



Group work summary

# INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION



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# Editorial

Thinking about cross-border governance implies to try and understand how to sustain actions within stable relations and how to equip organizations with integrated collective strategies to apply to cross-border territories. But thinking about cross-border governance starts with a lexical consideration. What does "cross-border" mean? The word is apparently simple and universal. What borders are we talking about?

The most obvious borders, "line-frontiers", are those that separate us, physically and politically, and amount to 250 000 km around the world, all with different contexts: though borders have become almost invisible in Europe and were quite open until 2015, others around the world show different kinds of realities, they are symbols of shut downs, such as the 75 borders around the world along which we keep on building walls, while other borders are being built right at Europe's doors as a reply to some global issues (migrations being one of them in this case).

Even in cross-borders areas, borders aren't really lines, they are rather spaces, collective territories, "living areas" – a situation that the pandemic has accentuated since 2020 by emphasizing the existing economic and functional interdependences which became visible

because they were limited. We're used to say the globalization doesn't play the border game, but globalization actually also happens at or near borders. Only through strengthening cross-border territorial cooperation can we indeed answer supranational and global matters such as climate change, rarefying resources, inclusive and sustainable growth, and peace.

European territorial cooperation is a singular case which combines cross-border, transnational and interregional levels. One of the best and most visible examples are the new operational 2021-27 Interreg programs, and their new goals – "Europe closer to citizen" and "Better governance". Besides, some recent work such as the European Territorial Reference Framework (ESPON, 2019) shed lights on various possible scenarios for the 2050 horizon, just like the scenarios put out by Charles Ricq (2006) which focused on cross-border territorial cooperation.

France was always a pioneer on the matter, for many reasons

- First, it is the European country which is the most concerned by cross-border mobility in Europe (500 000+ daily cross-border workers)
- Then, France took advantage of the creation of EGTCs (European Groupings

of Territorial Cooperation, existing since 2006) to use them as instruments for cooperation. France is the country with the most cross-border groupings.

- Starting already in 1997, France equipped itself with an engineering instrument to facilitate cross-border territorial cooperation, called the MOT (Transfrontier Operational Mission)
- France is the country where cross-border local authorities and their urban planning agencies get the most involved with European territorial cooperation (regional operational programs, Interreg programs, etc.)

But the COVID pandemic showed that a lot of work still needs to be done, both in France and in Europe, because territorial cooperation was strongly damaged by borders closing. In this context France only closed its borders in reaction to other neighboring countries closing theirs.

While the 11th Sustainable Development Goal of the UN talks about the ambition to "make cities and human establishments inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", the World Urban Forum of Katowice is a special place to question our future and to interrogate the role of cross-border and interregional territorial

cooperation in France, in Europe and in the world, with the 2050 horizon in mind. All the more so, knowing that:

- The first semester of 2022 is the semester of the French Presidency of the European Union, and it is also when the works of the Convention on the Future of Europe will be published
- The European Committee for the Regions voted a resolution on June 30, by 2050
- Katowice is a land of cross-border cooperation (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia)

In a world composed by "growing interdependencies" facing "functional disconnection" between development realities and administrative jurisdictions, many questions arise.

What territorial cooperation scenario should we envision for the 2050 horizon?

What are the specificities of European borders, in particular borders between France and its European neighbors?

How can these scenarios be embraced and transposed by and in cross-border territories, since these are great interterritoriality laboratories?

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# Introduction

## Methodology preamble: did you say “territory”?

Public policies usually apply to limited territories, whether they target the national scale (souverainism) or the scale of local territories (localism). Hence the importance of interterritoriality and of territorial cooperation, because they can have cross-border dimension. Indeed, institutional territories and actual functional territories will always coexist, and we will never be able to make them match perfectly: there will always be the need to cooperate.

### Territory or space?

The Peace of Westphalia ended religion wars and Hobbes conceptualized the notion of territory, where a State's sovereignty operates. This "westphalian" conception is of course problematic today but switching it for the concept of space doesn't work either. The French word "territoire" is richer, broader than *territory* or *space* in English. Territory understood in the sense of a space delimited by borders is only one meaning among others. Territory, in French, also relates to "terre" (earth), "terrain" (land), "terroir" (local culture), "atterrir" (to land), all of them words used in the daily language and to which we should want to remain close when making public policies, because public policies have to address and include everyone.

In French and in English, the word *space*

("espace" in French) can relate to interstellar space, meaning a geometry word, neutral, isotropic, which philosopher and science anthropologist Bruno Latour invites us to step away from. His idea is to deconstruct the "territory" concept as Hobbes understands it, and to come to the "soil-territory"'; because with climate change now happening, the goal is to conceptualize the Earth not as a globe in space, but as a terrestrial surface, the "critical zone" where we will remain on lockdown, whatever happens.

