

# The construction of cross-border metropolitan regions in Europe

## A comparative perspective

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- I. Introduction**
- II. The diversity of CBMR in Europe**
- III. Theoretical framework of border functions**
- IV. Empirical evidence**
- V. Conclusion**

## City-regions and the opening of borders

- Multiplicity of cross-border cooperation projects observed in Europe since the 1990s (Perkmann, 2007)

But also...

- Concentration of economic activity in city-regions (Krätke 2007)
- Regeneration of cities as territorial actors (Brenner 2004, Le Galès, Harding, 1998)
- The opening of the borders in Europe: an opportunity for cities to exploit the border differentials and flourish from their positive effects (Ratti, 1994)

**->Emergence of Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions (CBMR)**

## **Cross-border metropolitan regions: a specific geographic configuration**

-> The need to rethink the interactions between cities and border

### **A not so easy relationship**

- On the one hand, the **city**: idea of centrality, place of knowledge and innovation, transportation node, location of headquarters, cultural centre...
- On the other hand, the **state border**: idea of periphery, barrier, marginal space from a socio-economic point of view

## II. Diversity of CBMR in Europe

### CBMR as spatial constructions

#### 11 CBMR in Europe

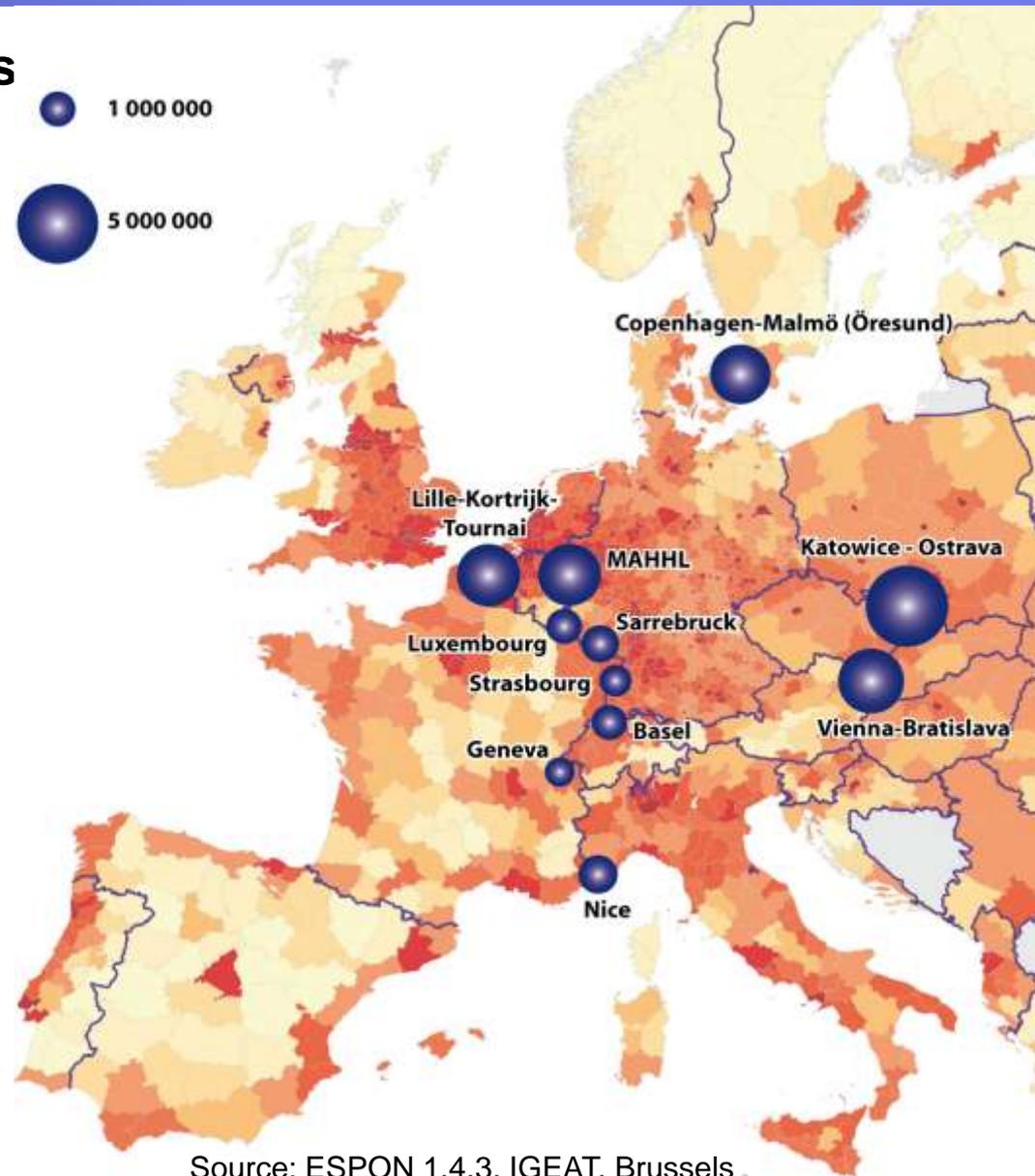
**Size:** 0.5 to 5 millions inhabitants

**Structure:** monocentric (Luxembourg, Geneva, Strasbourg) or polycentric (MAHL, Vienna-Bratislava)

#### **Economic profile:**

Knowledge-based economy in Luxembourg, Geneva, Basel, Copenhagen-Malmo

**Borders:** a source of new opportunities contributing to accelerating awareness of the interest (or the necessity) of cooperating



## II. Diversity of CBMR in Europe

### CBMR as political constructions

#### Existence of cross-border co-operation and integration strategies

**Basel:** Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel, metrobasel

**Geneva:** Projet d'agglomeration franco-valdo-genevois

**Lille:** Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai

**Maastricht-Arnhem-Heerlen-Luik:** MAHL

**Copenhagen-Malmö:** Öresund

**Vienna-Bratislava:** Centrope

-> The provision of financial resources aimed at formalising cross-border projects (INTERREG) constitute a strong incentive for cities and cross-border regions to cooperate (Scott, 2002)

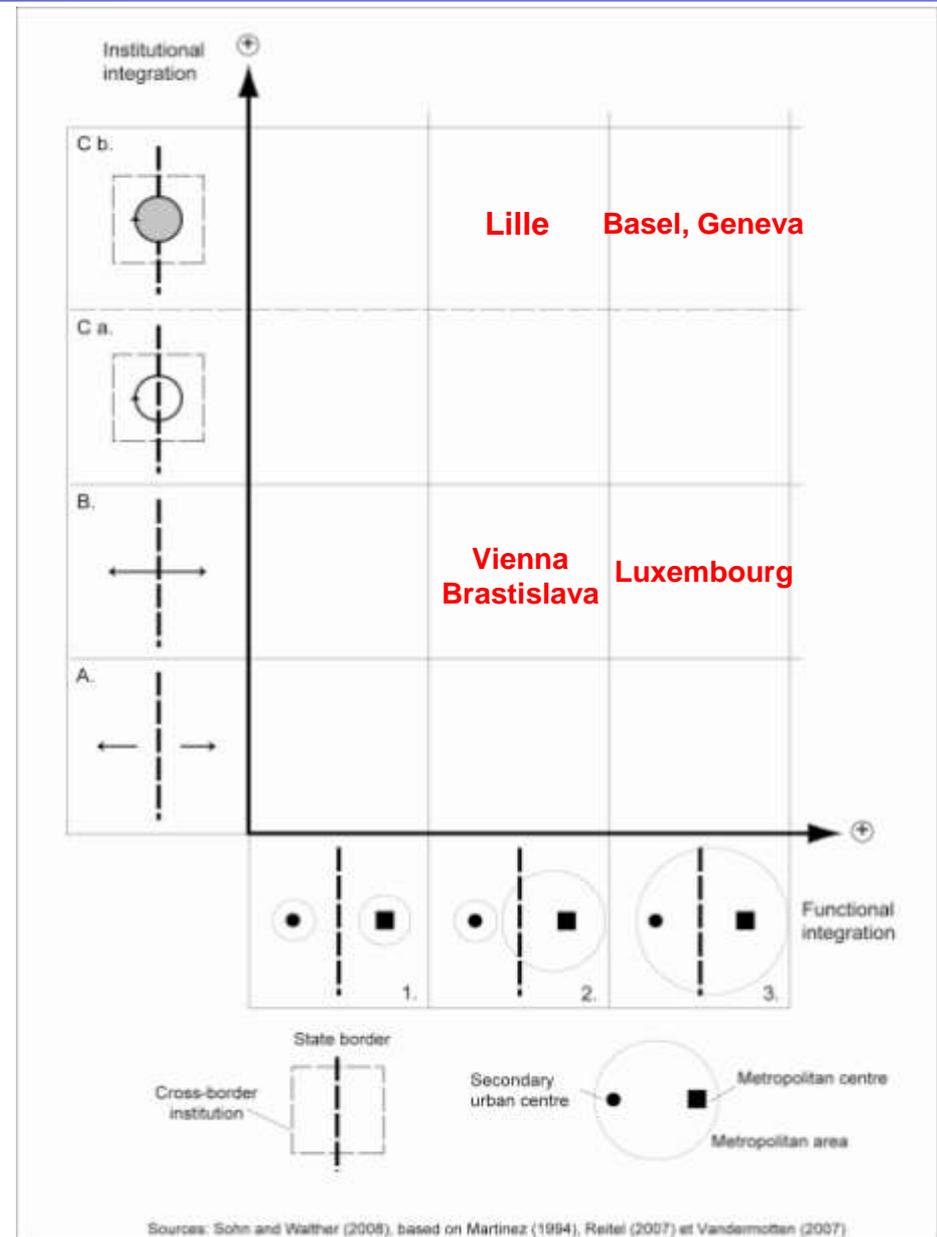
-> Implementation of new legal tools (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation)

