

# Border Orientation Paper

## France-Switzerland



# 1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out key characteristics of the cross-border region between France and Switzerland. It outlines options and orientations for the programming of the next Interreg France-Switzerland programme along that border. It is part of a series of similar papers prepared by DG REGIO for all EU land borders (and borders with Norway and Switzerland).

The objective of this paper is to trigger a constructive dialogue both within the cross-border region and with the European Commission for the 2021-2027 Interreg cross-border cooperation programme France-Switzerland.

The paper is based for a large part on objective information stemming from three studies commissioned by DG REGIO:

- “Border needs study” (“Collecting solid evidence to assess the needs to be addressed by Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes”) conducted in 2016;
- “Easing legal and administrative obstacles in EU border regions” conducted in 2015-16; and
- “Comprehensive analysis of the existing cross-border transport connections and missing links on the internal EU borders” conducted in 2017-18.

In addition, many data sources available at European level were also used to describe certain aspects socio-economic and territorial development. A full list of information sources is provided in annex.

Cross-border cooperation is much broader than Interreg programmes. The objective is to facilitate cross-border cooperation by reducing remaining persisting obstacles to cross-border activities and linkages as outlined in the 2017 Communication on Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions. The instruments available are not only the funds (in particular Interreg and other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programmes which may invest in cooperation), but also European and national legal instruments (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), regional agreements (e.g. in the Benelux and the Nordic countries), bi-lateral agreements, etc.) as well as a number of policies e.g. on labour mobility, transport, health, etc. The Interreg programmes should therefore not only aim to fund projects but should also seek to reduce cross-border obstacles. To do so, the legislative proposal on Interreg foresees that part of the budget is dedicated to cross-border governance (including capacity building and contribution to the macro-regional/sea-basin strategies).

That is why this paper goes beyond the traditional activities of Interreg programmes (funding projects) and also covers governance issues (reducing cross-border obstacles). On this, the roles of the programmes are: (a) to initiate the work on the obstacles (e.g. the members of the Monitoring Committee could contact the relevant public authorities and stakeholders); (b) to facilitate the work (by funding working groups as well as possible studies and pilot projects); and (c) to contribute to this work (providing input from the wide knowledge gained in past programming periods). Whilst the budget is limited, the impact can be important as the actions concerned will have a limited cost (meetings, studies, pilot projects, etc.) but structural effects.

## 2. ANALYSIS OF THE BORDER AREA

- The population of the border area between France and Switzerland is 5.6 million overall, with 3.2 million in the Swiss border regions and 2.4 million in the French border regions (based on the geography of the 2014-2020 France-Switzerland programme). All these regions had a population growth between 2007-2017, especially the Lemanic Basin with an increase of 16% (to be compared to the EU average of 3%). In terms of migration, the net flow is close to zero with some regions which had net emigration (Doubs, Jura (FR) and Belfort) and all other regions which had net immigration.
- The population density of the Franco-Swiss border area is very high in comparison with the EU average (almost 3 times the EU average), especially in Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel and Belfort (whilst in Valais and Jura (FR) it is about half the EU average).
- The percentage of residents born in the EU but outside the host country is below average in the French regions (i.e. below 4.3%) and significantly higher on the Swiss side (e.g. in the Lemanic Basin, the figure is 5 times the EU average).
- There are 11 metropolitan areas within this cross-border region (which is broader than the France-Switzerland programme area): Basel, Mulhouse, Belfort, Montbéliard, Biel, Bern, Besançon, Geneva, Lausanne, Annemasse and Annecy.
- The Franco-Swiss border has three very important characteristics: (1) it is a cooperation with a non-EU country (Switzerland); (2) it is a bilateral cooperation which means that all the activities concern partners and territories of the two countries (contrary to Upper Rhine or Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein where cooperation can happen without Switzerland); and (3) it is a cooperation which involves two levels of governance on each side: départements (on the French side) and cantons (on the Swiss side) as well as two French regions and the Swiss federal level.
- The cultural barriers between the French and Swiss sides are limited as there is little language barriers (most speak French) and a good level of trust. However, the Border Needs study show that cultural differences are seen as a problem for cooperation by 42% of the persons who were surveyed on the Swiss side and by 31% of those of the French side.
- This border area has many cross-border flows such as people (workers, tourists, etc.), goods (food, material, transit transport, etc.), services and also natural flows such as the Rhône river. This is especially the case of workers as 170,000 are crossing the border everyday, almost exclusively from France to Switzerland (it is the highest commuting flow of all the French borders). This has many consequences in terms of mobility, urban development, housing, employment, health, economic development, spatial planning, etc.. Hence, this is a key element of the cross-border cooperation on the Franco-Swiss border. To manage this imbalance, a system of financial compensation has been established.
- There are significant differences in terms of GDP *per capita*. In Switzerland, it is about 2.5 times the EU average whilst Rhône-Alpes is 3% above the EU average and Franche-Comté 17% below the EU average.

- The Franco-Swiss border has several cross-border public services (in terms of numbers it is on the EU average). This is quite an achievement as this border is with a non-EU country.
- The France-Switzerland border is one of the oldest structured cooperation areas in the EU with several cross-border political organisations such as the ‘Conférence transjurassienne’, the ‘Grand Genève’, the ‘Conseil du Léman’ and the ‘Comité Régional Franco-genevois’. In addition, there are several bilateral Treaties and several Agreements between Switzerland and the EU.
- The France-Switzerland Interreg programme was amongst the best functioning ones: there is a real willingness to cooperate and this has led to very good projects. In 2014-2020, the programme focused on the following: research and innovation, natural and cultural assets, cross-border mobility, employment (especially commuters).
- This analysis – and the subsequent orientations – focus on key elements which will have a visible improvement in the daily lives of citizens and which are feasible. It is not possible to cover all the issues, as it is not possible to solve all the problems. In addition, the France-Switzerland programme should aim for results and hence concentrate on those issues that can be improved. This analysis may also require funding from ERDF mainstream programmes, national sources and private sources.

