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Franco-Italian Mont Blanc Dispute and Climate Change: Policy Perspectives after the Quirinal Treaty

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This policy report focuses on the border dispute between France and Italy over Mont Blanc in the context of climate change, examining the causes of the disagreement between the two countries and the effects of glacier melting on borders among Alpine countries. Adopting the approach of territorial singularities and mobile borders, the work analyzes the impact of initiatives such as the ETRS89 framework, which ensures GPS-validated mapping technologies in Europe, allowing measurements of border shifts. Insight is given to practices and agreements adopted by Italy, Switzerland, and Austria, such as two bilateral treaties incorporating mobile borders. Starting with a review of the current perspectives of cross-border cooperation between France and Italy after the recent Quirinal Treaty, the report suggests some steps that could be taken to strengthen synergies and mitigate the effects of the dispute: remapping the area, monitoring border shifts, and applying a shared regulation of access and off-limits areas across the entire Mont Blanc.

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Executive Summary

Originating from the application of an 1860 international treaty, the controversy over Mont Blanc persists between two Schengen countries over an area of less

than half a square kilometer. France asserts that the principal peaks on the Mont Blanc massif lie in French territory, while Italy maintains that the summits are shared. The issue does not involve only the symbolic value of national sovereignty over a mountain. It has led, especially from 2015 to 2020, to a series of diplomatic incidents involving the movement of border markers and setting off-limits areas between neighbouring municipalities. The problem is further exacerbated by climate change, causing glaciers to melt throughout the Alps and consequently shifting mountain borders.

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This report begins with a short review of border studies, focusing on the concept of “mobile border”, influenced by natural changes and technological mapping advancements. This innovative idea has already been incorporated into two international treaties signed by Italy, one with Austria and the other with Switzerland. With the latter in particular, continuous monitoring of border movements has led to the management, albeit with difficulties, of a transboundary refuge, Rifugio Guide del Cervino, which, due to border movements, underwent a shift from Italian to almost entirely Swiss territory in just a few years. The case is a prime example of the emerging border management approach based on resource management rather than a defined border.

Whether this approach extends to the Mont Blanc scenario is uncertain, though desirable. The region is the scene of intense cross-border cooperation, which presents some weaknesses, primarily linked to the coordination modes among all institutional entities. Despite the recent Quirinal Treaty recognizing the border’s common interest, innovation remains elusive. Better outcomes may arise from governance options, like shared monitoring of border movements or networks of local authorities managing mountain access. Such an approach leverages existing expertise over a deterministic boundary, and, though not without its own challenges, could help overcome the policy hurdles of a border that is not immovable; the border has never been immovable.

1. Introduction

In 1860, with the International Treaty of Turin, the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia (destined to become the Kingdom of Italy the following year) ceded the region of Savoy to France. Attached to the treaty was a map that drew the border between the two states along the watershed line, causing the summit of Mont Blanc to have two slopes, one in each of the two countries. The French ratified the Treaty’s content but never accepted the map, claiming that the border, according to the 1861 Delimitation Convention, was located further south, with Mont Blanc entirely within French territory (Turrini 2021). In 1865, Captain De Mieulet, on behalf of the French state, created new maps of the area based on this assumption.

These differing interpretations continue to be reflected in the official cartographies of the two countries, creating an area of approximately half a square kilometer where territorial ownership is disputed, with three main points of contention being Mont Blanc, Dôme du Goûter, and Col du Géant (Pointe Helbronner), as shown in Figure 1.

Interestingly, this incongruity did not create any problems for the construction phases of the Mont Blanc Tunnel (1957-1965), perhaps the most significant infrastructure project in the area. It was during a conference held in Nice in 1988 on the maintenance activities of the Tunnel that representatives of the two states noticed the cartographic discrepancy (Martin 2023).



Figure 1. The three tension points in Mont Blanc dispute territory: Dôme du Gouter, Mont Blanc, and Col du Géant (Pointe Helbronner). Source: author’s elaboration from Google Maps.

This marked the beginning of a seemingly minor border dispute that would become increasingly strained from the 1990s, with a series of exchanges between the two nations and parliamentary inquiries. The dispute ignited in the middle of the 2010s, with a series of incidents occurring between 2015 and 2020 when local and national administrations of both countries took unilateral actions on the border (Gautheret 2020; Giuffrida 2020). Environmental concerns and the security of tourist access to the mountain influenced these actions.