## II. Diversity of CBMR in Europe

### Mismatch between functional and institutional integration

No clear relationship between the two dimensions of integration

In order to discover why, there is a need to examine the uses of the border functions



### Functional and institutional integration

Source: Sohn, Walther 2008, based on Martinez 1994, Reitel 2007 and Vandermotten 2007

## II. Diversity of CBMR in Europe

### Research questions

1. Why is there no direct link between the level of functional integration and the level of institutional integration?

-> Borders represent not only constraints but also opportunities for CBMR

2. What border functions are mobilized and how?

-> Need to deconstruct the concept of border in order to better analyze the role of its functions

### III. Theoretical framework

#### Identification of border functions

Based on Raffestin (1986) and O'Dowd (2003)

Distinction between basic functions and combined functions

#### Basic functions of the border

Functions	Actions/Effects
Separation (barrier)	Delineation, break, control, protection, defense, rejection, brake
Relation (interface)	Contact, exchange, transfer, distribution, collaboration, confrontation, mediation
Differentiation	Difference, differential, inequality, asymmetry
Affirmation	Staging of a power, an intent, a project Construction of a political or territorial legitimacy

Source: Sohn 2007, based on Raffestin 1986 and O'Dowd 2003

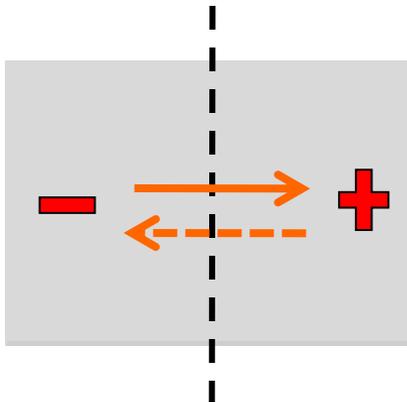
### III. Theoretical framework

#### Combined functions of the border

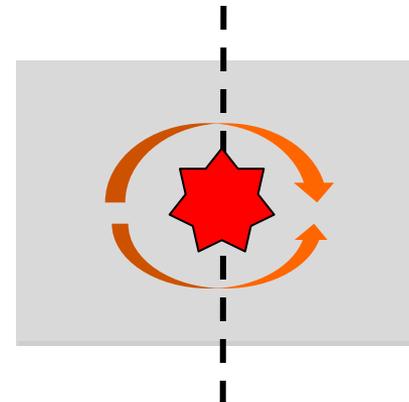
Combined functions	Basic functions mobilized	Purpose
Resource	Relation and differentiation	Manpower, land, knowledge
Recognition	Relation and affirmation	Local and international image