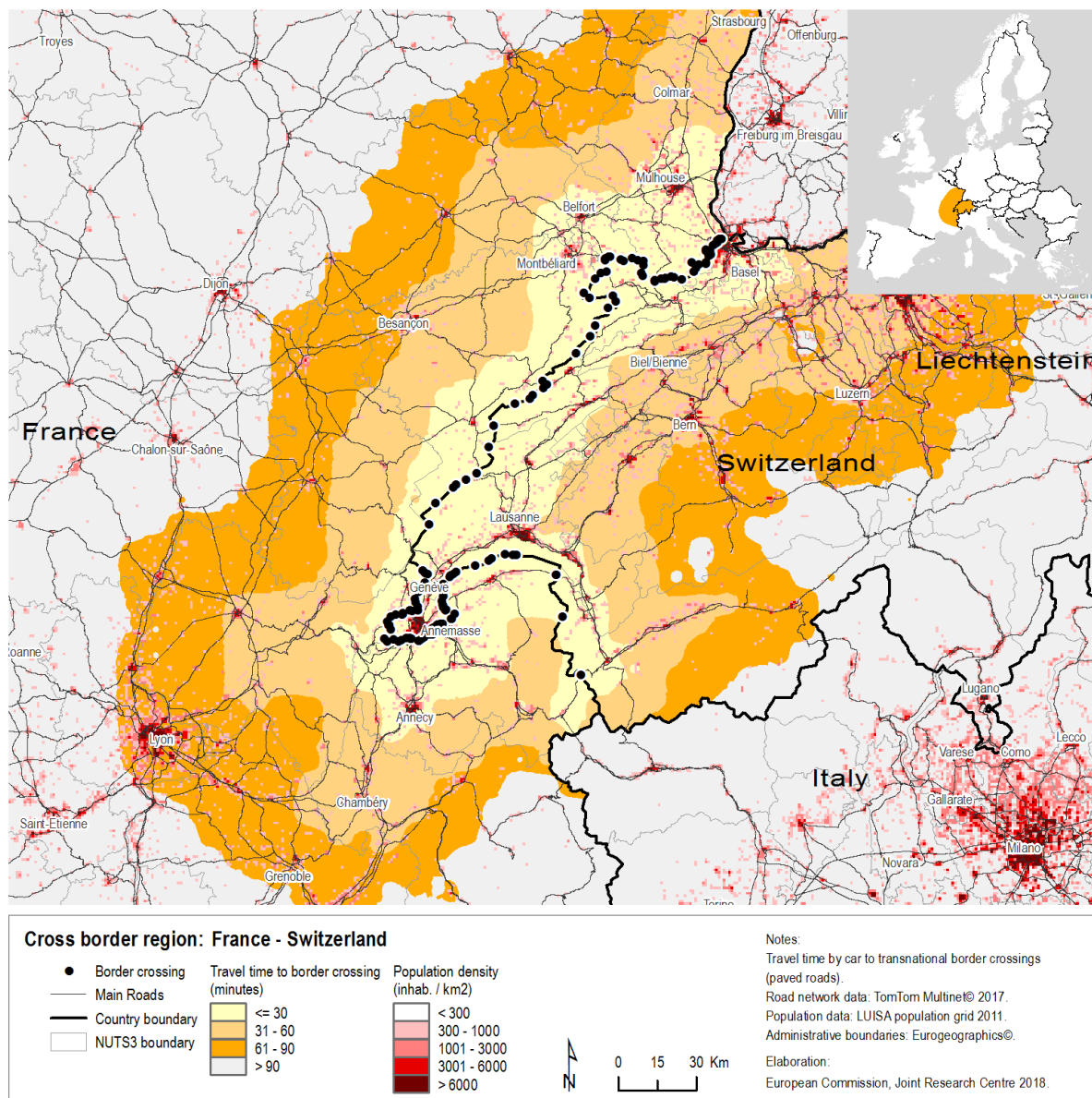
### 3. TERRITORIAL DIMENSION

- *Typology of regions*

1. The Franco-Swiss border is 600 km long (this includes the border in the Upper Rhine region). The territory on the Franco-Swiss border is almost as big as Switzerland as a whole.
2. The Franco-Swiss border has three different parts:
  - Along the Jura (between Basel and Geneva) - called Jurassic Arch -: It is a border of 230 km on mountainous areas. It is specialised in the industry of watches.
  - Around the Léman lake - called Lemanic Basin: It is an urban area with a lot of cross-border flows (commuters, transport, trade, etc.).
  - In the Alpine areas - Haute-Savoie and Valais -: It is a mountainous area with some cities such as Annecy and Sion.
3. The Franco-Swiss border has several cities (i.e. Mulhouse, Basel, Belfort, Montbéliard, Genève, Annemasse, Annecy and Lausanne) and two cross-border urban areas: Geneva-Annemasse and Morteau-La Chaux de Fonds.
4. On the Franco-Swiss border, most citizens live close to cities greater than 50,000 population so that access to public services (mostly located in cities) is rather easy. In addition, there are a number of cross-border agglomerations.
5. In terms of the nature of physical obstacles, the Jura and the Alps are obstacles that are present along most of the border with the exception of the area around the Léman lake.

- *Functional areas*

6. Interreg programmes may cover several overlapping functional areas depending on the topic (e.g. for the access to health facilities it can be larger as patients would be ready to travel further away to a hospital as this is occasional whilst it can be smaller for the access to the place of work as this is daily).
7. Therefore, for some topics, the solution can only be found if partners outside the France-Switzerland programme area are involved (e.g. to reduce the risks of floods, you may need to reintroduce wetlands or dams upstream of a river but outside the programme area). For some other topics, the solution is very local, on an area much smaller than the programme (e.g. to have a cross-border tram line in an urban area which is on both sides of a border; to promote daily commuting for work).
8. The travel time to the border is important to establish which types of cooperation are possible (e.g. as a citizen you might consider working across the border every day if the border is 30 minutes away (but not if it is 90 minutes) or going to a hospital occasionally even if it is 90 minutes away). For the Franco-Swiss border, the situation is as follows:



- This map shows that mobility (by road) is not an obstacle to cross-border cooperation, except in the mountainous area in the Châblais and, to a lesser extent, in Lausanne (as there is the Léman lake, the crossing of which takes time). Indeed, the time to reach the border is only dependant on the distance to the border and there are no areas which are close to the border, but with a long travel time due to natural or infrastructure obstacles (i.e. the travel time to the border of less than 30 minutes is broadly parallel to the border). This can be explained by a good road network and by numerous border crossings.
- The proposal to address the issues through a functional area offers some flexibility in planning and implementation so that linkages with other partners can be easier. The Monitoring Committee shall have the competence to decide on projects outside the programme area, provided they have a clear benefits for the cross-border region.

- *Links with macro-regional strategies*

11. The Franco-Swiss border is part of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (Alpine Strategy).
12. Macro-regional strategies are supported at the highest political levels of the EU, the Member States and the regions concerned and have become an integral part of EU regional policy.
13. The objectives of the France-Switzerland programme and of the Alpine Strategy are similar and given the long experience of the Interreg France-Switzerland programme in the Alpine Region, the Alpine Strategy could benefit from its contribution both in terms of policy and funding.
14. Macro-regional strategies require trust and confidence between partners (Member States, regions, stakeholders, etc.) in order to share a common vision which will bring concrete actions and projects. It is the same for cross-border cooperation. Hence, the two levels of cooperation are very much interlinked by nature.
15. The alignment of cross-border programmes to macro-regional strategies is a ‘win-win’ approach. Clearly, macro-regional strategies will benefit from the experience, the partners and the funds of cross-border programmes. But, cross-border programmes will also benefit from such an alignment: (a) bigger impact (on a wider territory), (b) good project pipeline (project ideas with a political support), (c) better visibility (by political leaders, decision-makers and citizens) and of course (d) an improved situation in the macro-region they are in (the actions of the strategy will also improve the cross-border area). In particular, the contribution to macro-regional strategies does not mean a reduction of the budget available for the France-Switzerland programme as it is clear that every project should also benefit the cross-border functional area.
16. Some of the actions of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region have a lot of potential for cooperation:
  - competitiveness of the alpine region (so that jobs are maintained/ created and enterprises can prosper both in the mountains, the valleys and the plains around the Alps);
  - mobility of citizens and goods (so that they can move efficiently without pollution and that territories are accessible) ;
  - preservation of the alpine landscapes and biodiversity (so that the Alps continue to be beautiful, which is an asset for its inhabitants and tourists);
  - adaptation to climate change (so that the impact - which is much quicker than on other parts of the EU - is limited);
  - promotion and use renewable energies (to have local, cheap and clean energy sources).

- **Tourism / cultural heritage**

17. The Franco-Swiss border has many touristic assets (natural - such as the Jura, the Alps, the Léman lake - and cultural heritage - such as several historical cities). Their cross-border added-value could be financed provided it is strategically framed and takes into account the views of citizens and stakeholders.

**ORIENTATIONS:**

- *Design the actions of the 2021-2027 France-Switzerland Interreg programmes based on functional areas - which depend on the issue - rather than on administrative boundaries. Authorities are encouraged to use the different available tools to support functional areas like e.g. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation – EGTCs -, Euroregions, Integrated Territorial Investments, Community Led Local Developments, metropolitan areas, natural parks, etc.*
- *Set out the actions expected to contribute - where relevant - to the Alpine Strategy, provided they also contribute to the specific objectives of the cross-border region. This requires a good and proactive coordination with the Alpine Strategy (i.e. following the developments, being in contact with the National Contact Points, etc.). Different projects could be financed, for example: Joint projects i.e. several programmes fund a single project (e.g. creation of a joint fund for transnational research and innovation); Coordinated projects i.e. several programmes fund several projects which together form a coherent group of projects (e.g. reduction of the discharge of nitrate or phosphate-containing products to reduce eutrophication of a sea-basin); and Single projects i.e. one programme funds one project with an impact on the entire macro-region (e.g. a lock to improve the navigability on a river). In addition, the France-Switzerland cross-border programme may consider one of these mechanisms: Specific selection criteria (e.g. bonus points); Earmarking of a dedicated budget; Specific calls for macro-regional strategies; and Labelling (e.g. ex-post identification of projects that could be replicated).*
- *Consider establishing a strategy for cross-border tourism with a view to implementing it through the programme.*



