





The Franco-Belgian border the Covid-19 health crisis

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STUDY Requested by the REGI Committee



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT B STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES



Cross-border cooperation in healthcare



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and the network tein

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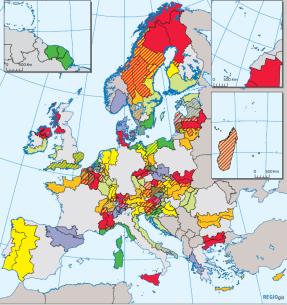


transfrontier euro-institut network

IFD is a member of TEIN

Background

- Healthcare, a principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- 37.5% of the E.U. population live in border areas
- Art.168 (TFEU) and Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (2011/24/EU)
- Primacy of Member States for national health policy, health and social security systems

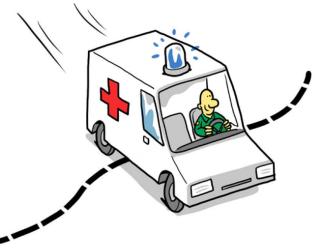


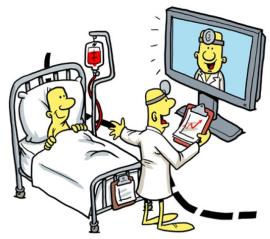
ERDF Cross-border cooperation programmes 2014-2020 Source: DG REGIO

Objectives

The role of Cohesion Policy in cross-border cooperation in healthcare

- The issue of governance and the persistent obstacles
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Possible solutions and recommendations for improving CBC in healthcare





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Methodology of the global research

- An analysis of Interreg A, B, C programmes for the last 3 programming periods
- An analysis of 135 healthcare-related Interreg V-A projects
- Institutional, academic and grey literature review
- Qualitative interviews
- 5 case studies:

Czech-Polish-Slovak border Franco-Belgian border Hospital of Cerdanya Franco-German border Euregio Meuse-Rhine



On the French-Belgian border Fieldwork and methodology

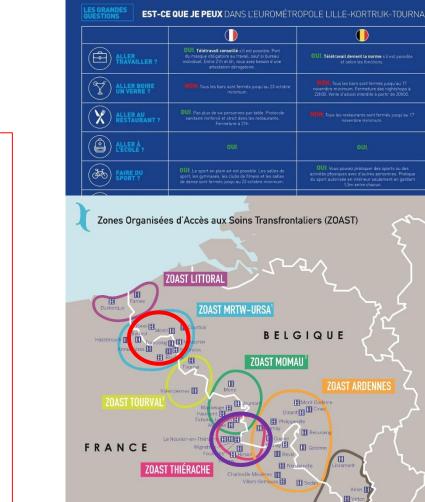
Fabienne Leloup François Moullé Pauline Pupier

Hypotheses

- Different types of border closures
- Better answers when crossborder cooperation

Two research fields

- The Lille metropolitain area (ZOAST* MRTW-URSA)
- The North/Walloon rural area (ZOAST* Thiérache and Mons-Maubeuge)



ZOAST LUXLOR

RÉCAP COVID-19 FRANCE / BELGIQUE

en Belgique, pour toute

personne qui demeure + de 48h consécutives sur le territoire ou qui en France

n Belgigue de minui

ligatoire dans les

nsports en commun

& lieux publics

LES PRINCIPES

80M&U (Merry Maubourgh

*ZOAST : Organised Areas of Access to Cross-Border Care

Qualitative interviews

7 interviews with managers

- Hospitals and emergency services
- Retirement and care homes
- Homes for disabled patients

One-hour interviews A semi-directive framework

allowing a deep exchange A collective summary Healthcare & CBC, project for REGI Committee of the EP. France/Belgium

Grille d'entretien semi-directive

Covid 19 à la frontière

- Établissement (MRS, Maison d'accueil, hôpital...) dans un contexte franco-belge ? Travailleurs ou patients étrangers ou frontaliers ? En temps normal ?
- Affronter le Covid, qui plus est dans une perspective transfrontalière ? Depuis mars 2020, concrètement
 - o Personnels,
 - Professionnels de santé (administratif, personnel d'entretien)
 - Étudiants stagiaires
 - Fournisseurs
 - Résidents, usagers ou patients
 - Accueil et hospitalisation, suivi médical, urgence
 - Familles et visites
 - Décès et rapatriement des corps
- Comment vous êtes-vous informés sur les règlementations nationales ?
- Comment vous êtes-vous adaptés notamment vis-à-vis des injonctions contradictoires des deux États ?
- Réorganisations et stratégies adoptées : mesures d'urgence, nouvelles procédures ? pérennisations / aussi améliorations ?

