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Espaces transfrontaliers

Cross-border areas



The letter of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière

For a Europe closer to the citizens



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In a Europe seeking its bearings and good governance in order to face the challenges generated by globalisation, it is useful to fall back on the fundamental meaning of European construction promoted by its founding fathers: to make Europe an integrated space of prosperity and peace for all its citizens. Europe is still too often perceived as an aggregation of nation-states which has difficulty implementing common policies capable of dealing with today's issues, and meanwhile interferes in a nitpicking way in people's daily lives. It is understandable why for some citizens, when asked, that is not the Europe they want!

Europe must therefore be brought closer to its citizens, and cross-border cooperation is an extraordinary opportunity for local authorities to accomplish this by setting up cross-border territorial projects and providing concrete responses to the needs of the population, facilitating the birth of genuine European citizenship. This is the underlying purpose of my commitment as chairman of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT). Now the states and the European Union must be persuaded to give strong support to this movement in the future. That is what we shall be trying to do at our conference in Lille on 8 and 9 November 2007, to which I invite you today.

The creation of EUROMOT

On 8 November 2007 in Lille, during the European conference "Cross-border territories: day-to-day Europe", the MOT (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière), Eixo Atlantico¹ and the City Twins² network are due to sign a cooperation agreement marking their joint decision to establish a European network of cross-border local authorities: EUROMOT.



Tornio/Haparanda, twin towns belonging to the City Twins network, on the border between Finland and Sweden.

A political message to bear

The cross-border territories, living areas which generate substantial flows every day, are fertile ground for convergence of national policies and apprenticeship in "European citizenship". They are also powerful vectors of integration of internal borders and pacification of the external borders of Europe. In order to encourage their development in an integrated territorial approach, it is important that the states and the European Union reinforce their policies concerning these territories.

EUROMOT

Capitalisation and sharing of practices between local authorities are also fundamental for supporting the territories involved in cross-border cooperation. In this context, the objective of EUROMOT is to form a strong European network to bring the local authorities together and collaborate more effectively

with national and European institutions. Its planned activities include operational assistance for projects, studies, training and research on cross-border cooperation, networking and acting as a political and technical interface from the local level to the European level.

Strategic alliance with AEBR

A strategic alliance will also be signed on 8 November 2007 between the MOT in the perspective of EUROMOT and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). This alliance aims to cover the different geographical scales (local and regional) in order to have more effective influence on national and Community orientations in cross-border cooperation. ■

1. Eixo Atlantico: network of border cities involving northern Portugal and Galicia in Spain.

2. City Twins: network of twin towns involving Germany, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Interreg IIC project).

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