## 4. GROWTH, COMPETITIVENESS AND CONNECTIVITY

### • *Innovation*

18. The Franco-Swiss border currently shows high levels of performance in terms of innovation. Data shows that framework conditions and capacities for innovation are fulfilled in the Franco-Swiss border.
19. The Global Competitiveness Index 2017-2018 ranked Switzerland as the most competitive economy in the world and France the 22<sup>nd</sup> (10<sup>th</sup> in the EU). The Regional Competitiveness Index gives more details about the reasons for this:
  - Institutions: Whilst the two French regions in this area are slightly above the EU average, Switzerland is the 4<sup>th</sup> best in the world and France the 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - Macroeconomic stability: France is at the average of EU Member States and Switzerland is rated better than all the EU Member States.
  - Infrastructures: Both concerned French regions are well above the EU average (Rhône-Alpes 42% above the average and Franche-Comté 26% above average). Switzerland is the 6<sup>th</sup> in the world (and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Europe).
  - Innovation potential: Both French regions are 15% above the EU average and France is rated 22<sup>nd</sup> in the world and Switzerland 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Overall, Rhône-Alpes is well above the EU average for innovation (the Regional Competitiveness Index is 64 compared to an EU average of 40) and Franche-Comté slightly above (45). Under the Global Competitiveness Index, France is the 17<sup>th</sup> in the world (10<sup>th</sup> in the EU) and Switzerland 1<sup>st</sup>.
20. In terms of research & development intensity (investments compared to the GDP), Rhône-Alpes, France-Comté and Switzerland are slightly above the EU average. The same goes for the share of persons employed in science and technology.
21. The Smart Specialisation Strategy of Franche-Comté focuses on the automotive industry, luxury industry, micro-technologies, food industry, wood industry, energy systems and ICT. It is to be noted that it explicitly indicates that the region should make the most of the ‘border effect’. The Smart Specialisation Strategy of Rhône-Alpes focuses on health, manufacturing processes, energy, transport, ICT and tourism. Whilst there are no Smart Specialisation Strategies as such in Switzerland, there are nevertheless some policy priorities which are set in the New Regional Policy - i.e. industry and tourism - and in the Regional Innovation Systems (RIS). The Franco-Swiss border is mainly concerned by the RIS for Western Switzerland (Jura, Neuchâtel, Fribourg, Genève, Vaud, Bern and Valais) where the focus is on: Life Sciences (BioAlps), ICT (AlpsICT), micro-technologies such as watches (Micronarc) and natural resources (CleantechALPS). Hence, the areas with high potential for cooperation are: micro-technologies, wood industry and ICT.
22. The 2014-2020 France-Switzerland programme, like many others has a priority axis on research and innovation. This is a successful axis which the partners appreciate and may be willing to continue in post-2020. However, in the case of research projects, this should be considered carefully as only projects that really benefit directly the Franco-Swiss

border area and that require cooperation should be funded (e.g. research on a subject which is specific to the Franco-Swiss border, which brings more jobs to the region, which makes SMEs of the regions more competitive, etc.). Research projects which do not have a direct impact on the Franco-Swiss border area are not a priority, especially as they could be funded through Horizon Europe or mainstream ERDF Investment for Jobs and Growth programmes and may be more efficient with partners located outside the Franco-Swiss border.

23. In the Jurassic Arch, the network ‘La communauté du savoir’ has been created in 2016 with 7 universities to promote cross-border innovation.
24. It would therefore seem that further development of cross-border cooperation and integration in respect of innovation offers potential, even if the already high levels of performance mean that there may be diminishing returns in this area (i.e. improvement and development are still possible, but may not be transformative as innovation is already strong).

- *Enterprises*

25. On the French side of the border, 28% of the total employment is in the manufacturing sector (even 34% in Franche-Comté; much higher than the national average at 19%), 13% in retail, 12% in the administration and 12% in the construction sector.
26. There is a differentiated economic development in the Franco-Swiss border, which is assessed as being principally due to different framework conditions between the French and the Swiss sides. This manifests itself in different ways. For example, certain aspects of the French system, such as higher taxes and more restrictive labour legislation, make it difficult for French local authorities to attract businesses, because some foreign companies prefer to invest in the Swiss side of the cross-border area. At the same time, the Swiss legal and administrative framework being different to the one of the EU on some aspects may discourage some entrepreneurs who may prefer to focus their efforts on other EU Member States (such as the neighbouring ones: Germany and Italy), especially as the labour costs are high in Switzerland.
27. There are also several issues relating to specific cross-border challenges between France and Switzerland. Indeed, complex and diverse legal provisions restrict access to the Swiss market for enterprises and self-employed service providers that are located in the neighbouring border areas of France. These issues have a high negative impact on cross border economic integration, adding administrative burden, business uncertainty/ risk and costs to cross-border economic activity. These barriers result from general legal restrictions applying to service providers, including issues such as the specific conditions for application of Swiss minimum wages to posted workers, issues with the recognition of professional qualifications and the impact of employment legislation on cross-border agents and temporary workers providing services in Switzerland. The negative impact of such barriers affects all EU enterprises seeking to do business in Switzerland, but it has a particularly strong effect on businesses in EU border areas for which Switzerland is part of their “natural” market. Although framework agreements at national level were developed to address some of the issues, the conditions for such cross-border business projects remain very fragile and the lack of legal certainty is problematic for developers and authorities.

28. For many enterprises it is still not natural to find suppliers or customers on the other side of the border. For this to happen, cross-border business advisory support would be useful.
29. The Franco-Swiss border has many different enterprises (big, medium and small covering several economic sectors) and this asset would benefit from networking and clustering.

- **Mobility**

30. In terms of connectivity, road links are rather good whilst rail links are average.

31. Road connectivity:

- Road connectivity is rather good with a good density of roads and motorways. However, parts of the areas immediately at, or close to the border have relatively poor access to roads (especially in Doubs (FR), Jura (FR), Haute-Savoie (FR) and Valais (CH)).
- In the Jurassic Arch, there is a platform for car-sharing (co-financed by Interreg IV) focusing on cross-border commuters. It is successful as it involves 130 enterprises for which 25% of the workers are using the service.
- In the Lemanic Basin there is also a platform for car-sharing (co-financed by Interreg IV) focusing on cross-border commuters.

32. Rail connectivity:

- The percentage of the population having access to cross-border rail services is relatively low.
- The cross-border transport study carried out by the Commission identified the following missing link as having most potential benefit and as being currently neglected: the St Maurice (CH) - Evian-les-Bains (FR) route.
- In the Lemanic Basin, the ‘Léman Express’ links 45 stations (on the French and Swiss side) on a line of 230 km located 60 km around Geneva and has a capacity of 50,000 passengers. It is already functioning and will be fully operational in December 2019.
- There is also a tramway between Annemasse (FR) and Geneva (CH). It is an old line that was created in 1883, but dismantled in 1958. Works have started in 2017 and should finish in 2023. The objective is to reduce the number of cars that cross the border in this area (35,000 per day). The total cost is € 87 million.

33. Bike and walking mobility: The “Voie Verte du Grand Genève” is a project to have a path of 37 km (for cyclists and walkers) between Geneva (CH) and Saint-Genis-Pouilly (FR). 21 km will be on the Swiss side and 16 km on the French side. The works have started with a first part of 5 km opened in 2018 (works are scheduled until 2025). The total cost is foreseen at € 5.8 million. It is designed for leisure, but also for the cross-border commuters.

34. As French regions on the Franco-Swiss border are some of the most developed regions in the EU, it is likely that the regional programmes in France will not have funds directly available for transport.
35. However, cross-border transport projects can benefit from Interreg programmes in 3 ways:
- Fund preparatory and coordination work (e.g. studies, networks, meetings, etc.);
  - Use a significant share of the budget to fund 1-2 strategic transport projects;
  - Initiate the transport project (e.g. a feasibility study) to make it become real and credible (“the EU supports it”) so that it can then find its way to additional EU/ national/ private funding (e.g. Connecting Europe Facility).

- *Digital*

36. In terms of digitisation, most information is only available at national level. Therefore, it is not possible to make any informed observations with regard to the situation at the regional level in the border region.
37. At national level, the main trends are:
- France is at the EU average in terms of digitisation.
  - On the availability of digital-based services, France is rated slightly above the EU average on automated services and/ or online services, whereas Switzerland is rated below the EU average. In terms of availability of services online for non-country nationals, France and Switzerland are both broadly at the EU average.
  - France scores slightly above the EU average on the provision of Digital Public Services for Businesses. There is no equivalent data for Switzerland.
  - In terms of e-Health services, France scores low, in relation to the EU average. There is no equivalent data for Switzerland.
38. E-government is one of the priorities of the Commission and should therefore be pursued. In a cross-border region such as the Franco-Swiss border, e-government - and particularly the development of inter-operable systems - can facilitate the daily lives of citizens in their cross-border activities.

