

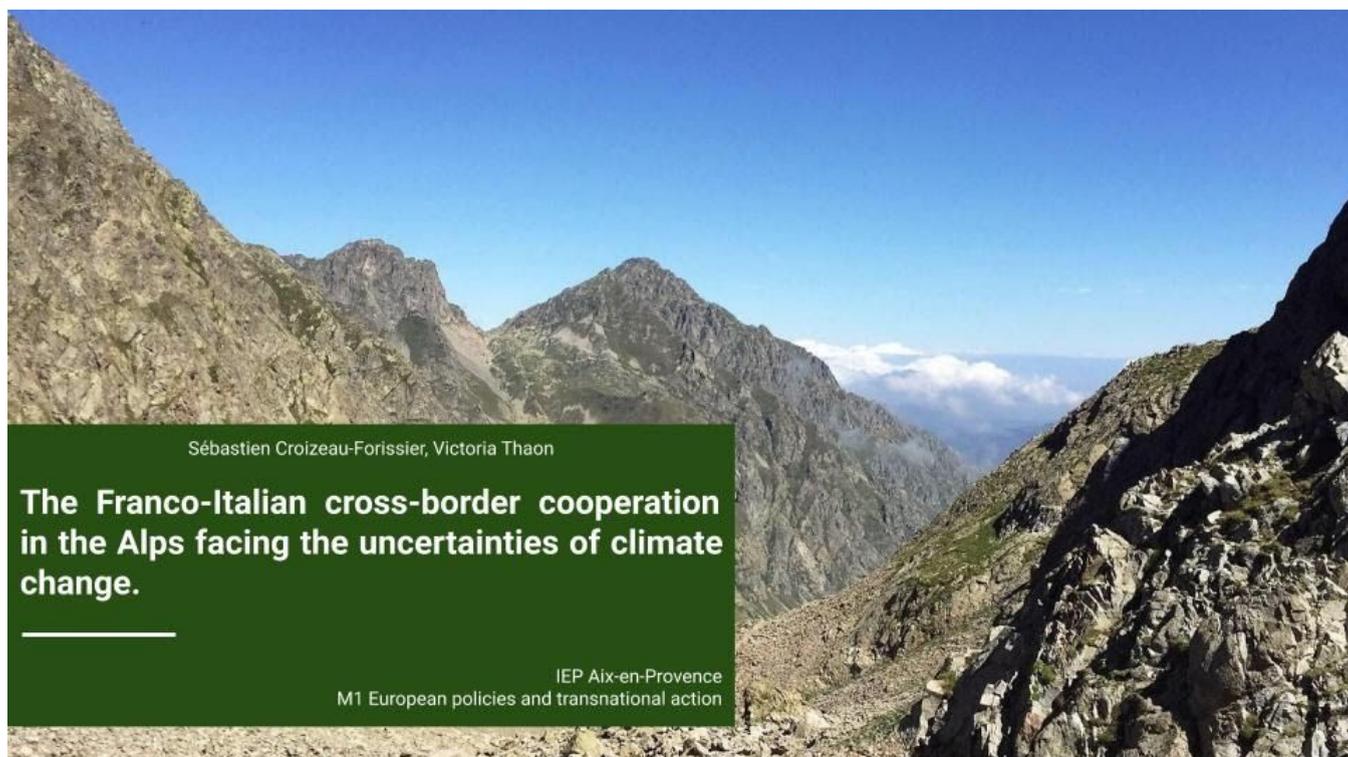
---

## MASTER-CLASS TRANSFRONTIÈRES ET DIALOGUE DES DISCIPLINES

“Coopérer dans les territoires au temps de l’incertitude”

Janvier 2021

---



## **Introduction**

"What's the point of lifting mountains when it's so easy to get over them ?" - Boris Vian.

Mountainous borders can appear as barriers between two countries, both geographically and legally. However, the development of cross-border cooperation in these specific areas has shown that mountains do not divide, but rather bring people together to defend their specific characteristics (Jacob, 2017). The pandemic that we have been going through for a year now has also reminded us of the importance of cooperating in order to overcome difficulties together. However, exchanges at the borders have been put on hold, only reminding us of their essential nature. As regards our field of study, that is to say the French-Italian border, a petition was, for example, launched by the elected representatives and inhabitants of the Roya valley in the Maritime Alps to reopen the border (Chantreau, 2020).

But today, the greatest source of uncertainty we face is the uncertainty caused by climate change and its consequences. Moreover, the link between climate change, our relationship with nature and the emergence of new viruses is no longer to be established. In the Alps, temperature variations are already having major environmental, social and economic consequences, as shown by the melting of the glaciers or even the Alex storm, which affected the French territories as much as the Italian ones last October. This mountain chain therefore appears particularly exposed to the risks caused by climate change. However, spread over many European countries (map), it also appears to be a particularly suitable area for cooperation. In addition to the international mechanisms for environmental and climate protection, such as the Paris Agreements, there are numerous instruments specific to the Alps. For example, the Alpine Convention of 1991, the Franco-Italian Alpine Conference (CAFI), or the Euroregion Alps-Mediterranean of 2006, heir to the Working Community of the Western Alps (COTRAO) of 1982. In addition to these, there is the Eusalp macro-region of 2015 and numerous cross-border partnerships, in particular under the European INTERREG programme.