### On territorial cohesion

In Europe, territorial cohesion is concept that embodies the directions chosen for regional policies in treaties. This concept too originated in France. Durkheim created the concept of "social cohesion" in his philosophy thesis published in 1893, called "The Division of Labour in Society". This work marks the birth of French sociology. Durkheim's vision was already territorial and European: *"The walls that separate the different part of society are disappearing more and more, forcibly. Population fluxes are increasing and happen faster, and passage lines are created for these fluxes to happen: communication channels. Fluxes get sometime active to the point that these passage lines cross each other: they become cities. The barriers that separate people are similar to those that separate*

*the various alveolus of a society, and they disappear in the same ways. A European society is emerging, above European people, in a spontaneous movement, a society which is already getting the idea of itself and is getting organized."*

Europe is a project of integration for which territorial cohesion is key word. This is the meaning of the Convention on the Future of Europe. Such a project doesn't exist for instance between the US, Canada and Mexico (NAFTA); European and American borders are of different kinds.

### "Earth" Europe

The language of Europe is translation (Umberto Eco). Our German partners called their ministry in charge of these matters, the Ministry of Interior and of "Heimat", yet again an untranslatable word but was translated to "territoire" in France and "community" in English (Bruno Latour advocated for "Heimat Europe", "Earth" Europe, Europe of commons).

Behind these vocabulary debates lies the reality of diverging understandings of the world. The English language dominates and act as the vehicle of economic liberalism, defined by "methodological individuals" (*homo oeconomicus*), whereas the French political and sociological school of thought is holistic, drawing from Saint Simon, Comte, Durkheim, Bourdieu, etc.

The question here doesn't only have to do with using different concepts; it has to do with using different visions for public policies – for policy of regional development for instance, choosing between the EU's way (cohesion policy, 7 year-programs) and the Anglo-Saxon way (World bank; project-based approaches). the French Alliance for Cities and Territory (PFVT) will bring a legitimate contribution by defending this "French" vision in the European and global debates of the World Urban Forum.

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# CHALLENGES

## Collective management of resources and of common goods

Since 2020, the health crisis has revealed the economical and functional interdependencies of cross border areas, and it did so by stopping some border fluxes (dependency between a national health system and its cross-border neighbors for instance). The crisis also showed that our collective resources are rare (environmental, human, technological, financial resources).

For months, borders became a great public topic again, also at local levels, because some borders have emerged inside the states: many states including France imposed domestic travel restrictions to their inhabitants. The situation revealed the existence of "productive-residential systems" (Davezies, Tallen-dier) and it showed the absolute need to develop interterritorial codevelopment strategies.

## A matter of cohesion

In a world where interdependencies grow bigger, cohesion between urban, suburban rural areas is crucial to be considered if we want to prevent discrimination, exclusion, social and spatial segregation, and to enable cities to participate to the development of their hinterland, including when that hinterland is cross-border. Remote work is a

symbol of this situation. On the one hand it reduced distances and took down many barriers between urban, suburban and rural areas. On the other hand, it also became the revelator of social inequalities that already existed.

Knowing that the world population is meant to reach 10 billion by 2050, the question of rarefying environmental resources is also urgent, in terms of accessing resources and of distribution. This could hamper the implementation of several of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as ending poverty or fighting hunger. On top of worldwide population growth, the active global population will probably follow an inverted curve, especially in France where the population will become older.

## Cohesion for health, funding, taxation, etc.

The UN is raising concerns about this topic, highlighting the "fiscal pressures that many countries have to undergo in order to build and maintain health systems, pension systems, and social protection systems for elderly." Likewise, on the matter of health, the pandemic accentuated the lack of workforce and most European countries affected by the crisis have had to call for retired health professionals or medicine students to come and help. Lastly, knowing that the crisis will have

a long-lasting impact on our world, especially financially, we will need to question of what funding model to choose. The 2019 "Lambertz" report on "Fair distribution of taxes in trans-frontier areas" dealt with this topic at length, applied to European cross-border areas.

To foster such connections, we need collective frameworks (legislative, financial) to implement development policy – this isn't the case in Europe. This is why we should avoid competitive or "predatorial" strategies and choose instead co-management and co-development strategies to deal with our resources. Territorial cohesion happens through market (economic integration of areas) but also through public policies and public policy transfers (through policies that aren't solely or exclusively territorial). In this regard, borders are far from disappearing. They are still major obstacles. Trans-frontier public services and financial cohesion systems (fiscal or other kinds) are still important points to think about.

What's at the stake here is collective and sustainable resource management, in a world where resources are rarefying. Our capacity to manage them sustainably will rely on sharing knowledge, thanks to common diagnosis done on the state of those resources, and thanks to monitoring their evolution. This process also relies on our capacity to collect tools and data.