## **ORIENTATIONS:**

- *Focus on a limited number of high-priority, more advanced forms of innovation collaboration in very specific areas, rather than on broad ‘generic’ innovation support measures (which are largely in place already). In particular, under the Smart Specialisation Strategies of Rhône-Alpes, Franche-Comté and the innovation strategies of Western Switzerland, there is potential for cooperation on ICT and micro-technologies.*
- *Support research activities provided they show direct benefits to the cross-border area (demand-driven by business and society) or address topics directly relevant to the area.*
- *Promote cross-border networking, cluster development and coordination for the deployment of joint cross-border innovative projects. In particular, the cooperation of enterprises should be encouraged with a special focus on finding complementarities, exchanging knowledge and joining forces in selling their products.*
- *In this context, cross-border cooperation between innovation centres and business incubators should be supported.*
- *Encourage enterprises to benefit from the different systems of France and Switzerland (e.g. employment conditions, administrative procedures, etc.). Indeed, whilst it is difficult for the border regions to change these framework conditions (as they are set at a wider-level), such differences can also represent a potential for businesses.*
- *Facilitate the internationalisation of SMEs, especially to have cross-border suppliers and customers. This could be done through cross-border business advisory support.*
- *Facilitate the planning or implementation of transport investments as well as the coordination of the different transport regulations (ticketing, security, etc.) with the aim to improve the quality and regularity of cross-border rail connections, especially those used by commuters.*
- *Coordinate with the ERDF regional programmes, the national and regional programmes, Connecting Europe Facility as well as private investors to have cross-border transport projects funded under other funding instruments.*
- *Facilitate cooperation between stakeholders (rail authorities, users, investors, public authorities, etc.) in order to progress on the following cross-border rail links: St Maurice (CH) - Evian-les-Bains (FR) route. This includes the funding of preparatory work.*
- *Consider investing in increased digitisation of the Franco-Swiss border, on the basis of a commonly agreed cross-border strategy and action plan. Focus this investment on improving general conditions for joint e-government (as this is a key action arising from the Communication on border obstacles), e-services in education, health care, business support, cultural cooperation that can foster jobs and growth.*

## 5. GREENER, LOW CARBON ECONOMY

- *Energy transition*

39. In terms of renewable energy, there is potential in hydro (especially on the French side), solar and biomass (straw and wood). However, there is little potential for wind.
40. In addition, there is a favourable economic environment for investments in renewable energy as the cost of capital for investments (availability of capital, expected rates of return, interest rates, etc. ) is relatively low in the Franco-Swiss border compared to EU averages. This makes it possible to have investments in renewable energy which are profitable.

- *Circular economy*

41. There is no sufficient data on circular economy at NUTS 3 level. However, France and Switzerland are rather advanced in this field. In particular, the circular economy and eco-innovation concerns are diffusing in the economic and policy landscapes.
42. The existence of the Geneva metropolitan area provides opportunities for cross-border cooperation on resource efficiency.
43. There is a cross-border underground tunnel (2.7 km) to transport wastewater from the French and Swiss side: Galerie de Chouilly (Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière - GLCT).

- *Climate adaptation*

44. The Franco-Swiss border is assessed as having a medium environmental sensitivity to climate change. However, there are potentially risks due to future droughts and also flood risks in the border regions of Haute-Savoie, Ain and Belfort. In addition, the global warming will have an impact in terms of snow in the winter (in the Jura and the Alps), melting of glaciers (in the Alps) and stability of mountains (in the Alps).

- *Risk management*

45. There are still many obstacles affecting joint/ shared emergency services. Indeed, there are different regulations and administrative practices between France and Switzerland as well as competences spread across different levels of government in each country. This failing may lead to losses in efficiency and flexibility in the case of emergencies that have a cross-border relevance.

- *Natural areas and biodiversity*

46. There are many protected spaces and biospheres reserves (including Natura 2000) within the Franco-Swiss border area, including several transboundary sites. There are also many ‘Ramsar’ sites (internationally important wetland site). Overall, the Jura and Alpine parts of the border have many areas of high wilderness quality (based on the Wilderness Quality Index) with a good forest connectivity (so that animals - especially large mammals - can benefit from an unfragmented natural ecosystem). In particular, the European Environmental Agency has identified several important cross-border habitats for the lynx and the wolf.
47. The percentage of classified water bodies having less than good ecological status or potential (i.e. not having ‘good chemical status’) is relatively medium on the Franco-Swiss border.
48. In this field, actions can only have the appropriate impact if they are undertaken across the border (especially regarding biodiversity, soil protection, water resources, protection of natural sites, air quality, green infrastructures). In addition, as these actions require a critical mass, it is useful to implement them on a wider scale.
49. Several areas within the Franco-Swiss border are assessed as having high potential for Green Infrastructure networks, with a relatively high capacity to deliver ecosystem services.
50. The Commission adopted an EU strategy on Green Infrastructure (GI) in 2013 to enhance economic benefits by attracting greater investment in Europe’s natural capital. GIs are strategically planned networks of natural and semi-natural areas with environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. They incorporate green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features. In certain sectors, in particular climate change mitigation and adaptation, green infrastructures approaches can offer complementary or more sustainable alternatives than those provided through conventional civil engineering. As GIs do not know borders and as they require a good planning with many stakeholders, they could be supported through Interreg programmes where appropriate (e.g. cross-border flood plains to prevent flood risks).
51. Several natural areas are managed jointly between the French and Swiss sides, in particular: Espace Mont-Blanc, Parc du Doubs and Parc Naturel Régional Haut-Jura/ Parc Jura Vaudois (for more details see § 7.1, “cross-border political organisations”).
52. In addition, there is the project to establish a cross-border natural park on the Jura. This territory is currently covered by two entities: the ‘Parc du Doubs’ on the Swiss side and the ‘Pays Horloger’ on the French side. It has a lot of potential in terms of natural preservation and tourism.

**ORIENTATIONS:**

- *Develop renewable energies focusing on hydro, solar and biomass (especially from straw and wood) e.g. through small-scale cross-border energy production for biomass (including joint infrastructures). NB: In this case, a thorough assessment of the planned installation would need to be done so as to ensure that all relevant environmental standards are respected, including those related to air quality.*
- *Increase the cooperation on resource efficiency, especially in the Geneva metropolitan area.*
- *Develop cross-border facilities for the joint treatment of waste, especially in the Geneva metropolitan area.*
- *Examine ways to increase the effectiveness of joint emergency services (i.e. how to reduce the obstacles which have been identified).*
- *Map the areas at risk for water quality and supply and those at flood risk (this is probably already done) and work on finding ways to reduce and manage these risks.*
- *Support actions to better use the potential of managing natural resources jointly e.g. through green infrastructures (to reduce fragmentation of natural spaces, increase water quality, etc.). The various protected transboundary spaces and the common border river provide the basis for integration of management services, and developments in these areas.*
- *Continue establishing the cross-border natural park on the Jura.*



## 6. EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND INCLUSION

### • *Employment*

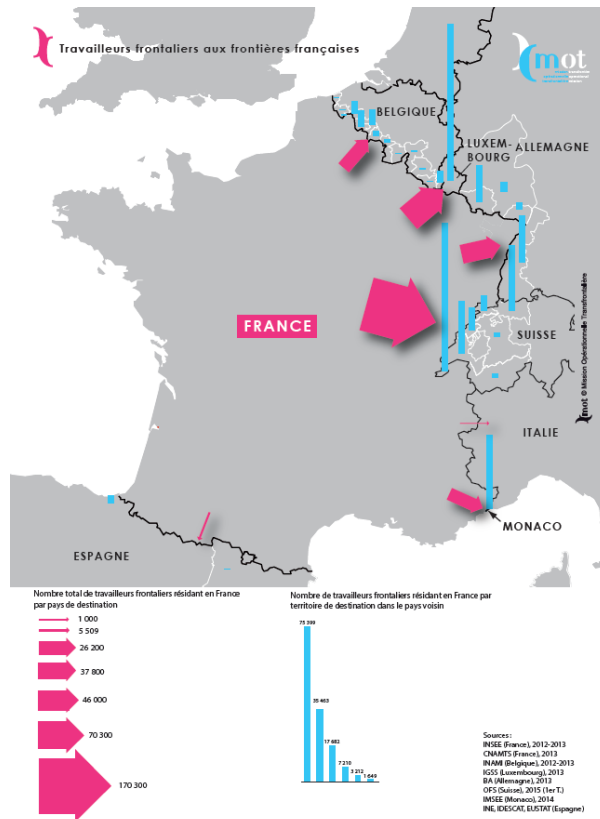
53. The study from the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière ‘Dynamiques de l’emploi transfrontalier en Europe et en France’ identifies the Franco-Swiss border as having significant differences on each side (GDP per inhabitant and unemployment rate) which offer a potential for cooperation. This is particularly the case along the Jura.

54. With regard to labour market factors, the following should be noted:

- Both French regions have unemployment rates that are above the EU average of 6.6% (Rhône-Alpes is at 7.9% and Franche-Comté at 7.9%; Doubs 8%, Jura 6.6%, Ain 6.6%, Haute-Savoie 6.6%, Savoie 6.7%). On the Swiss side, it is at 2.8% nationally but higher in the cantons of Geneva (4.5%), Neuchâtel (4.3%), Vaud (4.1%), Valais (4.1%) and Jura (3.7%).
- On wage indicators, wages and overall labour costs are above the EU average and in Switzerland, they are significantly higher.
- The labour productivity is above the EU average on the French side (10% above in Rhône-Alpes and 1% above in Franche-Comté) and 50% above on the Swiss side.