In September 2015, after French authorities bulldozed a border marker approximately 150 meters onto Italian territory, the mayor of the French town of Chamonix blocked access to Col du Géant, the main passage through the Mont Blanc massif, from the Italian side, citing safety reasons. These actions provoked hostile reactions from the municipal administration of Courmayeur, a nearby Italian resort town. An Italian parliamentary inquiry ensued but did not substantially change the situation.

In June 2019, following a fatal accident, the mayors of Chamonix and Saint-Gervais issued a ban on paragliding landings in an area of about 600 square meters within Italian territory. The next year, in October 2020, after President Macron visited the Mer de Glace, where he announced new restrictions on access to Mont Blanc, local authorities in Chamonix, Les Houches, and Saint Gervais designated a protected area off-limits to paragliding and ill-equipped mountaineers. This area, covering an area of approximately 3,000 hectares beneath Mont Blanc, also includes a portion of Italian territory.

The resulting overall picture is complex, characterized by interactions at different levels:

- Horizontally, there are exchanges between the two states, starting from a legal disagreement regarding the application of the Treaty of Turin and a prevailing tendency toward unilateral management of the mountainous resources.
- Vertically, interactions occur between local administrations and the state. Local administrations

request adequate environmental conservation protection and individual safety in their territory. They also seek “administrative certainty” that allows them to operate effectively in the relevant domain.

In 2020, the President of the European Parliament, an Italian national, appealed to the European Commission (European Parliament 2021). However, the Commission, hopeful for a mutually satisfactory agreement, reiterated the authority of the states to define sovereign boundaries as outlined in the Treaty on the European Union.

This uncertain situation is further complicated by glacial melt, a common phenomenon throughout the Alpine region that has brought about significant changes in the landscape of Mont Blanc, as demonstrated by recent research (Figure 2).

Climate change not only alters the socio-economic dynamics of the area (Clivaz & Savioz 2020) but also complicates locating international boundaries. In this case, is the line drawn by the watershed, the crest line passing through the highest peak, or the valley bottom line? Significant border shifts have been observed in recent years in all Alpine countries (Studio Folder 2016), leading to different approaches.

This study aims to illustrate possible options for managing the border issue in Mont Blanc. Section 2, after introducing some theoretical concepts, outlines issues and approaches already adopted among Alpine countries. Section 3 provides context of institutional relations between France and Italy, existing cross-border cooperation in the Mont Blanc area, and the prospects offered by the Quirinal Treaty. Section 4 presents a brief conclusion, and Section 5 suggests recommendations based on the case’s specificities.

2. State Borders on Alpine Countries

The historical approach to borders, led by the territorial state in international relations, originated in Europe with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the first based

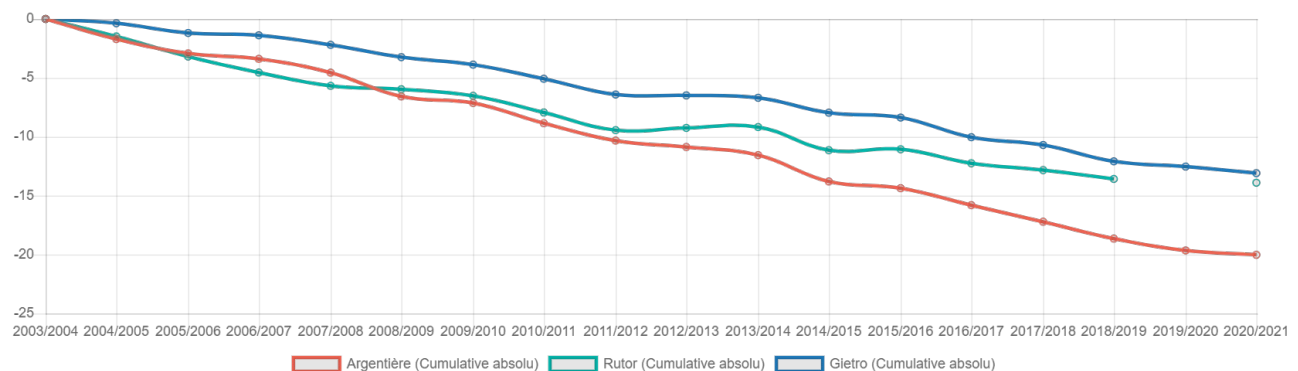


Figure 2. Annual cumulative loss of glacier mass on Mont Blanc. Image source: Observatoire du Mont-Blanc (2022).



