

# 19<sup>th</sup> EUROPEAN WEEK of REGIONS and CITIES

11 - 14 OCT  
2021

*Together for Recovery*

## Impact of the COVID-19 measures along EU internal borders on cross border communities

**Lessons learned, challenges for CB regions and their future**

EWRC Workshop: Citizens at the forefront of the development of CB living areas



#EURegionsWeek

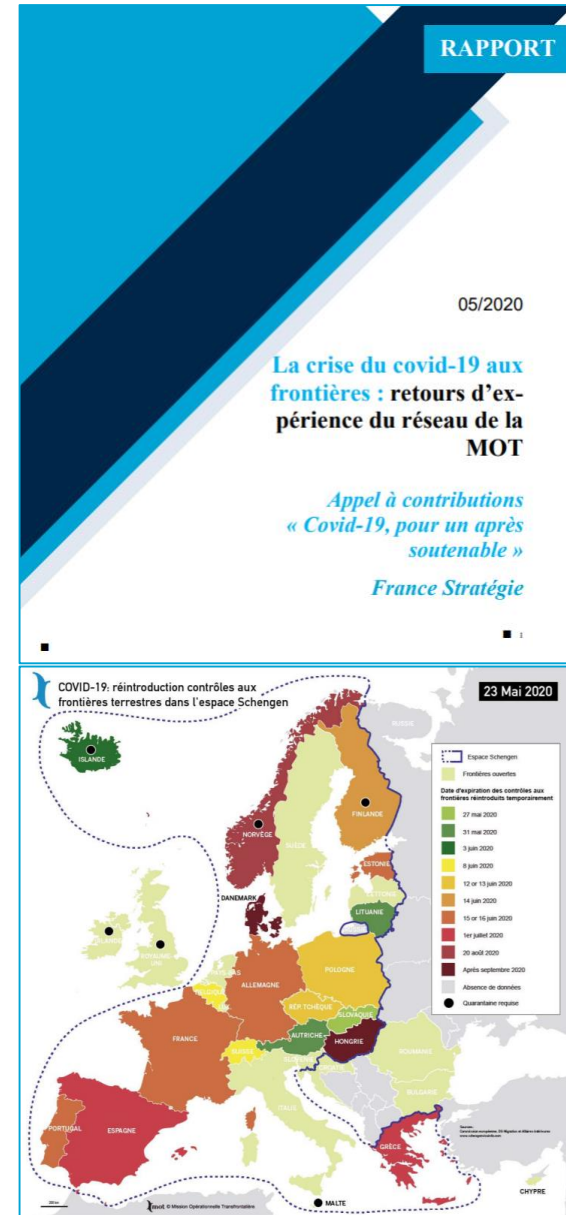


# Study for DG REGIO: understanding the impact of border measures on CB communities

- Refers to spring 2020, 1<sup>st</sup> wave of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Internal land borders (including CH, NO, AD, LI)
- 21 interviews
- Involved MOT, AEBR and CESCO's networks

## ► 4 main tasks :

1. Mapping of the border measures taken
2. Impact on CB communities, (20 case studies)
3. Role of CB structures
4. Lessons and recommendations on CB governance







## Lessons learnt and recommendations

1. What can be done at the local level of cross-border regions
2. What can be done at the level of States and EU, within a multi level governance framework

> for crisis management, also valid for the recovery and beyond

All regions suffered, but **Cross Border regions suffered double penalty.**

When borders were suddenly closed, **persons** were hurt as:

- **Economic** actors (CB workers...): mobility was drastically limited !
- **Users of CB public services**: they were the 1<sup>st</sup> to be interrupted !
- **Citizens**: suddenly only national ! (restrictions based on ID cards). What about EU citizenship ?
- **Informed**: there was no more CB information !
- **Inspired** by culture, ethics: persons crossing the border considered as "strangers" !
- **Engaged** in couples, families...: sometimes divided by the border !

After the border closure, **persons** reacted first.

But existing CB governance showed the way.

We need **institutions**, also in the CB context.



- => **Start from CB life of persons** with all its dimensions
- => **in their CB communities: consider borders as living areas**, rather than lines.
- => **Prefer a functional approach**, rather than institutional, vertical, bureaucratic.
- => **Give local authorities, EGTCS or equivalent structures a more prominent role to manage borders**



- For **CB users**: develop **Cross border public services (CPS) and maintain them** in case of crises: establish a **EU framework for CPS**
- For **CB citizens**: ease persons' and families' border-crossings, with a **"CB citizen status" (CB living area convention)**
- Provide CB communities with permanent democratic **CB councils**
- For **CB workers, consumers, businesses**: develop **CB information centers**
- For **informed citizens**, develop **local CB observatories** delivering harmonised CB data –with support of national and EU level
- For **inspired citizens**, fund **people-to-people projects** to (re)-build **trust**



**During the crisis, most problems came from lack of State coordination across the border**

**National level also matters to manage crisis and recovery**

In crisis context, States have legitimacy to limit mobility; but should **coordinate**, horizontally and vertically.

We need **sovereign States** (legal and funding capacity); but **acting together**

**EU did much, but with a limited mandate =>room to increase its intervention:**

Check that State action is fair and proportionate; provide information and coordination.

**> This is also an issue for citizens !**



**CB regions** deserve EU's special attention (article 174 TFEU), because of their **handicaps** (CB obstacles) and **potentials** (fully open border).

**CB interdependencies** revealed by the crisis require new policies: **functional approach** considering **persons in their CB living areas**.

Join the **European CB Citizens Alliance** !

➤ build CB contributions to the **Conference on the Future of Europe!**

The « **ever closer union of the peoples of Europe** » happens **in CB regions** !





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Thank you !  
Merci !

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