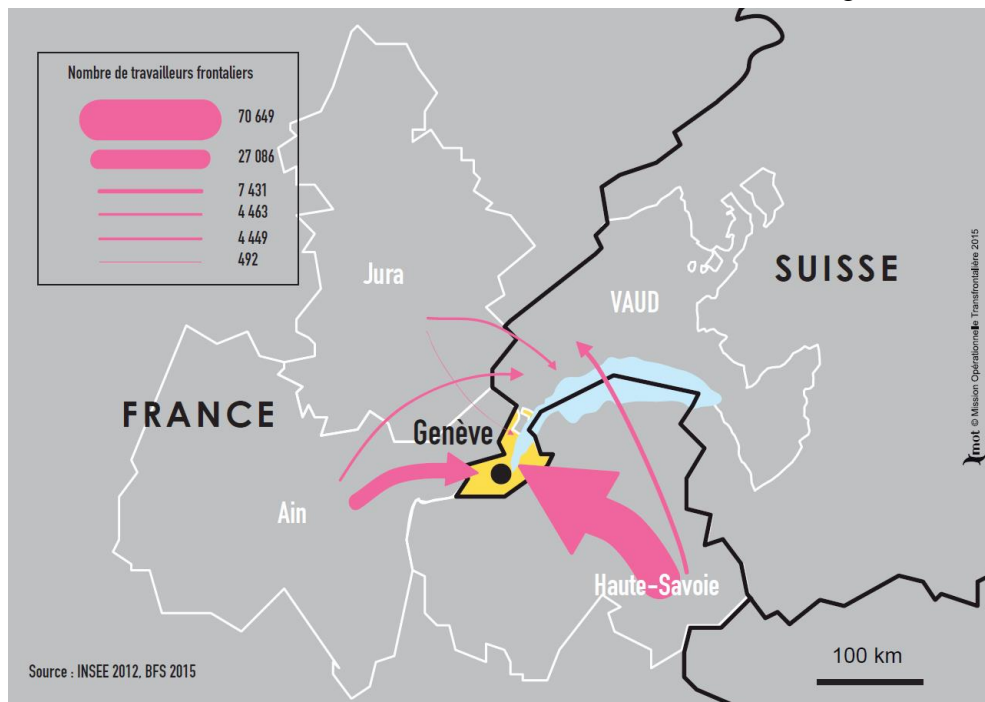
55. In terms of cross-border labour markets the following should be noted:

- There are 170,000 workers commuting every day from France to Switzerland. The biggest number concerns the Geneva agglomeration, then the Lemanic Basin, then the region around Basel and finally the Jura region (which is not the highest in number but can represent a significant share of the local population).
- According to a survey conducted in 2015 on cross-border cooperation (Eurobarometer), 14% of those surveyed from Franco-Swiss border indicated that they have travelled to their cross-border neighbouring country for work or business purposes. The percentage is higher on the French side (17%) than on the Swiss side (11%). This would rank it 11<sup>th</sup> from a list of 54 EU border regions in terms of percentages of population involved.



Source: *Travailleurs français aux frontières françaises*, MOT, 2018

- Switzerland is the country that welcomes the biggest number of cross-border commuters from France (170,000). About 1/3 of these are working in industry.

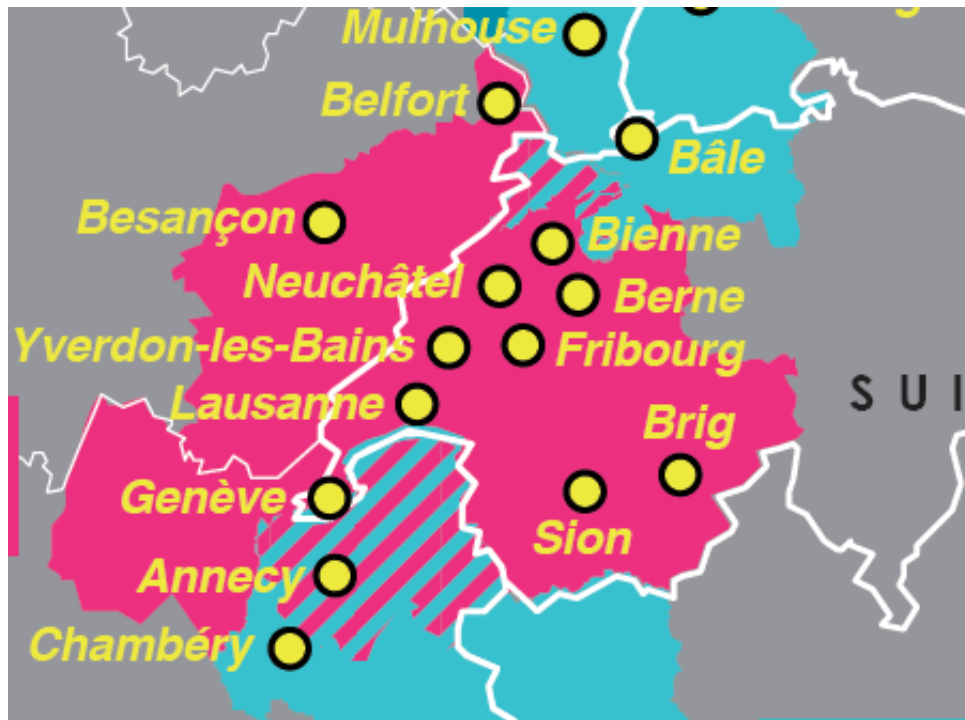


Source: *Les flux domicile-travail sur le Grand Genève*, MOT, 2015

56. This map shows that most workers live in the départements of Ain and Haute-Savoie and work in the Geneva area.
57. The Franco-Swiss border has a strong potential for cross-border labour mobility. Such mobility has many benefits (reduce unemployment, increase activity in enterprises, keep people in the region, etc.). It also has many dimensions; recognition of skills/ qualifications/ diplomas, social security, pensions, taxations, transport, schools/ kindergarten, etc.. To facilitate this multi-faceted policy, several borders have established 'offices' that help workers and enterprises in this regard.
58. In the Franco-Swiss area there are two main such offices:
- The Groupement Transfrontalier Européen (GTE): It has existed for more than 50 years and provides advice to cross-border workers, mainly those living in France and working in Switzerland. The advice is in the following fields: social security, labour law, taxation, employment and daily commuting (many questions are answered through the website). It has 37 employees in 7 offices along the border (on the French side). It is funded by the members who pay a yearly fee (32,500 members).
  - There are no 'EURES points' on the Franco-Swiss border. These points are funded under EaSI (programme for Employment and Social Innovation) and provide advice for people willing to work or working across the border (e.g. job vacancies, training, information on wages, taxes and social benefits, etc.). However, as the Groupement Transfrontalier Européen is well known and covers the entire border, there is no need for an additional organisation.
59. However, the national legislation in Switzerland may restrict the access of workers from France to the Swiss labour market. Indeed under a system called 'préférence indigène light' Swiss employers wishing to recruit must first advertise the vacancy through the *Office Régional de Placement* (ORP) of their canton so that these can propose candidates to the vacancy. It is only after 5 days that the vacancies can be open to candidates outside Switzerland, in particular to French persons living on the other side of the border. This obstacle has a high negative impact on cross-border labour market integration and also on the quality of life of citizens in border areas.

- **Education**

60. The population of the Franco-Swiss border has a high level of education compared to other EU regions.
61. The level of the working population with general attainment at tertiary level education is above the EU average in the Franco-Swiss border. There are some differences, with the Swiss border region and Rhône-Alpes having a slightly higher percentage (38-41%, well above the EU average of 31%) than Franche-Comté (31%).



Source: *Universités et programmes opérationnels Interreg 2014-2020 aux frontières françaises, MOT, 2017*

- **Health**

62. Hindrances to health care cooperation are often caused by differences between national health care systems. Indeed, it was assessed that, even where there are framework agreements in place to facilitate cooperation between health care providers, the obstacles for cooperation are persistent and emerge from national health care planning approaches, from an asymmetric cooperation constellation, from dysfunctions in the mandatory prior authorisation mechanism (dealing with reimbursement of costs) and from procedural problems of health insurances. At the planning level also, public health care does not sufficiently incorporate a cross-border dimension. A further issue is the difference in governance between the countries, creating asymmetric systems.
63. In terms of access to health services, although the large majority of the population in the Franco-Swiss border has good access to hospitals and to doctors, with large numbers of doctors within a short journey time, a small number of isolated areas still have poor access to hospitals and/ or to doctors, especially in Valais (CH) and in the Jura Arch.
64. In such a densely populated area, economies of scale through the pooling of resources or via an integrated specialisation system for health care centres could bring many advantages to both patients and social security systems.