Source: Sohn 2007

#### Resource



#### Recognition



## IV. Empirical evidence

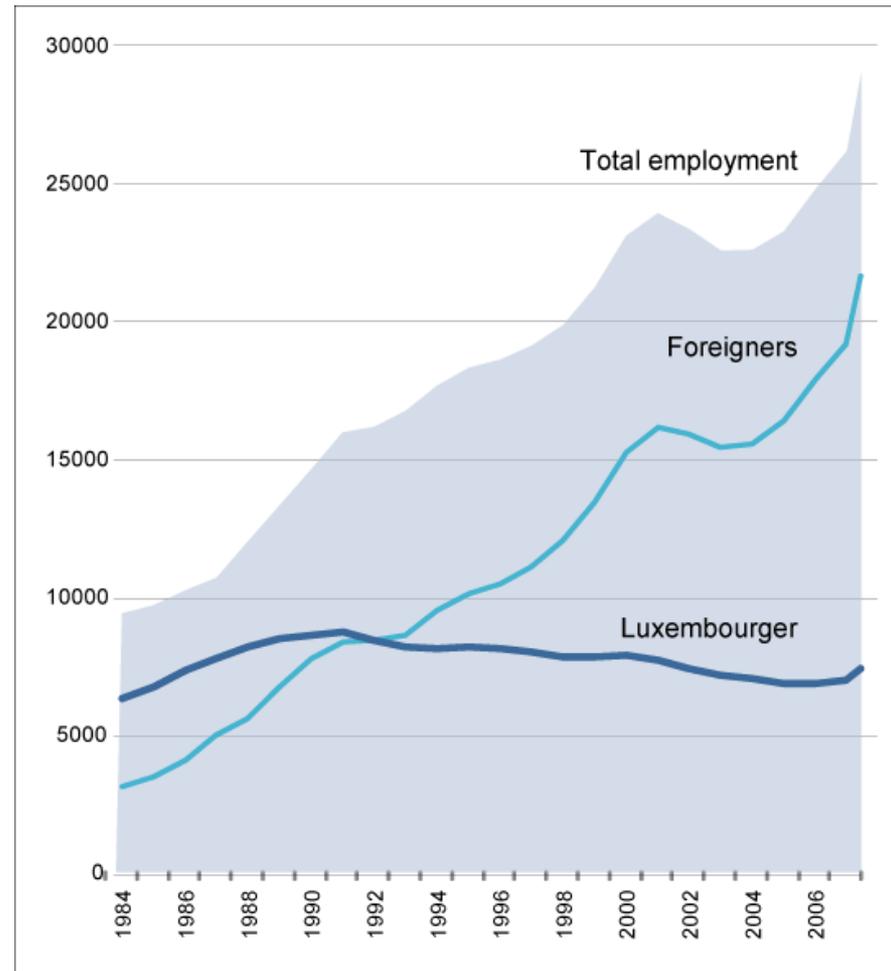
### Borders as resources

#### 1. Economic resource

- Cross-border metropolitan centres can offer favourable conditions for attracting qualified workforce

*The case of the Luxembourg finance industry (2001-2002): The workforce was unevenly affected by the financial downturn depending on the nationality of workers*

Employment in the financial sector, 1984-2007



Source: Walther 2008, CEPS/INSTEAD Luxembourg

# IV. Empirical evidence

## Borders as resources

### 2. Land resource

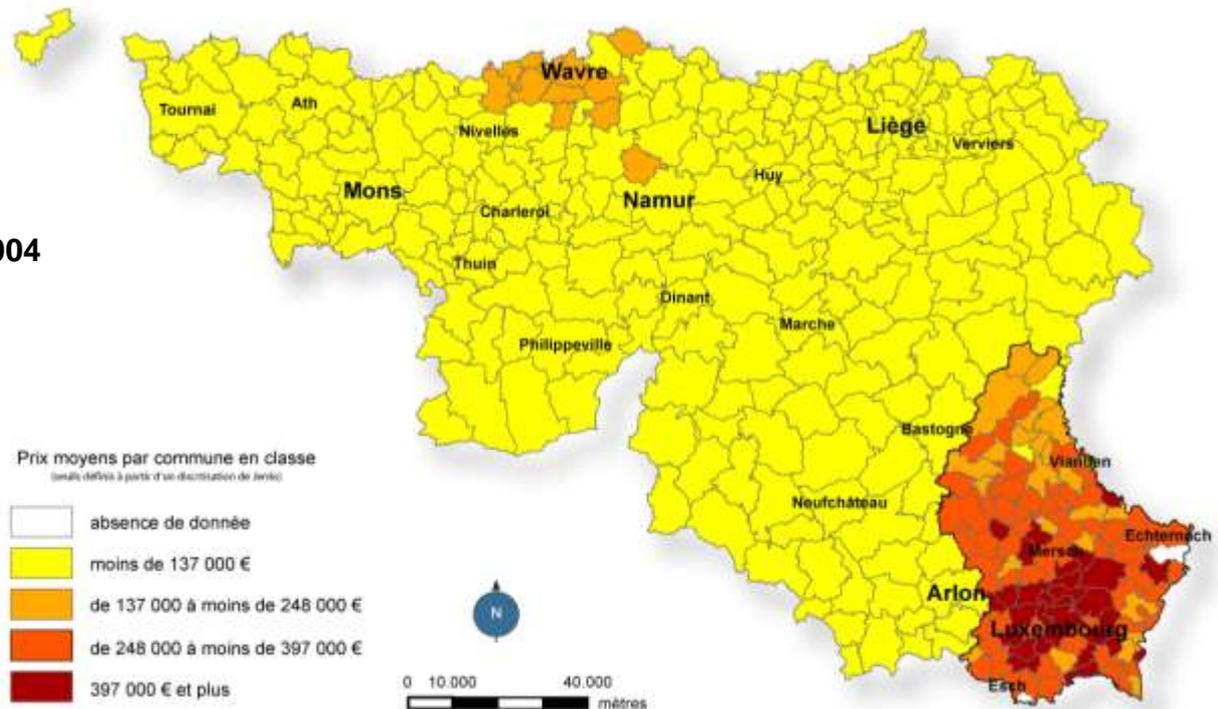
- The border situation also allows access to available land resources