on an international treaty and maps (Brunet-Jailly 2015[a] and 2018). This marked the emergence of the modern nation-state concept, where borders assumed a juridical role as limits to sovereignty. A study on Western Alpine regions noted the Alps’ transformation as the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age unfolded, sacrificing local community autonomy to the rise of nascent states (Guichonnet 1980). The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 played a pivotal role in shaping state borders between the Duchy of Savoy and France (Sereno 1999), notably using the Alpine chain as a natural border, a criterion central to the later Mont Blanc dispute (Frey & Frey 2019).

On the other hand, border studies reveal complexities in issuing and maintaining state borders based on natural topography. Jones (1945) highlights challenges in delineation (on maps and treaties) and demarcation (on the ground) in mountain borders due to their complex shapes. The Alps’ unique geography poses difficulties in retaining criteria like crest lines, watershed lines, and valley bottoms, leading to uncertainties. Such complex disputes, arising with delimitation and demarcation or when a natural element defining the border undergoes a change, can be described as “positional” (Brunet-Jailly 2015[b] and 2018). International arbitration has sometimes proven to be an effective tool, also in the Alpine area, as in the case of Alpe of Cravairola between Italy and Switzerland (Lowenthal 2004).

2.1. Border singularities and mobile borders

Unique border cases resulting from specific issues, such as a disagreement over territorial boundaries, can be studied also in the perspective of “border singularities” (Perrier 2020). In these situations, tailored agreements for the management of a shared resource are prioritized and the exact position of the border can be left undefined.

This is the case, for example, of Lake Constance, on the border between Switzerland, Austria, and Germany, an expanse of water whose border regime has been undefined, despite the presence of agreements on fisheries and navigation (Kramsch 2015), or the Ems-Dollart estuary between Netherlands and Germany, where a sort of “agreement to disagree” on the exact location of the boundary was settled, stating that the two countries, in a spirit of “good neighbourliness”, jointly maintain the border zone through a binational committee (Van der Velde 2015).

In this framework, a special feature of the border is its mobility over time and space: Amilhat Szary and Giraut (2011), who first defined the concept of “mobile borders”, note the fluid and evolving nature of border regions, due, for example, to political, cultural,

and social factors. Mobile borders are particularly pronounced in the Alpine region due to geology and climate change, requiring repeated negotiations and a nuanced understanding of governance solutions (Amilhat Szary 2013; Fourny 2013). This idea is further developed in Konrad (2015), according to which new border studies must incorporate this idea of movement, including a concept of dynamic equilibrium.

2.2. Innovative case studies in the Alps

2.2.1. Mapping change: the ETRS89 system

The European Terrestrial Reference System 1989 (ETRS89), established to facilitate precise positioning and geodetic data exchange among European countries, utilizes a network of satellite stations developed by the EUREF Permanent Network (EPN), a network of more than 100 universities and research institutions in Europe. The system is designed to guarantee compatibility with global frameworks like World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS84) and dynamic consistency through periodic updates, making it a promising tool for managing mobile borders and data harmonization. Most European countries have adopted ETRS89 in their national cartographic institutes (Bruyninx et al. 2019) and the network of satellite stations is steadily growing across European territory. One of them, Lignan, active since June 2022 is approximately 70 kilometers from Pointe Helbronner on Mont Blanc (see Figures 3 and 4).

Discussions among scholars are ongoing about the potential of bilateral border treaties based on the ETRS89 System. Detailed studies, as seen in the case of the Czech Republic (Poláček 2015), emphasize the importance of data harmonization by neighboring countries for the project’s success.