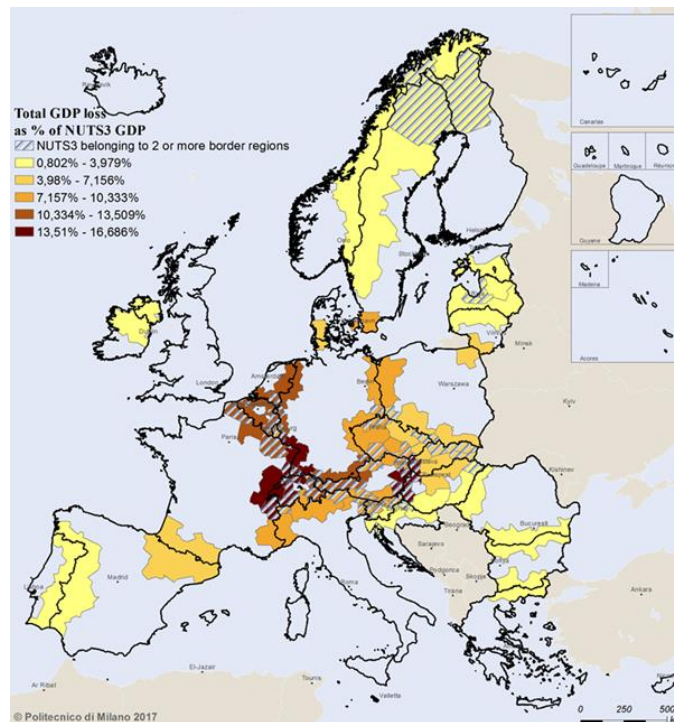
**ORIENTATIONS:**

- *Promote cross-border labour mobility as there is a strong potential given the differences in unemployment rates. In particular, the authorities on the Franco-Swiss border could examine whether it is possible to find local arrangements to reduce the negative impact of the ‘préférence indigène light’ (respecting the rule, but finding practicalities limiting the impact for candidates from the French side of the border).*
- *Support actions to strengthen and deepen cross-border cooperation between educational institutions (both Higher Educational institutions and other relevant institutions such as vocational training providers, certification bodies, etc.) and between relevant professional bodies. These should focus on tackling the specific barriers/ obstacles identified in relation to cross-border cooperation, mobility and integration (including matters such as recognition of Higher Education/ Vocational Education and Training qualifications, cross-border mobility and access to education, language training).*
- *Improve communication on health services available on each side of the borders and on the procedures to have costs reimbursed (including the mandatory prior authorisation).*
- *Provide health services for the isolated areas of the Franco-Swiss border (e.g. through telemedicine).*
- *Pool the health care centres or establish an integrated specialisation system.*

## 7. GOVERNANCE

### **Section 1: Cross-Border Governance in a wider context (and use of the new "Interreg Governance" specific objective)**

65. Cross-border cooperation is not limited to Interreg programmes. It also builds on policies (e.g. cross-border mobility), on legal instruments (e.g. bi-lateral agreements, treaties, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation) and on funding (including but not limited to Interreg).
66. Actions and orientations set out in this section may be supported by using the part of the France-Switzerland programme's budget as proposed in the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) Regulation for improving governance issues.
- *Working on border obstacles and potential*
67. As illustrated in the Commission Communication "Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions", there are many different types of obstacles to cross-border cooperation. There is also scope for greater sharing of services and resources in cross-border regions. Among the obstacles, legal, administrative and institutional differences are a major source of bottlenecks. When it comes to unused potential, the shared use of health care or educational facilities could contribute greatly to improving the quality of life in border regions. As the Interreg programmes are instrumental to effective cross-border cooperation, they should seek to address these particular obstacles and tap into the common potential to facilitate cooperation in this wider context.
68. The geographical area of the Franco-Swiss border is amongst those facing the highest number of border obstacles especially as it is a border between an EU Member State and a non-EU country. It is not that there is less concern with cross-border phenomena (on the contrary), but precisely because the higher the level of cross-border interactions, the higher is the probability to identify new obstacles. The image below illustrates the potential gain in GDP from the removal of obstacles.



## ORIENTATIONS:

*Some very important objective of the 2021-2027 France-Switzerland Interreg programme should be:*

- *To identify precisely key obstacles and untapped potential (e.g. cross-border labour market hindrances, health care, transport connections, use of languages, etc.; the Cross-Border Review should be used as a starting point)*
- *To bring the relevant actors together (e.g. authorities at national/ regional/ local levels, enterprises, users, etc.)*
- *To facilitate the process of finding ways to reduce these obstacles or exploit the potential (e.g. by funding meetings, experts, pilot projects, etc.).*

- *Links with existing strategies*

69. Cross-border cooperation cannot be done in isolation. It has to be framed in the existing strategies (e.g. national, regional or sectoral).

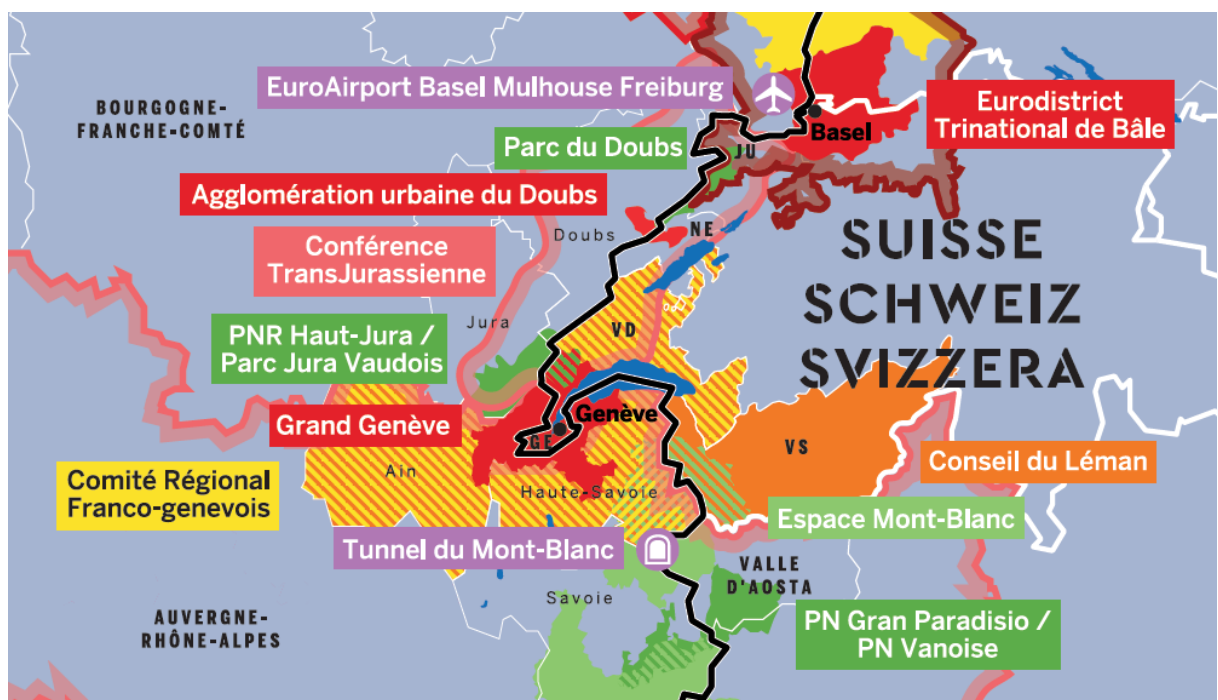
70. Ideally, there should be a dedicated cross-border strategy which is based on reliable cross-border data, which is politically supported and which has undergone a wide consultation with relevant stakeholders. It is a useful exchange forum and a necessary step for sustainable and structural cooperation (i.e. a Monitoring Committee is not sufficient as its focus is on funding and not on designing a development strategy with strong political support).

71. In addition, the France-Switzerland programme is similar to the other cross-border programmes with Switzerland where there are therefore many complementarities (Upper Rhine, Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein and Italy-Switzerland).