## Participatory governance

States and local authorities alike are geographically bound to their administrative borders when drawing their territorial development policy. Borders are

rarely neutral; they create obstacles or opportunities. And while domestic administrative borders already hamper interterritorial cooperation, national borders can add an extra level of constraints which isn't just geographical.

## Conciliating territorial institutions and functional realities

That being said, physical and socio-economic fluxes draw and define functional areas, characterized by interdependences, and these areas go beyond administrative borders, sometimes beyond national borders - for instance in the case of functional urban areas or trans-frontier agglomerations. Public policy can choose to promote a system relying more on an administrative approach, or on a functional approach. There are still a lot of discussions between those who promote an integrative, federative approach, who want to make functional areas fit plain territorial limits, and those who promote more flexible approaches, and the idea of "inter-territoriality" (Vanier 2008, 2015). The idea here isn't to oppose these approaches but to find the right articulation between them.

In the European context, the matter of governance applies to traditional action frameworks, called "territories of power" (type I, "hard", meaning territories of governments: Lands, Regions, local authorities), but it also applies to more flexible, adaptive frameworks, meaning, "territories of projects" (type II, "soft", territories of governance: macro-regions, trans-frontier areas, metropolitan areas, etc.). Lately, the problem of the disconnection between territorial institutions and functional realities has been considered as a central point of



attention in prospective scenarios drawn for the 2050 horizon, established in the context of the ESPON's European territorial reference framework (2019)..

### The question of governance and democracy

The differences between the French and German visions on governance resonate with European debates, despite progresses made lately thanks to the Aachen Treaty (2019). The most visible examples of these differences are discussions on Eurodistricts and on European Groupings of Territorial Cohesion (EGTCs), which the Aachen Treaty encourages to equip with "suitable competences". This proposition seems to open up new perspective opportunities. Being considered as landmark instruments of trans-frontier governance, should EGCTs and other similar cross-border organizations only have missions, or should they enjoy more specific competences (like for instance that of managing public services)?

How to make flexibility strategies a strategy of territories of power, in order to allow institutions with democratic legitimacy to develop agreements or contracts with neighboring territories? How to provide territories of governance with democratic legitimacy, and enable them to use their competence or to directly implement projects at their territorial scale? Such questions resonate even more strongly in the context of cross-border territories. Few cross-border groupings are able for instance to develop frequent and steady contact with citizens or civil society. More importantly, citizens aren't involved in these functional cross-border areas, neither

are they involved with the actions undertaken by these territories nor with their representatives.

### Going beyond national frames

Our German neighbors would like for our trans-frontier organizations to be equipped with real competence, and with cross-border representative elected through universal suffrage. For Germany, indeed, juridical competence and democracy are related – meaning that a "territory of project" is related to a "territory of power". But France has a different take on this. The difficulty to organize multi-level governance was shown by the recent failure of the European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM) regulation, meant to use a systemic and multi-level approach to facilitate solutions against obstacles to cross-border cooperation.

In its recommendation #148, the New Urban Agenda formulates the necessity to "*promote the strengthening of the capacity of national, subnational and local governments [...] in shaping organizational and institutional governance processes, enabling them to participate effectively in decision-making about urban and territorial development.*" *More than that, on the topics cross-border integration, the 2030 territorial Agenda specifies that, all together, "European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, the main programs on cohesion policy in the EU, macro-regional strategies, inter-metropolitan cooperation, functional area governance, cross-border development and trans-frontier legal agreements" represent "sustainable examples of cooperation facilitation between administrative areas beyond the frame of isolated project".*

The question of "participatory governance" relates to several approaches:

- Vertical approach: knowing how to conciliate and to better combine functional and institutional approaches (maybe some models have to be reinvented? Maybe we need to restart and rethink the EGTC machine?)
- Horizontal approach: to include citizens, inhabitants, usage experts to trans-frontier territorial action
- Anticipatory approach: to anticipate and manage crisis and consequences collectively at the scale that's best suited to go beyond national frameworks

### For the EU to be helpful, supportive and trustworthy

30 years ago, European hope was a thing. As the Berlin wall came down and Germany reunited, as the USSR was dismantled and Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia became independent again, the single market and territorial cooperation area that the EU proposed, appeared as solutions to many problems. After joining the EU in 1986, Spain and Portugal started a historical transition as their economies reclaimed dynamism. Going from 15 States in 1995 to 25 States in 2004 confirmed this tendency.

1990 was also the year when the Interreg European programs were created. These programs, qualified as programs of "European territorial cooperation", were created to promote cooperation between European regions and to develop collective solutions, and they supported cooperation beyond borders through to collective challenges and projects, and to thanks to funding from the EU.