*In Geneva and Luxembourg, cheaper houses can still be found in the cross-border suburban area*

### Average price for a family house, 2004

Sources: Statec, ISN

Cartography: CEPS/INSTEAD 2006



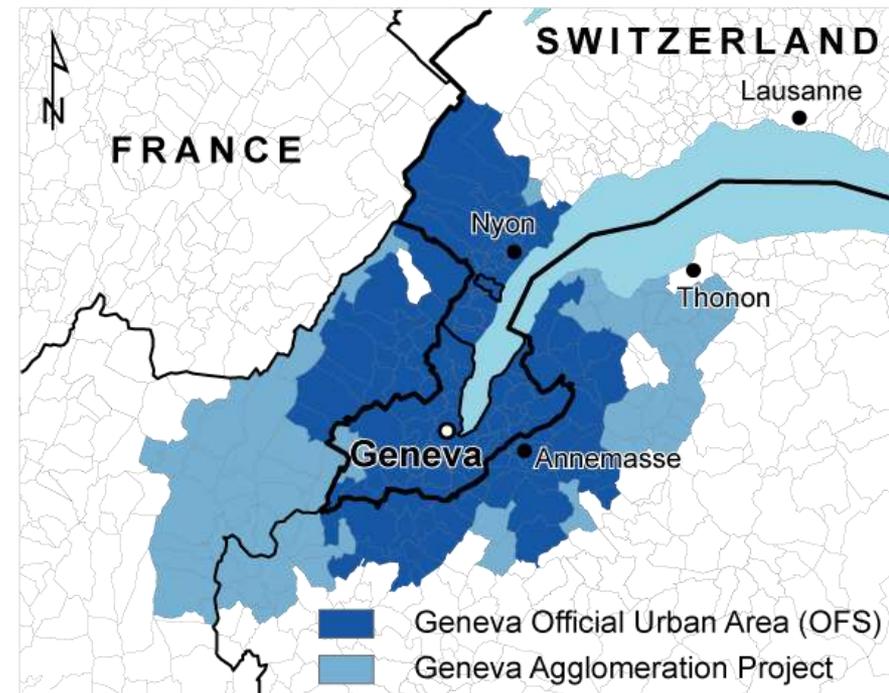
## IV. Empirical evidence

### Borders as resources

#### 3. Knowledge resource

- Cross-border exchanges may induce hybridization processes with new values, norms, ideas, representations

*In Geneva and Basel the presence of a border also creates an opportunity to develop original forms of governance, considering the wide flexibility of legal and regulatory provisions that surround cross-border cooperation*