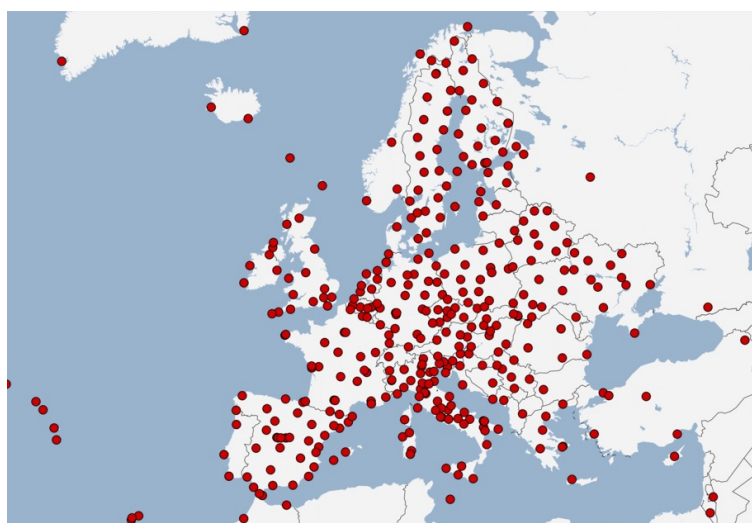


Figure 3. Locations of the EPN tracking stations (status December 2022). Source: EPN (2023[a]).

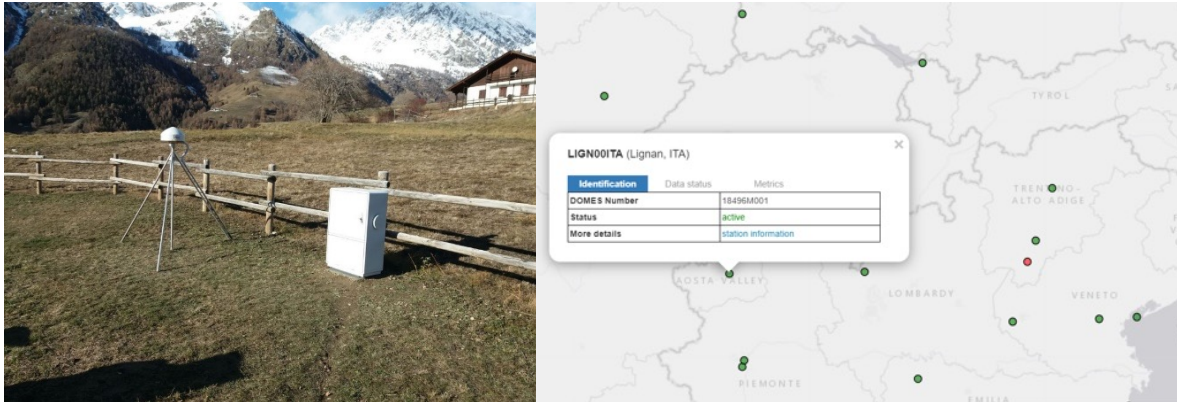


Figure 4. Lignan satellite station (Aosta, Italy) and its location. Source: EPN (2023[b]).

A unique case in Europe is the Treaty signed on June 16, 2022, between France and Andorra, explicitly mentioning the ETRS89 System as the reference for bilateral border demarcation. However, in the case of France and Italy, despite joint validation actions for coordinates along their 515-kilometer border, the Mont Blanc area remains excluded due to the ongoing dispute (CNIG 2021). This exclusion poses a significant challenge to achieving a homogeneous data framework that the ETRS89 System aims to establish.

2.2.2. Border shifts in the Alps: The Guide del Cervino case

Between Italy and Switzerland, near the Plateau Rosa, where the new cross-border cable car Cervinia/Zermatt was inaugurated in July 2023, the border, defined along the watershed, has shifted approximately by 100 to 150 meters southward due to the retreat of the Theodul Glacier, from 1940 to today (Swisstopo 2022[b]). The border shift, depicted in Figure 5, has



Figure 5. Italian-Swiss borders in 1940 (black crosses) and nowadays (purple line). Source: Swisstopo (2024[b]).

so far only affected uninhabited terrains, except for an alpine lodge, the Rifugio Guide del Cervino, a hangout for mountaineers located at the Swiss-Italian border, on the edge of Testa Grigia peak, at 3,480 meters of altitude.