### From positivity to doubts

This "honeymoon" however slowly made room for doubt and mistrust after many unfavorable events and decisions happened. The year 2005 was the first bump, with French people and Dutch people refusing to sign the treaty that would have established a constitution for Europe. Fifteen years of crisis have been followed since then (subprimes, Greece, migration waves). For the first time since Schengen, many European borders started being shut down (fully or in parts). Brexit was next, with the United Kingdom leaving the EU, followed then by the health crisis started in 2020 which particularly affected cross-border territories. Many trans-frontier channels have been blocked or are now very strictly controlled, and some border segments are now closed off with fences.

There remains the question of European programs and more specifically of the Interreg programs. These programs were created to facilitate interterritorial cooperation, especially European cross-border cooperation (with these areas concentrating about 30% of the European population and 2 million daily cross-border workers); but according to certain actors involved, these programs have become to burdensome (audit, monitoring, multiples rules, etc.). Some actors even mistrust them. Although this impression needs to be nuanced, it does appear however that partnership-based and financial engineering strategies took over the investments that citizens can directly enjoy and see, and this situation certainly contributed to making Europe more distant and harder to apprehend in terms of the impacts it has on our daily lives.



### The EU remains an innovative territorial "machine" despite it all

Created in 2006, the European Groupings of Territorial Cohesion (EGCTs) are instruments of trans-frontier cooperation (also trans-national and interregional) equipped with juridical personality and made of juridical entities of at least two different states. Although their implementation may seem complicated, they've been very popular in Europe. The upcoming years should push for a change of method, of vision, following the examples of innovative propositions made in 2015 by the Cross-border Review advocating for going beyond the sole scope of Interreg strategies. Since several years now, cross-border territories have been defined as laboratories of daily life Europe, and in this regard, they could play a key role to push for the change of vision we call for. Several projects, initiated lately, could serve as a basis for this evolution.

The Aachen Treaty implemented an innovative multi-level mechanism to lift obstacles that limit trans-frontier cooperation, and to ensure democratic and cross-border control through the creation of a Cross-Border Cooperation Committee. This mechanism is already being replicated on the French-Spanish border and French-Italian border (Quirinal treaty, 2021). It prefigures other structural evolutions to come,

such as brainstorms and propositions being discussed as part of the European Cross-border Mechanism regulation project (ECBM).

### What financial resources do cross-borders territories have?

Even though the 2021-27 European programs set new policy objectives (objective 5 "*Europe closer to citizens*" and ISO 1 "*Better cooperation governance*") that push to better consider cross-border territories, we still need to encourage and support the main actors involved to apprehend and use such programs. We also need to think about how cross-border territories can find their place in the EU's main investment plans, when this point was actually forgotten by the recent recovery plan for Europe (NextGenerationEU, amounting to 800 billion euros). These funds have to be used to compensate difficulties related to periphery situation and to obstacles (3% GDP loss due to cross-border obstacles, Cross-border Review).

Between cooperation and competitiveness, between closing down or opening up borders, the EU is being watched, and faces a lot expectation. Europe as to prove that it can be a positive driving force for its people and for its territories, including for its cross-border territories.





# 2050 SCENARIOS AND PATHWAYS

## A world of balanced (inter)territorial networks

During the three decades that will have preceded 2050, the dominant global society model will have gone from "unreasoned" fluxes to that of a model of "reasoned" fluxes. The transformation will affect all sectors, the main ones being the sectors of cities and territories. In 2050, territorial interdependencies and territorial interrelations that we can call "inter-territoriality" in France (Vanier, 2008) and "territorial cooperation" in Europe, will have found the right balance in most parts of the world. Far from going back to stocks models or to an opposition of global versus local, this differentiated model will correspond to a model of chosen interdependencies.

To make sure that interrelations and territorial networks help bring places and their populations closer together and to make sure that these interrelations and territorial networks limit social and spatial segregation, they will be fully acknowledged as a constitutive part of urban planning public policy, especially at the European level.

## Going from a European urban Agenda to a true European territorial Agenda

To implement the change of paradigm embodied by the new interdependency model wanted for territories in Europe, we need to take different steps:

- Adopting a "European Rural Agenda" by 2023, as proposed by the French Presidency of the EU. This rural agenda would complete urban planning public policy in Europe, which already rely, first, on a European Urban Agenda started in 2015 with the Dutch presidency, and then, of a Territorial Agenda.
- By 2035, defining collective frameworks for urban, rural and territorial policy in Europe. The Territorial Agenda can even, at the same time, become an Interterritorial Agenda and dedicate most of its objectives to creating connections and networks between Urban and Rural Agendas.