As regards the cooperation in the French-Italian Alps, it was in the 1980s that it developed, particularly through European construction and the Madrid framework convention on cross-border cooperation of territorial authorities of 1980. However, it was not until 1993 that a bilateral agreement was signed between France and Italy. It was then the INTERREG programme, launched by the European Commission in 1990, which provided a concrete framework for this cooperation, in particular with the Alcotra programme for the Alpine border (Darnis, 2015).

These programmes made it possible to establish working habits between French and Italians, which we believe are necessary to deal with the uncertainties caused by climate change. Indeed, local actors and populations are the first concerned by the consequences of climate change as well as by established public policies. Therefore, their work is a necessary complement to actions carried out at other levels.

Through this presentation, the aim will be to study the knowledge and tools mobilised, as well as the practices and responses adopted by French and Italian actors to jointly address climate change. First, we will come back to the specificity of the Alps, in terms of vulnerability but also of their potential for innovation. Finally, we will study the opportunities offered by cross-border cooperation.

## **I) The specificities of the Alpine territories**

### **A) A particular vulnerability to climate change**

The aim here will be to show how mountain territories, and more particularly the Alps, are particularly vulnerable areas in economic, social and environmental terms.

### **B) The innovative potential of mountain and border areas**

Here, we will show how mountain and border areas differ from other areas, particularly in legal terms (Jacob, 2017). While they may appear as obstacles, these specificities could on the contrary constitute assets in terms of innovation (Leloupe & Gagnol, 2017), and more particularly in terms of territorial policies (Rudaz, 2020).

## **II) The opportunities offered by cross-border cooperation**

### **A) Governing the border in the European context**

The aim here is to detail cross-border cooperation in the European framework, referring both to the concept of multi-level governance (Guigner & Périssé, 2020), the tools developed and its institutionalisation (Jacob, 2017). We will also return to the voluntarism of regional actors (Vion, 2006), the way in which partnerships are formed and the obstacles to cooperation. We will then pay particular attention to the INTERREG programme (Roux & Borgheli, 2008).

### **B) Examples in the French-Italian Alps**

We will come back to what has been said previously through two projects set up in the framework of the Alcotra programme: Alcotra CCLimaTT and Biodiv'Alp.

## **Conclusion**

All in all, there are already many instruments for cooperation along the French-Italian Alpine border. If the crisis we are going through may have called these into question, particularly through the closure of the borders, we believe on the contrary that it has underlined their necessity. The working habits developed thanks to these mechanisms, coupled with the development of specialised courses in territorial cooperation that did not previously exist (Garcia, 2014), suggest that a deepening of this cooperation is possible. In the face of climate change, which knows no borders, it appears crucial. Although the actors concerned seem to have become aware of the issues at stake, we believe that it will be necessary to go beyond this.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Academic sources

Bolgherini, S. & Roux, C. (2008). Les régions d'Europe et l'enjeu des coopérations. *Pôle Sud*, 29(2), 111-130.

Darnis, J. (2015). Les politiques transfrontalières France-Italie et les nouveaux enjeux territoriaux. *Espaces et sociétés*, 160-161(1-2)

Guigner, S. & Périssé, D. (2020). Coopération transfrontalière. Dans : Romain Pasquier éd., *Dictionnaire des politiques territoriales* (pp. 103-108). Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Jacob, L. (2017). *Gouverner la frontière. Innovations dans la coopération transfrontalière des territoires alpins : espace Mont-Blanc, Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour*. Thèse de doctorat en Géographie. Université de Genève.

Leloup, F. & Gagnol, L. (2017). Présentation. De la barrière à la coopération transfrontalière : frontière, développement et gouvernance de l'environnement. *Mondes en développement*, 177(1), 7-12.

Rudaz, G. (2020). Montagne. Dans : Romain Pasquier éd., *Dictionnaire des politiques territoriales* (pp. 373-377). Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Vion, A. (2006). L'affirmation des gouvernements urbains dans l'Union européenne : une légitimation professionnelle diffuse. *Politique européenne*, 19(2), 143-167.

### Mediatic sources

Chantreau, M. (2020). Coronavirus : les habitants de la vallée de la Roya refoulés à la frontière italienne. *France Bleu Azur*. Available at : <https://www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/coronavirus-les-habitants-de-la-vallee-de-la-roya-refoules-a-la-frontiere-italienne-1587558036> [Accessed 16/01/2021].

### Webography

BIODIV'ALP : LA BIODIVERSITÉ SANS FRONTIÈRE. Website of Région Sud Provenances-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Available at : <https://www.maregionsud.fr/la-region-en-action/amenagement-et-developpement-durable/biodivalp-la-biodiversite-sans-frontiere> [Accessed 16/01/2021].

Découvrir Alcotra. Website of the Alcotra program. Available at : <https://www.interreg-alcotra.eu/fr> [Accessed 16/01/2021].

Il clima cambia, cambiamo anche noi. Website of the CCLimaTT program. Available at : <http://www.cclimatt.eu/> [Accessed 16/01/2021].