In the 1980s, the refuge was entirely located in Italian territory, while now it is facing a challenging situation: two-thirds of its area, including most of its beds and the restaurant, is in Zermatt, the Swiss part, and only the remaining third in Valtournanche, Italy (Poll 2021; AFP 2022). The issue is seemingly minor but results in significant uncertainty for the refuge, affecting matters such as taxation and the rules for managing an accommodation facility. The administrations of both states have been monitoring the situation for some time, formalizing a tailored solution for the refuge, which, for now, remains formally under Italian jurisdiction. While Google Maps has not updated the situation, on official Swiss maps, the refuge is marked as a point along the boundary line, which in this section, instead of being continuous, is dotted, as shown in Figure 6.

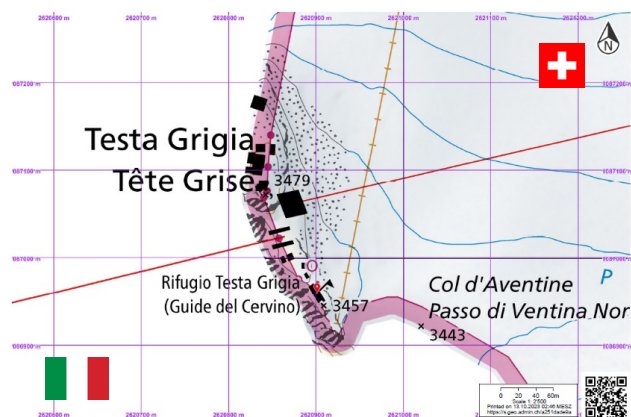


Figure 6. Location of the Rifugio Guide del Cervino and delineation of the Swiss-Italian border. Source: Swisstopo (2024[a]).

Italy and Switzerland have long been engaged in monitoring border shifts and signed a bilateral agreement in 2008 to manage mobile borders, where they agree that the mountain border may follow gradual and natural changes, defined as the result of erosion or glacier melting. Sudden natural and superficial alterations and superficial alterations normally leave the boundary line unaffected. However, in such cases, the states may agree to exchange equivalent surface areas. Both countries commit to regular border monitoring and biennial revisions, thanks to joint work by technicians from both nations. A treaty envisaging the same principles, without the option of exchanging portions of land, had already been established between Austria and Italy in 1994, demonstrating an innovative approach to the “instability” of borders. These two treaties currently stand as unique among Alpine nations. In this framework, the Rifugio Guide del Cervino, as human settlement affected by border shifts, raised administrative, economic, and legal issues concerning its management. For instance, approvals from both countries were required for its renovation project in preparation for the cable car’s inauguration. This affected the reopening of the refuge, which was possible after significant delays.

3. Franco-Italian Cross-Border Cooperation on Mont Blanc

The experience of Alpine borders prompts reflection on the border as a place where dynamics of both separation and cooperation simultaneously unfold. Within a balance between best practices and obstacles, the Alpine region is a significant example with a well-established and evolving tradition of cross-border cooperation.

3.1. Espace Mont-Blanc (EMB) and the Alcotra project

In the 1990s, prompted by the European institutional framework of the Interreg Community Initiative Programme and the Rome Agreement (1993), significant Alpine projects emerged, including the creation of the Espace Mont-Blanc (EMB). Covering 3,500 square kilometers, the EMB involves cross-border cooperation among Savoie and Haute-Savoie in France, the autonomous region of Vallée d’Aoste in Italy, and the Canton of Valais in Switzerland (Alderighi et al. 2020). The EMB, with a unique juridical status, operates through the Mont Blanc Conference, a consultation table representing five components from each country at all institutional levels involved in cross-border cooperation (EMB 2023).

From 2007, significant cooperation projects, including the Mont Blanc Observatory, emerged under the fourth and fifth programming cycles of Interreg Alcotra (Alpes Latines Coopération TRAnsfrontalière), dedicated to

cohesion between French and Italian Alpine regions. The ongoing sixth programming cycle (2021–2027), with a budget of 182 million euros, covers the extensive 515-kilometer Franco-Italian border territory (Interreg Alcotra 2021). Introducing innovations in governance tools and reinforcing territorial specificities, this cycle addresses coordination issues among stakeholders, emphasizing local interest groups. This effort aims to overcome historical weaknesses in cooperation projects, such as focus on the number of institutional entities rather than their competencies, planning complexity, and lack of shared strategic vision (Botteghi 2020). The innovations in the latest cycle provide an impetus for structural innovation, aligning with the recent Quirinal Treaty, a relevant turning point discussed in the following paragraph.

