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Autor: Tschanz, Pierre-André

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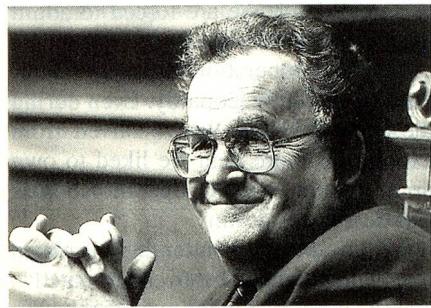
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The link to the European high-speed rail network concerns frontier regions and Switzerland as a whole. The French high-speed trains already reach Lausanne, but travel times to Paris will become even shorter.

IMPRESSUM

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Editors: René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Berne (chairman); Heidi Willumat (WIL), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Berne; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Giuseppe Rusconi (RUS), parliamentary correspondent. Editor of Official News: Paul Andermatt (ANP), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

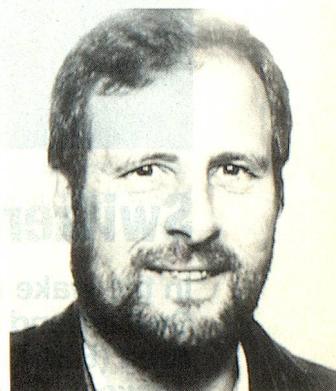
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Frontiers separate states not people. What is the difference between the inhabitants of Chêne-Bourg and Annemasse, just outside Geneva? Or of Riehen and Lörrach, near Basle? Or of Chiasso and Como, on either side of the Swiss-Italian border? Passports, tax systems, legislation are all different. But the sky, the earth and the water – those elements which mould the human being, to take up the idea of C.-F. Ramuz – stay the same. So there is nothing more natural than to ignore frontiers, as far as this is humanly possible – to do your shopping wherever the choice is bigger or the price lower, to live in the country where the cost of housing is cheaper, to work wherever there is a job, to study at the nearest university. This network of relations between peoples of different nationalities needs to be strengthened. The discomforts of national frontiers must be eased, without of course endangering the sovereignty of states. New structures – including dialogue, consultation and cooperation have been created over and above frontiers for the purpose of catering to the daily needs of people and the economies of frontier regions.

This cooperation takes different forms according to the regions concerned and the problems which arise in them. In some places it has already been worked out in detail and tested, while in others it has not yet really taken off. In each case the driving force is everyday reality. Cooperation is more or less intense, covers more or less spheres of activity, influences the daily lives of more or less people according to geography, economic relationships and infrastructure. In the valley of the Doubs – a river which for part of its way forms the

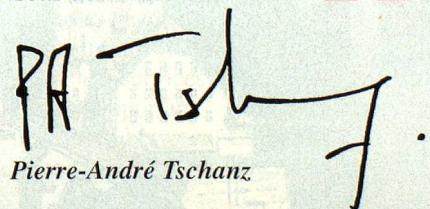
border between France and Switzerland – cooperation is a matter of fishing rights, water control and protection, regional transport, tourism, and so on. In the Basle region, joint action concentrates on Rhine navigation and the use of the waters of that great river, the operation of the international airport of Basle-Mulhouse-Freiburg im Breisgau, urban and international transport systems, the legal position of frontier workers, transit of goods and persons, alarm systems in the event of industrial accidents – and a whole lot more. These require solutions acceptable to a region of two million inhabitants divided between three states.



A spirit of dialogue, consultation and cooperation develops and intensifies in tune with the phenomenon of interdependence. Large-scale projects to extend France's high-speed rail network (TGV) have led to new cooperation programmes to take account of reciprocal interests, find common denominators and promote routes which are most suited to the needs of the population throughout the area.

The results of such inter-regional, cross-border cooperation are rarely spectacular. They do not often hit the newspaper headlines. But they nevertheless exert a favourable and practical influence on people's daily lives. The refusal by Swiss voters to take their country into the European Economic Area has led to an increase in such efforts at cross-border joint ventures. This is evidence enough that they meet a real demand."




Pierre-André Tschanz