## Acknowledging cross-border living areas

In this world made mainly of interrelations, some resources will have been rarefying. To preserve, manage and use those that remain, in the best possible way, member States of the EU will have adopted a differentiated management model for each key resource at the supranational level - especially for food, energy, environment and health.

The 90's were defined by an "open" model in which "obstacle" borders slowly disappeared, thanks to Schengen mainly; the years 2010-20 were however defined by a "closed" model where, following the COVID-19 pandemic, borders were more and more considered as (so-called) protective barriers. Now, in the years 2050, the differentiated model is a model where public policies adapt to real life situations in cross-border areas. This kind of supranational management happens concretely, at the scale of functional territories, and more specifically at the scale of cross border living areas. After being a concept used only by thinkers and territorial specialists, the idea of cross border living areas has become widely acknowledged at the European level thanks to a regulation applied in all member States starting 2040.

## Facilitating access to health systems for cross border inhabitants: the example of health areas

After the 2020 crisis, health was effectively considered as a European priority for supranational political management. "Health areas" are already existing, in Zoast (organized areas to access cross-border health systems), which have proved efficient.

To develop this kind of specific areas meant access health systems within European domestic borders (for instance in places where rules can be very different, such as on the border between France and Luxembourg vs on the border between France and Switzerland), we have to:

- Lift obstacles that limit, slow down or disturb the creation of health areas
- Vote different regulations and harmonize situations between member States: to recognize cross-border health services, recognize cross-border births, acknowledge the need for cross border emergency services (for emergency services to intervene on the other side of their border), need to transport bodies (when someone dies on the other side of the border), to fight pandemics, and need for rules to prevail in cross border living areas.

## Implementing collective management systems of water resources: the examples of catchment areas

Water doesn't know any border. There are 260 cross border rivers around the world, with their area split between at least two countries, and with that area concentrating about two thirds of the surface of all continents and hosting about 2/5 of the world. 15% of the countries rely on more than 50% of water resources belonging to other countries, located upstream. Water access is the source of a lot of cross border conflicts, and pollutions have systematic consequences on territories located downstream. Even though many agreements have been signed throughout centuries between countries sharing rivers to ensure navigation freedom on cross border rivers and to ensure the construction of hydroelectric dams since the

end of the 19th century, there are in fact very few agreements, conventions or treaties to fight pollution, to manage aquifers and, more so, to organize a cohesive management of shared catchment areas.

In Europe, cross border management of water resources is a fundamental topic of cooperation. Since the beginning of the years 2000, the water framework directive has helped concretized a set of directions relating to cross border cooperation on water streams. In France, the idea of "inter-territoriality" was born from this issue of collective water management. It led to the creation of organization in charge of water management in several cities as well as to the creation of water agencies at the scale of catchment areas.

The creation of systems meant to collectively manage green areas, catchment areas and to manage underground water resources in Europe will start with adopting a new framework-directive in 2030 on water management, to push for the creation of many cross border water agencies. This would follow the example set by the Rhin-Meuse cross border water agency, which brings together French, Swiss, Belgian, German, Luxembourgian and Dutch authorities and strengthens preexisting cooperation, like for the Meuse International Commission.

#### **Installing cross border smart electric networks: the example of Smart Border**

Hope remains to make Europe the first climatically neutral continent in the world, in a way that respects the objectives and commitments of the Paris agreement on climate change adopted in 2015 – hence the emergency to implement the European framework for energy and climate by 2030.

In a context of energetic transition, improving the integration of the electricity market is a very important point; so are interconnections between national networks. High voltage electric lines enable interconnections between countries which exchange electricity, but local distribution networks are more likely to stop at the border.

Yet to develop productions means of renewable electricity we have to envision the development of smart electricity distribution networks (smart grids) and envision the creation of cross border networks of regional energy infrastructures, as well as means of production and storage. The thing is, unlike electricity produced by coal-fired plants or nuclear plants, electricity produced with renewable energies is generally produced on the spot, and directly sent to the distribution network that brings it to neighboring households. Cross border territories cooperation at the local scale is therefore a particularly suited strategy to ensure this process.

Smart Border provides a good example. It was set up between Sarre and Lorraine in France (Great East region), created at the beginning of 2020. The goal is to implement of a cross border smart electric network. Aware of the importance of smart networks to optimize energy consumption and to target energy decarbonization,

the EU adapted, during the years 2020, some directives on trans-European energy networks. The idea was to support more projects like Smart Border, which became a real technological window and inspiration to implement the goals of the energetic transition. As a positive side effect of collaborations that happen between people who manage local distribution networks beyond borders, collective strategies promoting e-mobility developed to enable cross border workers to be better able to access recharge points for their vehicles riding on electricity or hydrogen.

The goal for 2050 is to develop and multiply these cross-border smart grids with the support of the EU, so that these grids can help achieve the carbon neutrality collectively, at the scale of the continent.