## ORIENTATIONS:

- *Embed the France-Switzerland Interreg programme in the existing national, regional or sectoral strategies (e.g. with an analysis on how to translate these in a cross-border context). This requires a coherent overview of all existing strategies (i.e. have a mapping of the strategies affecting the border area). Some strategies to be considered are: Conférence transjurassienne, Grand Genève and Conseil du Léman.*
- *Have regular exchanges with the other cross-border programmes with Switzerland (i.e. Upper Rhine, Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein and Italy-Switzerland)*

### • Cross-border political organisations



Source: *Les territoires transfrontaliers aux frontières françaises, MOT, 2018*

72. The authorities and institutions on the Franco-Swiss border have a strong experience in cooperation. This is reflected in part by the number of cross-border legal bodies operating on this border (mainly as a Groupement Local de Coopération Transfrontalière (GLCT)). Many of these organisations have a legitimacy (established by public authorities), an experience (many exist for years) and expertise (through their past work and staff) that should be put to good use.

73. This includes in particular the following:

- Conférence transjurassienne (also known as Arc Jurassien franco-suisse): this organisation covers the border between Basel and Geneva, along the Jura. It has three urban areas: Besançon, Belfort-Montbéliard and Lausanne. The Conférence transjurassienne has been created in 2001 (but cooperation has been structured since 1985) and aims to promote cooperation between political and administrative institutions on both sides of the border (analyse cross-border obstacles, make



recommendations and prepare Agreements). It has a strategy for 2016-2020 covering: economic development, mobility and exchanges, management of natural resources and citizens-oriented actions. On the French side, it is composed by the region and préfecture of Bourgogne Franche-Comté and on the Swiss side, by Arcjurassien.ch which works on cross-border cooperation issues covering the cantons of Jura, Neuchâtel, Bern and Vaud in coordination with the federal level.

- Grand Genève (Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière - GLCT): the Grand Genève groups 212 municipalities and 1 million inhabitants and has 550,000 jobs. The cooperation around Geneva started in the 1970s and is now a ‘Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière’ (public entity with legal status and budgetary autonomy) and may become a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The national levels of France and Switzerland are associated. It has a territorial strategy for 2016-2030 focusing on mobility, energy, climate adaptation and urban development. One of the key issues is to reconcile the growth of the Geneva metropolitan area with the scarcity of land on the Swiss territory which makes it difficult for many to find housing on the Swiss side (lack of space due to mountains, restrictive laws, cost, etc.). In addition, 80,000 French cross the border everyday to work in Geneva and this is growing (Geneva being the city outside France which attracts the most French workers). All this has many consequences (public infrastructures, traffic-jams, pollution, etc.). To balance this a system of financial compensation has been established in 1973 which foresees a financial contribution by the canton of Geneva to the French départements of Ain and Haute Savoie. Indeed, the people living in the French side and working on the Swiss side pay their income tax in Switzerland - ‘impôt à la source’ - but benefit from the public infrastructures in the French-side (this amount is significant as in 2017 it was € 246 million).
- Conseil du Léman : the objective is to organise the cooperation between territories around the lake Léman. It was created in 1987. It covers 5 main topics : Economy and tourism (which also groups the Chambers of Commerce); Transport and Communication (with very concrete projects such as connectivity to the TGV, better accessibility of the Châblais, etc.); Cross-border population and social issues (working on cross-border labour mobility and associated obstacles such as health insurance); Education and culture (promoting school exchanges and university cooperation); and Environment and spatial planning (e.g. through awareness raising).
- Comité Régional Franco-Genevois: it is the oldest cross-border cooperation body at the Franco-Swiss border as it was created in 1973. Its objective is to design and implement some cross-border projects in the Geneva area. It coordinates its work with the Grand Genève and Conseil du Léman.
- Espace Mont-Blanc: this territory is between the Savoie and Haute-Savoie (FR), Val d’Aoste (IT) and Valais (CH). It is therefore only partly on the Franco-Swiss border. It covers a territory of about 100,000 inhabitants. Its main aim is the protection of the natural areas, mountain agriculture and tourism. It has been created in 1991 is considers becoming a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.
- Agglomération urbaine du Doubs (Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière - GLCT): its objective is the cross-border cooperation between Morteau (FR),

Villers-le-Lac (FR), Fins (FR), Le Locle (CH), La Chaux-de-Fonds, Les Brenets (CH) in the Jurassic Arch. The key feature is that 1/3 of the population on the French side works in Switzerland. Its focus is on mobility issues and on ‘people-to-people’ projects so that the exchanges are not only economic ones (commuters) but also bring the inhabitants together.

- Franco-Swiss chamber of commerce: there is a joint Franco-Swiss Chamber of commerce which provides assistance to enterprises, including on how to settle in Switzerland and in France.

74. One important specificity of the Franco-Swiss border is the cooperation with a non-EU country. This means that legal and administrative rules can be even more different than between two Member States. In particular, Swiss regional policy is not fully aligned to the EU’s, both in terms of priorities, timing and amounts available. Indeed, Switzerland has its own ‘New Regional Policy’ for 2016-2023. This ‘New Regional Policy’ focuses on four priorities: encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, improve the competitiveness of regions, create jobs and reduce regional disparities. It mentions specifically the border regions as a type of territory to be supported. Both the Federal level and the cantons contribute. The total may amount to € 2.2 billion over 4 years. However, some important issues are not covered (environment, education, health, etc.) and can only be funded if the cantons decide to finance related projects without federal co-financing. This makes it more difficult for the Interreg programmes to involve Swiss partners on such policy areas.

75. The France-Switzerland programme and the Monitoring Committee are very much embedded in the political cooperation of the region. In particular, Monitoring Committee members are also partners in ‘everyday business’ and not only for the Interreg programme.

**ORIENTATIONS:**

- *The 2021-2027 France-Switzerland Interreg programme should build on the legitimacy, experience and expertise of these cross-border organisations. Where there is a legal body, it could play a role e.g. by managing a Small Projects Fund or by managing strategic projects (as sole beneficiary, in particular for the EGTCs).*
- *Ensure regular coordination with the Conférence transjurassienne, the Grand Genève and the Conseil du Léman in order to facilitate the funding of those important actions agreed politically (provided they fit with the programme). The France-Switzerland Interreg programme should be seen as one of the tools to deliver the priorities of these organisations.*

- **Links with other Cohesion policy programmes**

76. The proposed Common Provisions Regulation stipulates that “each programme shall set out, for each specific objective the interregional and transnational actions with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State”. Whilst a similar provision was already present in the past, it is now compulsory for the mainstream programmes to describe the possibilities for cooperation for each specific objective.

77. It means that if mainstream programmes do not plan such cooperation actions, they will have to justify why. This may have many benefits for cross-border areas: more ambitious projects (e.g. joint infrastructures), involvement of new players (e.g. the national authorities such as Ministries) and overall more ambitious policies (e.g. spatial planning with associated funds).
78. In particular, there is a strong potential for cooperation with Switzerland in the current programmes of Franche-Comté and Rhône-Alpes regarding the following policy areas: competitiveness, tourism and biodiversity. In addition, the Interregional Operational Programme ‘Rhône-Saône’ covers risk management issues, especially regarding floods. As the Rhône is a river which flows from Switzerland to France, there is some potential for cooperation in this programme.

#### **ORIENTATIONS:**

*The 2021-2027 France Switzerland Interreg programme should establish (or participate in) a strong coordination mechanism with the authorities managing mainstream programmes (i.e. the future programmes covering Rhône-Alpes and Franche-Comté). This coordination implies exchange of information and cooperation and should happen at all stages: planning (e.g. designing complementarities), implementation (e.g. building on synergies) and communication (showing the benefits for the citizens and the region). In particular, this could cover: competitiveness, tourism, biodiversity and risk management.*

- ***Cross-border data***

79. In order to have good public policies (e.g. spatial planning), these should be based on evidence (i.e. data, studies, mapping). Whilst this is generally available at national level, it is not always the case at regional/ local level and even less at cross-border local level. Some of this evidence is particularly important: economic flows, transport flows and trends, labour mobility and mapping of competences, health of the citizens, mapping of important infrastructures and services (such as energy, waste treatment, hospitals, emergency services, universities), mapping of risky areas (to floods, fires, etc.), mapping of natural areas (e.g. Natura 2000, sites under the Ramsar convention of wetlands, etc.) and mapping of the main inclusion difficulties (poverty, marginalised communities, etc.).
80. In the Jurassic Arch, there is the ‘Observatoire statistique transfrontalier de l’Arc Jurassien’ (OSTAJ) working with French and Swiss statistical offices to provide cross-border statistics.
81. In the Lemanic Basin, there is also an ‘Observatoire statistique transfrontalier de l’espace franco-valdo-genevois’ working with French and Swiss statistical offices to provide cross-border statistics (created in 2001). It has been co-funded by Interreg (2002-2006). It has statistics on demographic, economic and social data. In addition, it publishes regularly some studies on this cross-border area.