3.2. The Quirinal Treaty: a new perspective?

Signed in Rome on November 26, 2021, and effective since February 1, 2023, the Quirinal Treaty strengthens cooperation between France and Italy across economic, diplomatic, and defense policies. The preamble highlights objectives related to combating global warming and preserving biodiversity. Article 10, dedicated to cross-border cooperation, underscores the land border’s significance as a shared interest area for both populations and proposes the establishment of a cross-border committee chaired by the Foreign Ministers of both countries, involving representatives from various entities.

Two years after the Quirinal Treaty’s signing, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided an update on its implementation, reporting consultations organized by Ambassadors throughout 2022 to prepare “the modalities for the establishment and functioning of the committee” (Ambassade de France en Italie 2023). Alcotra project leaders have aligned with the treaty, expressing readiness to overcome differences on environmental and cross-border issues (Interreg Alcotra 2023[a], 6–7). In this framework, a new funded project, Alcotraité (2021–2027), specifically targets obstacles to cross-border cooperation, such as climate change, envisioning a Technical Table in support of the cross-border committee of Article 10 (Interreg Alcotra 2023[b]). This latter, formed from representatives of border communities, parliamentarians of both countries, and cross-border organizations, held its inaugural meeting in Turin on October 31, 2023. The committee has devised a multi-year work plan covering topics such as mobility, environmental protection, and public service organization, with plans for another meeting in 2024. From these elements, it seems clear that the treaty creates new opportunities for institutionalized bilateralism (Darnis 2022), establishing forums to address specific issues. The effectiveness of addressing these concerns and fostering cross-border cooperation hinges on how they are analyzed and tackled.

4. Conclusions

The Mont Blanc border dispute, rooted in a historical context where the involved countries used the border for national sovereignty demarcation, entailed challenges due to the mountainous terrain and imprecise maps in the nineteenth century. The mid-2010s brought external factors like technological progress and climate change, challenging the notion of fixed references by maps. Borders are shifting, climate is changing, and local communities grapple with preserving the environment and ensuring safety for winter sports enthusiasts. Who has the authority to govern this?

Many involved actors maintain a territorial preservation approach, struggling to envision a resolution ingrained in the political culture of both countries. The experience of cross-border cooperation, despite valuable initiatives in environmental awareness promotion, needs to embrace a perspective of change. Innovative approaches in the Alpine context, such as the ETRS89 system and legal recognition of the mobile nature of borders in bilateral agreements, show that technology and international treaties positively impact border communities when awareness of the relative nature of borders is internalized.

The case study of Rifugio Guide del Cervino exemplifies a problem-oriented approach to border management. However, it risks limited effectiveness if decision-makers focus solely on areas affected by current issues. Given the rapid alterations in Alpine ecosystems due to global warming, governance approaches beyond territorial exchanges are crucial.

The Quirinal Treaty introduces new practices to implement and evaluate (Lazar 2022), even if it sets a legal framework with little room for deviation. Its merit lies in acknowledging the border as a common interest, providing an impetus for decision-makers to view the Franco-Italian borders differently. For Mont Blanc, the disputed area is not just a zone resistant to innovation but a resource calling for shared collective responsibilities beyond border positioning. This perspective can leverage the strengths of both countries, including cross-border cooperation experiences, the skills within mountain communities, and the universally recognized landscape value of Mont Blanc. Overcoming vulnerabilities like those affecting the Alpine ecosystem and climate uncertainty requires embracing a dynamic approach to governance, recognizing borders as evolving and calling for collaborative responsibility.

5. Implications and recommendations

Considering the positions held by France and Italy, a definitive resolution of the dispute seems currently unlikely, as neither country seems inclined to relinquish sovereignty in favor of an international arbitrator. It

seems more feasible to identify actions that can mitigate the adverse effects of this dispute concerning two objectives: addressing climate change and overcoming obstacles to cross-border cooperation.

These intervention areas are identified among Alcotra Program 2021–2027 priorities, as shown in Figure 7. Specific recommendations will be identified in the following paragraphs, including: mapping the effects of climate change on the border and shaping network-based governance models for strategic decisions in the region.