Coopération transfrontalière et réponse européenne

- Comment la coopération transfrontalière en matière de santé a-t-elle été impactée par la pandémie ? A-t-elle su réagir ?
 - o Présente /absente ?
 - ad hoc / encadrée ?
 - Positif / négatif ?
- Quel peut être le rôle de la coopération transfrontalière ? Quels projets pourraient émerger ? Qu'est-ce que l'on peut améliorer ? En lien avec :
 - ZOAST
 - o GECT
 - Observatoire franco-belge de la santé
 - Accords transfrontaliers
 - INTERREG
 - o Autres
- Adaptation et assouplissements des règles INTERREG pour vos projets en période Covid : pertinent, efficace ?
- Attendez-vous une réponse européenne à la pandémie ? Comment le niveau européen pourrait vous aider dans cette crise ?

Notes Pauline Pupier

Results for the French-Belgian border

Health are professionals in turmoil:

- Not always concrete answers from the authorities
- Top-down rules without consultation
- Reinforcement of central authority at the cost of subsidiarity
- Different rules on both sides of the border
- Uncertainty of free travel pass for crossing the border

Patients and residents:

- Isolated, especially far from French families (e.g. for disabled or elderly people)
- Light medical follow-up in Belgian homes

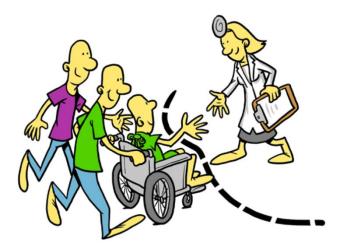




Results for the French-Belgian border

For cross-border medical cooperation :

- Very clear decline during the first lockdown
- The cross-border workers were first able to cross the border, but difficulties occurred when new police forces came from other regions, who were not familiar with the porosity of the Franco-Belgian border
- Cross-border follow-up consultations have dropped significantly <u>A real</u> <u>public health issue</u>





Hospitals in Mouscron and Tourcoing a case study

- 30 years of active collaboration complementarities services and staff
- The first lockdown was a sharp stop of the cooperation and created a disorganisation in the complementarities
- Transfers of Covid-19 patients according to overloads on both sides of the border
- Some patients were transferred without authorisation from the supervisory authorities – transfers during the nights
- The inter-knowledge of the institutions enabled a strong resilience after a few weeks



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Results at European level

Immediate effects of Covid-19

and the role of cross-border cooperation in the European response

- Increasing presence of the "health" topic in the Interreg projects of the last three programmes
- Obstacles and limits to health-related territorial cooperation: obstacles to crossing borders for staff and patients (lack of information, lack of recognition of diplomas, lack of administrative follow-up, governance difficulties)
- In times of Covid, asymmetry of decisions, lack of data, lack of consideration of cross-border particularities, recentralisation of decisions, even misunderstanding and mistrust
- Local arrangements and European initiatives in response to Covid

Recommendations: information, cross-border language, data and mapping of (trans)border health actors, joint provision of health and social services, European protocols and cross-border routines, role of intermediaries (EGTC, observatories, ZOAST and other networks)

Conclusions

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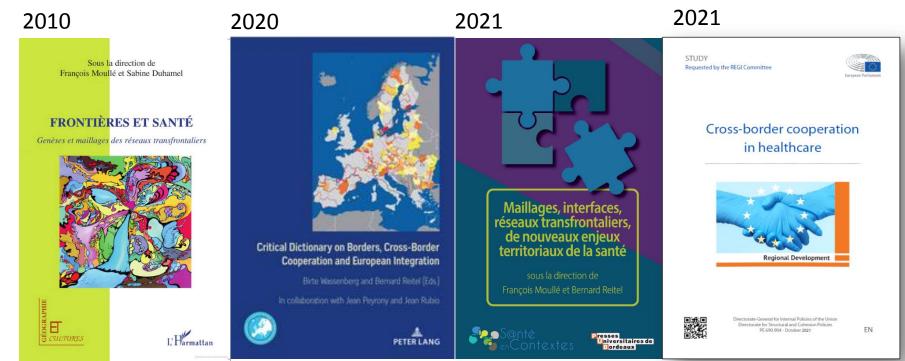
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The Franco-Belgian field is not exhaustive for analysing the European scale:

- Long-term experience of cross-border cooperation in health
- A genuine European laboratory for complementary health care
- The crisis has greatly disrupted and perturbed the activities
- Resilience was progressively achieved because local actors are wellinformed about each other's needs, even if it meant working outside of legal rules

A long term research in line with our scientific work









Thank you for your attention

Illustrations from Alex HUGUES, in Delecosse et al, 2017

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