**Geneva Official Urban Area and Agglomeration Project**  
Sources: OFS; Projet d'Agglo, 2008



# IV. Empirical evidence

## Borders as recognition

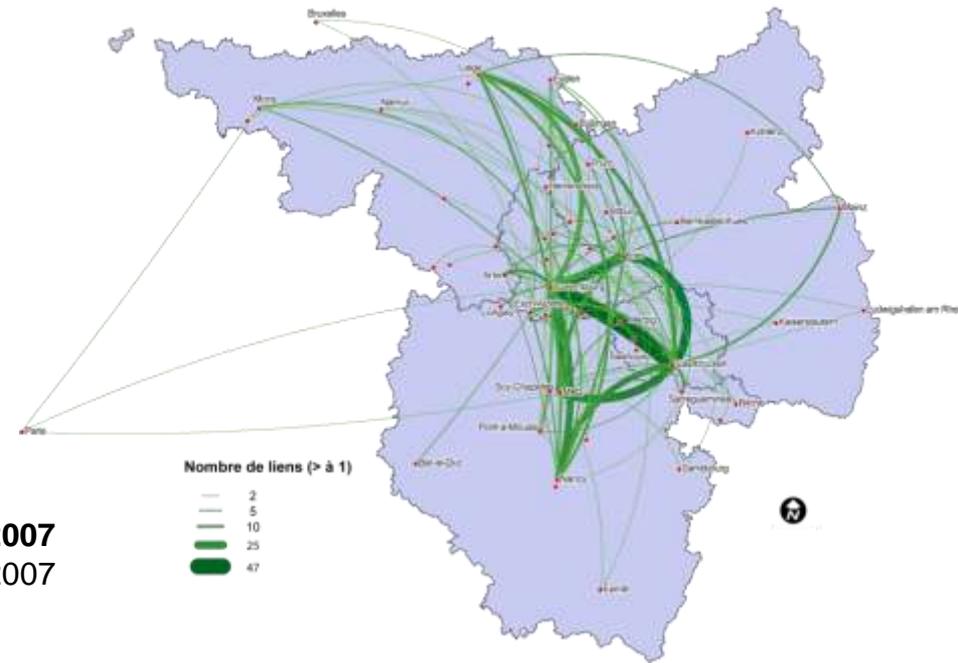
### 2. International recognition

- Cross-border dimension allows the city to display its international character and cultural diversity

*Project IBA Basel 2020 « International Bauaustellung », Euralille district (high speed trains, business and shopping centre, university and cultural infrastructures...), Mimram bridge in Strasbourg*