#### **A democratic and societal cross-border deal as global cross-border strategy**

In 2050, Europe will have witnessed major societal and democratic improvements in the field of cross-border areas, especially cross border living areas. This will have been made possible by ambitious European cross border policy, the Cross Border Deal, adopted between 2030 and 2035.

To make sure that cross border European populations fully sense that they belong to a collective community that goes beyond national limits, and to make sure that they get a sense of belonging to a "shared destiny", the Cross Border deal will have laid the foundations and created the tools to sustain ad support the development of cross border civil societies: knowledge of these people's languages, of their common history, media broadcast, training courses, common debates, councils of cross border development, etc.

#### **Grow awareness at all age and through education about Europe and cross border topics**

To sustain civil society in cross border areas implies to share and spread a common culture – a sort of education at all age that could happen through:

- Common schoolbooks used by all school organizations on both sides of a border, sometimes provides by the EU, in agreement with ministries of education of the involved member States, and dealing with History, with Geography, and with the key characteristics of the cross border territory involved – in complement of a History of Europe
- Trainings targeting adult populations, with MOOC – Massive Open Online Course -, based on the model of the first MOOC on cross border cooperation done in 2021-22
- Local and regional media broadcasting, that would put cross border affairs on daily agendas, following the experimental example of the Léman Bleu channel (French-Swiss border) or of TV7 (French-Spanish border).



## Defining euro-regional circumscriptions with elected representatives

Improving the populations' feeling of belonging to cross border areas cannot happen without pushing for a change of the electoral and democratic framework, and without electing representatives of euro-regional circumscriptions through direct universal suffrage. For this to happen, we need:

- For member States to acknowledge and define what "euro-regional circumscriptions" are in Europe
- To make the decision, during European elections organized in 2039, to advocate for the election of representatives for the European regions.
- To push for change of European regulations, in order to suggest adding have representatives elected through direct universal suffrage also within European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), relying on a territorial basis (cross border agglomerations; cross border euro-regions such as the Greater Region or Nouvelle Aquitaine Euskadi Navarre).

The pre-condition to each one of these steps is, first, to overcome conflicts related to the articulation of European and national laws.



Unsplash / Hermes Rivera

## Focus

### Areas organized to access cross border health services (Zoast in France)

Some border areas between France and Belgium are so close to each other that populations, health institutions and health professionals asked, at the beginning of the years 2000, for the implementation of systems that would simplify administrative and financial processes to access health abroad.

The main objective of these areas was to provide populations living near the border with improved access conditions to health services. To do so, each "Zoast" has to define: the limits of the targeted territory, the health institutions or organizations where patients can be treated, and the administrative and financial modalities to admit patients in these organizations. 7 Zoast were created over 7 years (between 2008

and 2015) along the border between France and Belgium.  
<https://tinyurl.com/4y72m78b>

### The Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region

Created in 1997, the Greater Region is a space of cross-border cooperation that brings together the Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate, the French region Lorraine, the Federation Wallonia-Brussels and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, amounting to more than 11 million inhabitants and more than 250 000 cross border workers.

The Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region is:

- The institutional platform that represents the Greater Region's social partners. Representatives of economic, social and professional organizations are therefore constitutive parts of political brainstorms that takes place at the Greater
- Region's scale.
- It is also the organization that represents and speaks for the Greater Region's employees and employers
- It is the consultation body with socio-economic goals of the Greater Region Summit.

Missions of the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region:

- To tackle issues related to the Greater Region's economic, social, cultural development and to the Region's territorial development by means of recommendations or resolutions. The committee supports social dialogue, relying recommendations and experiences shared and voiced by partner organizations and actors.
- To set up a bi-annual report on the social and economic situation of the Greater Region. This report has to present a synthetic summary of the social and economic situation of the Region and to draw comparisons at the European level.  
<https://tinyurl.com/3pddbka4>



# PROSPECTIVE VISION

## For the EU to be helpful and trustworthy

In 2050, cross border areas are considered to be pilot territories, making for 30% of the European population; they play a key role in favor of territorial cohesion.

The Cross Border Deal, promoting democratic, participatory, organizational and cultural evolutions beyond just the frame of institutions, will have contributed to various the effort of the European Union to transform how European citizens see European projects.

## An integrated cohesion policy, the first budgetary lever of the European Union

Crisis multiplying (financial, health-related, climate-related) and being combined with the lack of flexibility of the EU's treaties and processes, will have led the European Commission to create several instruments to provide ad hoc answers to the various chocs we will have had to go through. This new kind of flexibility within EU processes will have helped lift many obstacles, previously considered to be insurmountable (like mutualization for instance, with the NEXTGEN EU recovery plan); but it will also have resulted, through time and through policies and specific investments tools being added and piled up, to dilute the unity, clarity and power of cohesion policies, for which funding slowly decreased until 2035.