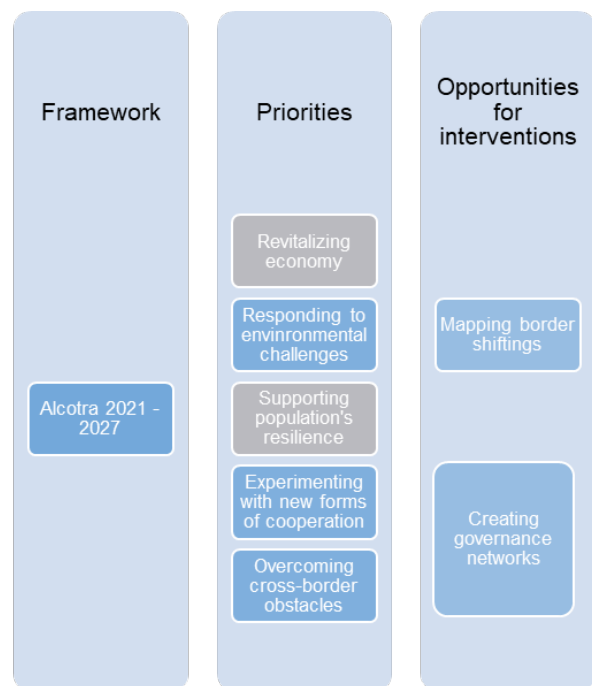


Figure 7. Priorities in Alcotra 2021–2027 and opportunities for interventions. Source: the author.

5.1. Mapping border shifts

A recent French report (Carroué 2023) highlights the absence of a quantitative study correlating glacier melting and border changes in the Mont Blanc area, despite available climate data in the Espace Mont-Blanc. Mapping this correlation is prudent due to significant Mont Blanc glacier loss and the need for an updated understanding of mountain movements in response to climate change. The area's three tension points complicate its morphology, emphasizing the need for research into how these areas behave—whether shrinking or expanding—for future environmental studies. While the positional dispute poses challenges to the project, experiences in other territorial disputes, like Lake Constance or the Ems-Dollart estuary, suggest the possibility of “agreeing to disagree” on the exact border

position. This approach could be applied to the disputed Mont Blanc area, forming the basis for joint projects, such as a monitoring plan for border movements. Existing resources and expertise only require synergies for implementation. The Observatoire du Mont-Blanc’s (OMB) continuous climate data production can be integrated with border information validated by Italy and France within the ETRS89 framework. Although the border dispute hindered the project’s completion in the contested area, adopting specific validation of the double boundary line is proposed. This involves listing points from ETRS89 coordinates defining the diverging boundary lines, creating a digitized map of the contested area, and using the satellite stations network, including the Lignan station in the Mont Blanc area, for further research.

5.1.1. Activating and maintaining a measurement system

The valorization of existing experiences and the creation of a partnership among competent entities constitute the initial stages for implementing a measurement system for border movements in response to climate change. The system requires numerous monitoring and revision processes to endure over time, enabling it to produce relevant information and adapt to environmental modifications. This is a progressive and cyclical development, articulated into various phases, which can be summarized in Figure 8.

In particular, it would be helpful to establish a stable synergy between the French and Italian mapping institutes and the OMB. Swiss intervention could be helpful, at least in the preliminary phases, to share

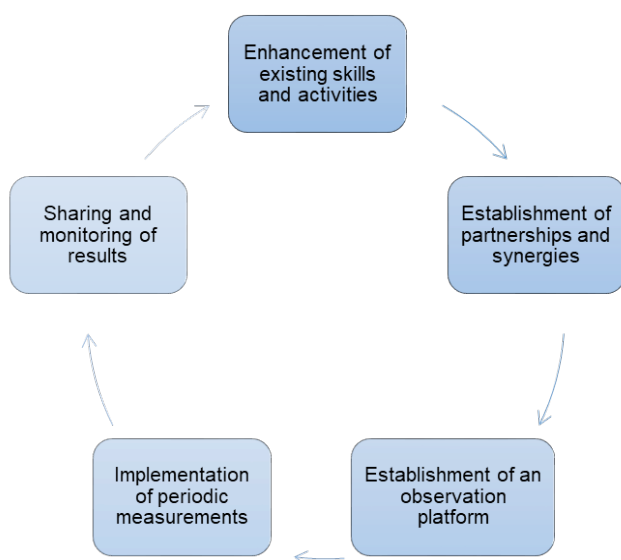


Figure 8. Activation of a system for measuring border movements due to climate change in the Mont Blanc area. Source: the author.