*Luxembourg and Greater Region, European Capital of Culture 2007*

**Relations transfrontalières entre villes**  
(projets culturels transfrontaliers 2007)



**Cross-Border relationships between cities, 2007**

Source: Sohn 2007

## V. Conclusion

### CBMR development: dialectic between closure and opening

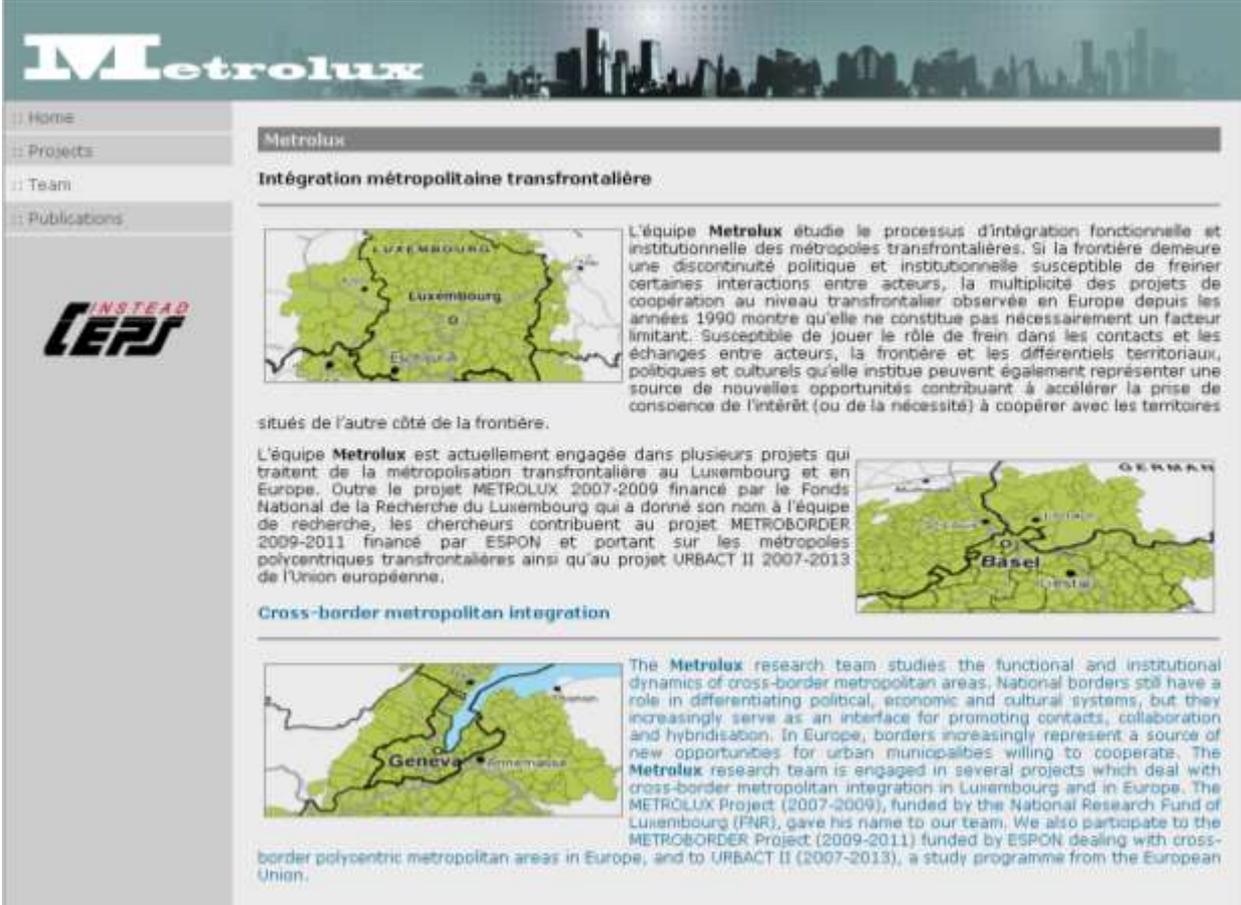
	Border as a barrier	→	Border as an interface
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Preserve control over comparative advantages (niche activities...)</li><li>Protection of territorial sovereignty</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Opportunities for new economic resources (global economy networks)</li><li>Political and cultural innovation</li><li>Positive image of the metropolis</li></ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Political regulation limited to national territory</li><li>Border increases uncertainties</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dependency to cross-border rules</li><li>Deficit in democracy</li></ul>

-> CBMR strategies result from cost/benefit evaluation

# V. Conclusion

This research was funded by the National Research Fund of Luxembourg  
METROLUX Project 2007-2008

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### Intégration métropolitaine transfrontalière

L'équipe **Metrolux** étudie le processus d'intégration fonctionnelle et institutionnelle des métropoles transfrontalières. Si la frontière demeure une discontinuité politique et institutionnelle susceptible de freiner certaines interactions entre acteurs, la multiplicité des projets de coopération au niveau transfrontalier observée en Europe depuis les années 1990 montre qu'elle ne constitue pas nécessairement un facteur limitant. Susceptible de jouer le rôle de frein dans les contacts et les échanges entre acteurs, la frontière et les différentiels territoriaux, politiques et culturels qu'elle institue peuvent également représenter une source de nouvelles opportunités contribuant à accélérer la prise de conscience de l'intérêt (ou de la nécessité) à coopérer avec les territoires situés de l'autre côté de la frontière.

L'équipe **Metrolux** est actuellement engagée dans plusieurs projets qui traitent de la métropolisation transfrontalière au Luxembourg et en Europe. Outre le projet METROLUX 2007-2009 financé par le Fonds National de la Recherche du Luxembourg qui a donné son nom à l'équipe de recherche, les chercheurs contribuent au projet METROBORDER 2009-2011 financé par ESPON et portant sur les métropoles polycentriques transfrontalières ainsi qu'au projet URBACT II 2007-2013 de l'Union européenne.

#### Cross-border metropolitan integration

The **Metrolux** research team studies the functional and institutional dynamics of cross-border metropolitan areas. National borders still have a role in differentiating political, economic and cultural systems, but they increasingly serve as an interface for promoting contacts, collaboration and hybridisation. In Europe, borders increasingly represent a source of new opportunities for urban municipalities willing to cooperate. The **Metrolux** research team is engaged in several projects which deal with cross-border metropolitan integration in Luxembourg and in Europe. The METROLUX Project (2007-2009), funded by the National Research Fund of Luxembourg (FNRF), gave his name to our team. We also participate to the METROBORDER Project (2009-2011) funded by ESPON dealing with cross-border polycentric metropolitan areas in Europe, and to URBACT II (2007-2013), a study programme from the European Union.