During the 2029-35 mandate, an ambitious restructuration of the framework and management strategies of European structural funds will have happened under the impulsion of the European Parliament, to better facilitate the joint use of national and European money and serve the economic, social and environmental cohesion of European territories. This reform will have proved particularly adapted to the specificities of cross border areas, and it will have impulsed new dynamics in how we manage and use collective resources.

The preexisting principle of this measure will help direct funds to cross border territories, in a more simple and systematic way, relying on new territorial projects. As of 2033, the European Commission will start a new program called "cross border areas of the future", created based on the successes and failures of ITI (integrated territorial investments). This program will be a big scale extension of the French-German MORO, a project started in 2020 to concretely translate the ambitions of the 2019 Aachen Treaty. At the start of the years 2020, this program helped set up two innovative projects that served as experimentations on the cross border

areas of the Greater Region (strategy of cross border territorial and commercial development) and on Rhin supérieur (multi-site cross border activity area), supported by regional and national funds.

The "cross border area for the future" program will expand this framework by completing it with complementary European structural funds. It will resemble some French national programs such as "Petites villes de demain" (small town of tomorrow) or "Action cœur de ville" (heart of the city action), started at the beginning of the years 2020. They enabled the concentration of substantial funding coming from various organizations to allocated them to cities and inter-city organizations that were the most in need. These investments will come to complete other greater investments, provided by the territorial authority involved.

The "cross border area of the future" program will answer the ambition of having "cross border pilot projects", and it will aggregate the funding means of different structural funds and of national and regional cross border groupings equipped with ambitious and integrated territorial strategies, and with democratic legitimacy. These funds will be managed by a cross border political body, put in charge of it.

## Focus

### IBA in Basel

The Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) is a German system meant to ensure a long-term development of a structuring and innovative architectural and urban planning project. Its "exhibitions" are thoughts as ways to rethink the global urban development of a region.

The 2020 IBA in Basel was the first international IBA. Between 2010 and 2020, it developed a certain approach as well as themes that were conditioned by the daily life in the tri-national area, between France, Germany and Switzerland. Developed for the long term, this instrument had the objective to create and develop exemplary projects in the fields of architecture, urban development and landscaping, since these are the first markers of an agglomeration's development or renewing. Little by little, from the first IBA 2013 projects' presentation to the 2020 closing presentation of the projects that were implemented, Basel IBA 2020 took shape and become a reality.

The 3Land project is one of its landmark projects. It was developed on the former harbor and industrial areas of the three countries, at the crossing of Basel, Weil am Rhein (DE) and Huningue (FR). This tri-national area of 430 hectares is slowly developing along the Rhine river, and will ultimately become a living area for 20 000 inhabitants and workers. constitue l'un de ses projets phares. Sur les anciennes deviendra à terme un lieu de vie pour 20 000 habitants et employés.

<https://www.iba-basel.net/fr/home>



Unsplash - Imre Tomosvari

## CONTROVERSY

### The evolution of the role and place of the European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions is the voice of regions and cities within the European Union. It represents local and regional authorities of the EU and puts out recommendations about new legislative deeds which directly impact regions and cities (meaning 70% of the EU's legislation). The Committee tries to bring the EU's institutions closer to the EU's citizens by getting representatives of local and regional authorities involved, since they are the ones who are in touch with the daily preoccupations of citizens. The Committee also works on creating more proximity with citizens by inviting them to take part to various events and debates.

The European Committee of the Regions is made of 329 members and 329 deputy members, all coming from European states. Each national government proposes local and regional representatives (members and deputy members), who compose national delegations. Members have a 5 year mandate, starting from the date of their nomination by the Council of Europe.

Right now, the EU doesn't have the obligation to follow the Committee's recommendations, but it actually does so in practice, to a certain extend.

Our group suggests two possible evolutions for the European Committee of the Regions:

- Getting its role reinforced by having its representatives be elected, and even having cross-border representatives elected by citizens themselves. Currently, the Committee's representatives are chosen by the national governments. les instances européennes à revoir leurs propositions en cas d'avis défavorable.
- Strengthening the effects of the Committee's recommendations by making it mandatory for European institutions to revise their propositions if these propositions receive negative recommendations from the Committee.

The question is even more important now, since it is at the heart of discussions held by the European Committee itself, as illustrated by various scenarios included in the report published for the Conference on the Future of Europe, called "Putting Local and Regional Authorities at the Heart of the European Democratic Renewal" (2021).



# LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

## Conclusion

The years 2010 were dark years times that led borders reappearing where they had previously disappeared. But despite growing skepticism, the European ambition remains strong. Let us bet that centrifuge forces (global challenges multiplying, growing needs for strategic independence, for a sense of belonging, and for cohesion) will come to revive the EU in the upcoming three decades, and that the cross border territorial cooperation will become a motor of policy integration on the continent by means of developing an alternative way to acknowledge and use the specific strengths of cross border territories.

### Specificities of cross border cooperation

With cross border territories have historically proved to be laboratories for integration and daily symbols of European societies' lived realities, the great chocs to come may very well reveal the vital need there is to collectively manage rarefying heritages and resources, like the many natural areas of world importance that some borders go through. Cross border territories are sometimes marginalized because they are located far from decision centers; but they mostly need more flexible frameworks to use borders that go through them as a strength, rather than as an obstacle limiting their development – so that cross border territories can become places of institutional innovation.

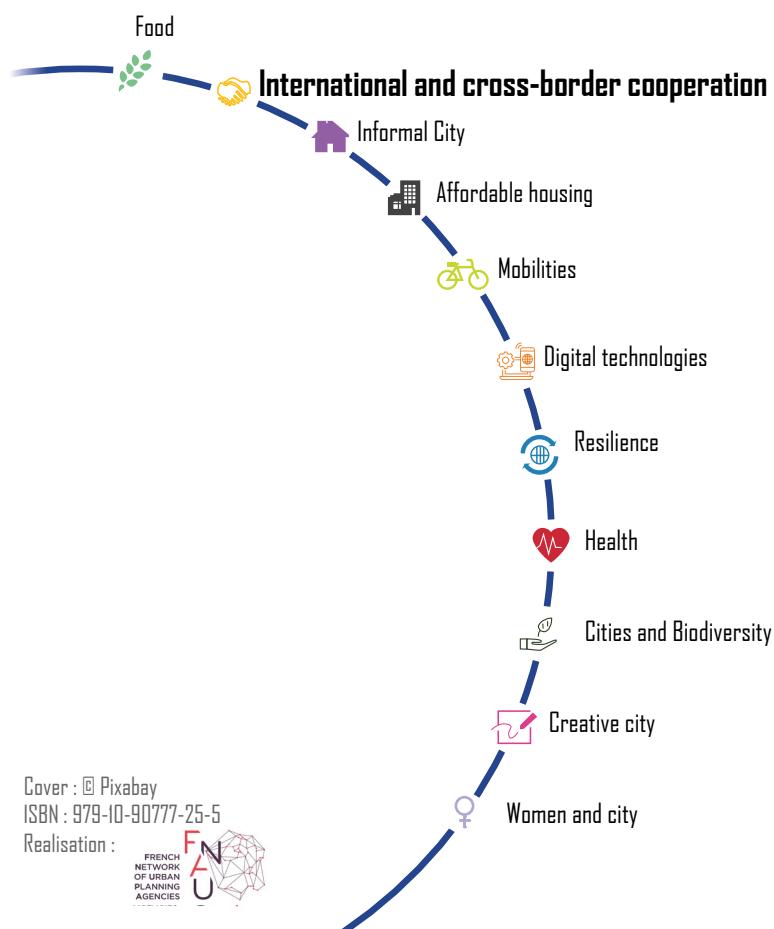
French and European cross border areas will have to learn, during the three upcoming decades, to reconcile governance and democracy. Again, let's bet on cross borders territories, by 2050, will push, with the support of ambitious reforms led by the European Parliament, their democratically legitimate institutions to go beyond their boundaries and to develop acceptable agreements and contacts with their neighboring countries, and to strengthen at the same time citizen participation – with the end goal being for these institutions to use their competence and implement projects at the local scale.

### The strategic aspect of cross border cooperation

If cross border territories aren't prepared and equipped enough to undergo the crises to come and the potential dividing effects these crises will have, these territories run the risk of triggering tensions and mistrust among European democracies. In the opposite case, if they have new capacities to manage and transform differences and inconsistencies on the day-to-day, they can become real innovation and resilience spearheads to serve the population's needs, and they can therefore have a real strategic role to play in terms of democratic legitimacy and democratic stability.



Started in 2011, the French partnership for cities and territories (PFVT - Partenariat Français pour la Ville et les Territoires) is a platform meant for the exchange and valorization of the French urban actor's expertise at the international level. It is a multi-actor partnership headed by Hubert JulienLaferrière, Member of Parliament, supported by the Ministry of Europe and of foreign affairs, the Ministry of territorial cohesion, the Ministry of the ecologic and fair transition, and the Ministry of culture. It brings together close to 200 organizations representing the diversity of the French expertise, contributing to the construction of a shared French vision based on a capitalization of exchanges and of innovative and sustainable experiences. <https://www.pfvt.fr/>



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