best practices by its Topography Office, particularly regarding methods and implementing strategies. Subsequently, features and details of a research platform could be defined with specific reference to the time intervals for measuring border movements. For instance, the same time window used to assess glacier mass variations could be applied to evaluate border shifts, specifically the hydrological year from October to September of the following year. This approach would facilitate consistent assessments and, consequently, more accessible correlation studies.

Another critical aspect is identifying methods for comparing and sharing results. In this regard, the experience of the OMB as a digital platform, with its timely and widespread production of climate data and information, can serve as a starting point to circulate these studies and make them a resource available to communities and administrations. All the results from monitoring should be shared, discussed, and developed to be the foundation of following operational strategies. In the following paragraph, proposals for suitable implementation models will be addressed.

5.2. Enhancing substantial symmetry

Incidents at the Mont Blanc border from 2015 to 2020 underscore several weaknesses in cross-border cooperation governance:

- Historically, a balance based on an equal number of institutions from different countries has been sought, neglecting a homogeneous set of competencies.
- France and Italy conceptualize relationships differently between local administrations and central governments, leading to more formal than substantive symmetry at consultation tables (Botteghi 2020).
- Representation is imperfect, with smaller entities relying on more prominent ones, risking inadequate communication and dialogue.

To address these issues, governance should prioritize substantial representation of powers and competencies and facilitating information flow and dialogue among all parties involved. A coherent territorial governance model can be established by focusing on both vertical coordination (among local and national institutions) and horizontal coordination (among the involved states) (Faludi & Peyrony 2011).

5.2.1. Creating new governance networks

From the perspective of government tools, the Quirinal Treaty has both a conservative and innovative role. On the one hand, it maintains the existing array of tools and means provided by community legislation; on the other hand, it paves the way for a new instrument, the cross-border committee. Under what conditions can

this committee serve as a basis for innovation and not become a mere bureaucratic bottleneck? Which role can the Technical Table of the regions envisaged by the Alcotraité project assume? It seems advisable to recommend that, in the design of these new institutions, a census of powers and competencies be carried out among the entities sitting at the consultation table of the EMB. This is a necessary starting point to prevent the new institutions from operating as mere duplicates of existing ones or, conversely, to avoid “vacant functions” that could hinder and slow down decision-making processes. In addition, it would be helpful for the Technical Table to operate by suggesting specific environmental topics to the thematic committee on a case-by-case basis. To promote improved cross-border cooperation and prevent incidents like those that occurred between 2015 and 2020, the committee could promote interaction and synergy among competent institutions to define strategies about issues of common interest, such as:

- Specific regulation and programming of access to sports and tourist facilities (mountaineering and trekking routes, skiing, and paragliding landing areas).
- Definition of protected and off-limits areas due to climate conditions.
- Maintenance of border markers and demarcation tools in general.

Regarding the third point, it is crucial that on-the-ground maintenance of the border is aligned with delineation on digital maps and shared on a bilateral basis, also considering that deterioration or displacement of demarcation tools can provide important “site-specific” information about mountain conditions, territorial stability, and, in general, climate change.

More generally, a perspective of bilateral sharing should guide all impacted entities from both countries. Institutions should operate within this framework with a network-based perspective, prioritizing the exchange and dissemination of information over bureaucratic procedural structures. The resulting system should be lean, goal-oriented, and flexible in adapting to emerging needs and facilitating the flow of information.

Is this innovation genuinely achievable in the Mont Blanc area? It is indeed a recent perspective which can be embraced gradually but undoubtedly leads to adopting, at the foundation of international relations, a concept of undetermined and evolving space, where geographic study does not lose its significance but instead engages with this necessary dynamism (Agnew 2015). Whether and how Italy and France progressively embrace this perspective in their bilateral relations will significantly impact the implementation of this type of governance and its effect on the Mont Blanc dispute.

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