestier wishes to step up dialogue to ensure better crisis management. 'The crises have shown that the area is very vulnerable without an agreement on local coordination.'"

The MOT's documentary portal: latest publications

- **Guide for France-Luxembourg cross-border workers 2020**
Grand Est Region, January 2021
- **Covid-19 and subsidiary crisis management: Cross-border perspectives in the light of German federalism**
Geopolitical study group, Le Grand Continent, December 2020
- **Borderlands in the Era of COVID-19: Special Issue**
Published by the University of Victoria, Borders in Globalization (BIG) Review, December 2020
- **Cross-border territories and the Covid-19 health crisis: preliminary lessons and approaches for the future**
North Lorraine Urban Planning and Sustainable Development Agency (AGAPE), Exploratoire No. 3, November 2020
- **Cross-border Circulation and Networks in the European Space**
Birte Wassenberg, Fare Cahiers No. 18, L'Harmattan, June 2020 – an article co-authored by Jean Peyrony and Xavier Faure on Cerdanya Hospital



Find all of the publications on cross-border cooperation listed in the MOT's documentary portal – in French.

CROSS-BORDER NEWS

Mission Opérationnelle
Transfrontalière
38, rue des Bourdonnais
75001 Paris France
Tel: +33 (0)1 55 80 56 80
mot@mot.asso.fr

Production: Domitille Ayrat
Photos: All rights reserved.
Page 2 :
Arthimedes/Shutterstock.

Director of publication:
Jean Peyrony

Follow us on twitter:



@reseauMOT

Follow us on LinkedIn:



http://bit.ly/2yK0XDP

To subscribe to the newsletter:

www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/en