## Section 2: Governance of the programme

- **Partnership principle**

82. The principle of partnership is a key feature covering the whole programme cycle (including preparation, implementation and participation in monitoring committees), building on the multi-level governance approach and ensuring the involvement of economic, social and environmental partners. Examples of good practice include involving representatives of different interests in the programming process; involving them in programme evaluation or other long-term strategic tasks for instance by setting up temporary working groups; consulting all members on key documents also between meetings. An active involvement of economic, social and environmental partners should be ensured by their participation in key steps. Technical Assistance can be made available to facilitate their full involvement in the process.

- **Role of the monitoring committee**

83. The monitoring committee is the strategic decision-making body of the France-Switzerland programme. In 2021-2027 the monitoring committee will be given a more prominent role in supervising programme performance.

### **ORIENTATIONS:**

*Monitoring committees currently concentrating on project selection should be invited to widen their scope of action and take on a more strategic role. Good practices include having strategic discussions as a standing agenda point, inviting macro-regional strategies' contact points or institutions playing a key role in the border area, organising project visits. Some examples of strategic discussion themes: border obstacles, cross-border data needs, inclusion of SMEs, NGOs and other under-represented beneficiaries or target groups of the programme.*

84. The **composition of the monitoring committee** must be representative of the cross-border area. It must also include partners relevant to France-Switzerland programme objectives (i.e. priority axis), e.g. institutions or organisations representing environment, SMEs, civil society or education.

85. **Project selection** shall take place in the monitoring committee or in steering committee(s) established under the monitoring committee in full respect of the partnership principle. It is crucial that all are involved in the process. Selection criteria and their application must be non-discriminatory and transparent. They should also be clear and they must enable the assessment of whether projects correspond to the objectives and the strategy of the France-Switzerland programme. They are to be consulted with the Commission and communicated to applicants in a clear and systematic way. The cross-border dimension should be compulsory in every selected project. The programme might consider the use of independent expert panels for preparation of project selection. Larger strategic projects/ flagship projects (i.e. designed and implemented by public authorities without a call) may be pre-defined in the programme document or selected via a transparent and agreed procedure. It is up to the France-Switzerland programme partnership to decide on the optimal balance between different types of

projects to reach the overall programme objectives (flagship projects, regular projects, bottom-up or top-down project selection, small projects etc).

86. **Decision-making** must also be non-discriminatory and transparent. The procedure should also be inclusive. Each monitoring (or steering) committee member shall have a vote. Voting by delegation should not be encouraged unless it is transparent and puts weaker partners on an equal footing with "institutional" partners.

- ***Role of the managing authority***

87. The managing authority shall ensure effective implementation of the programme. The managing authority is also at the service of the programme and its monitoring committee. It acts as the programme authority representing *all* countries participating in the programme.

**ORIENTATIONS:**

- *The Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region, which is hosting the France-Switzerland programme authorities, should be represented in the monitoring committee separately from the managing authority (i.e. a different person). The managing authority shall ensure the effectiveness and transparency of the project selection, reporting and monitoring systems.*
- *The use of Interact's Harmonised Implementation Tools is encouraged.*

- ***Role of the Joint Secretariat***

88. The Joint Secretariat (JS) should ideally be the cross-border executive body of the France-Switzerland programme at the service of the managing authority. It should consist of professional and independent staff from the participating countries. The JS should possess representative linguistic competence and relevant border country knowledge. Its procedures should be efficient and transparent. Communication with beneficiaries, potential applicants and the general public should be ensured mainly by the JS. Regional contact points/antennas operating directly under the JS' responsibility may be useful in border areas characterised by large distances and/or difficult accessibility.

- ***Trust-building measures***

89. The ultimate beneficiary of cross-border cooperation should be the citizen. There are mainly two reasons for that: (a) the citizen should be educated to cooperation with the neighbouring region (it should become natural, they should master the language of the neighbour, etc.); and (b) Interreg has a specific added-value in 'erasing' the borders and thereby showing the citizens that a genuine European integration can bring many concrete benefits in their daily lives.

90. Effective cross-border cooperation requires a good level of trust between partners. Trust needs to be built and maintained. This is a long-term investment which aims at fostering cooperation-minded future generations. The France-Switzerland Interreg programmes can make a substantial contribution by providing financial support for trust-building

activities such as linking up schools, sports clubs, cultural organisations, etc. The beneficiaries of such activities are often not equipped to manage full-blown Interreg projects.

**ORIENTATIONS:**

*It is highly advisable to put in place mechanisms to finance smaller projects or people-to-people projects that make a strong contribution to the social and civil cohesion of the cross-border region. This can be done using the new tool proposed by the Commission (the Small Projects Fund) or via specific calls managed by the Managing Authority itself.*

- ***Conflict of interest***

91. Conflict of interest between decision-making bodies and applicants and beneficiaries is to be avoided at any moment, including project generation, project preparation, project selection and project implementation. One way to avoid this is to ensure a proper segregation of duties between institutions and persons.

- ***Communication and publicity***

92. Appropriate measures in line with the communication guidelines need to be taken by all involved authorities and beneficiaries like e.g. identification of communication officer per programme, establishment of a website per programme and use of the term 'Interreg' next to the emblem of EU. Responsible authorities are encouraged to explore the possibilities to receive targeted funding under the Interreg Volunteers Youth Initiative (IVY), which now has a budget available for citizens engagement activities.

- ***Use of Interact tools***

93. The programme France-Switzerland does currently not use eMS for the 2014-2020 but CTE- Synergies which has been developed by France for the Interreg programmes where a French region is Managing Authority.

94. The France-Switzerland programme does not use the Harmonised Implementation Tools (HIT) directly but has considered them when developing its own tools.

- ***Cooperation with the 'cooperation world'***

95. There are many initiatives to support cooperation: the Interreg Volunteer Youth (IVY - "Interreg Volunteer Youth" - is an action to offer the possibility to young EU citizens aged 18-30 to serve as volunteers in cross-border, transnational or interregional programmes and related projects); the B-solutions (pilot project to collect concrete & replicable actions which aim at identifying & testing solutions to cross-border obstacles of a legal and administrative nature in EU internal land borders in 5 fields: employment; health; public transport of passengers; multi-lingualism; institutional cooperation); ESPON (which carries out studies on territorial development), etc..

## Existing sources of information

- Border needs study (Commission, 2016) - [Collecting solid evidence to assess the needs to be addressed by Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes - Regional Policy - European Commission](#)
- Eurobarometer No 422 conducted in 2015 on cross-border cooperation
- EC ex-post evaluation of ETC 2007-2013  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/ec/2007-2013/#11](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/ec/2007-2013/#11)
- European Territorial Cooperation - best practices and innovative measures, European Parliament, 2016 [REPORT on European Territorial Cooperation - best practices and innovative measures - A8-0202/2016](#)
- Quantification of the effects of legal and administrative border obstacles in land border regions (Commission, 2016) - [quantification of the effects of legal and administrative obstacles in land border regions - Bing](#)
- Easing legal and administrative obstacles (Commission, 2017) - [Easing legal and administrative obstacles in EU border regions - Regional Policy - European Commission](#)
- Comprehensive analysis of the existing cross-border transport connections and missing links on the internal EU borders (Commission, 2017-2018) - [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/cb\\_rail\\_connections\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/cb_rail_connections_en.pdf)
- Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière, Frontière Franco-Suisse, <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/ressources/territoires/frontieres/frontieres-en-europe/frontiere-france-suisse/frontiere-france-suisse-4/>
- Strategy of the 2014-2020 programme (ex-ante evaluation, SWOT, priorities, evaluations)
- La nouvelle politique régionale de la Confédération – Promouvoir les régions. Renforcer la Suisse – 2016-2023 ; Confédération Suisse, Secrétariat d’Etat à l’économie SECO, 2017
- “Dynamiques de l’emploi transfrontalier en Europe et en France” (Mission Opérationnelle Territoriale, 2017)
- Taux de chômage localisé au 3<sup>ème</sup> trimestre 2018, INSEE, January 2019
- La situation sur le marché du travail, Secrétariat d’Etat à l’économie, SECO, janvier 2019
- Smart Specialisation Strategies in Rhône-Alpes and Franche-Comté – <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

- DG SANTE's study on cross-border health care – [Building Cooperation in Cross-border Healthcare: new study published! | FUTURIUM | European Commission, 2018](#)
- ESPON's Targeted Analysis on Cross-Border Public Services – [CPS - Cross-border Public Services | ESPON](#)
- ESPON's European Territorial Review, 2017 – <https://www.espon.eu/european-territorial-review>
- EU Strategy for the Alpine Region
- Au-delà des frontières, RegioS, RegioSuisse, N°15, 2018
- Coopération transfrontalière en Europe, RegioSuisse, 2015