



LINES OF EXCLUSION AS ARENAS OF CO-OPERATION:  
RECONFIGURING THE EXTERNAL BOUNDARIES OF EUROPE  
POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PERCEPTIONS

# EXLINEA

## Welcome!

Despite the vicissitudes of national and local politics, the uncertainties of referenda and the conflicts of interest inherent in the process of European integration, EU enlargement now seems to be well on track. Starting in 2004, Hungary, Poland, Estonia and other candidates will be admitted into a Union that is itself within a process of transformation. EXLINEA is about the present and future outer boundaries of this expanding community. Here we will be exploring the development of cross-border avenues of communication and co-operation and examining the capacity for “region-building” (that is, the development of co-operative structures, governance practices and conflict-minimising dialogue) in eight case study areas.

Borders are a geopolitical reality as well as a social institution. As the EU takes on new members and its external boundaries gradually shift, socio-economic and political transformations are taking place at the borders – the community’s “outer edge”. These transformations also signify new regional development opportunities but often problems and tensions. The promotion of cross-border co-operation has, for over a decade now, been an important strategic policy tool with which the EU has attempted to further its integration agenda and create a sense of European “belonging”. Yet is it still realistic to assume that cross-border co-operation can transcend stark socio-economic and structural asymmetries as well historical animosities and facilitate positive interaction with neighbouring non-EU states?



We believe that the particular value of EXLINEA lies in its innovative scientific approach as well as in its pragmatic, policy-oriented perspectives. Both of these elements are reflected in our particular focus on potentials for local/regional co-operation and in the following research questions:

- What are the principle socio-economic, political and environmental challenges that require cross-border collective action in contexts of EU enlargement?
- How are policies, that regulate the ‘permeability’ of borders, compatible with pursuits to promote cross-border co-operation? How do European, national and local policies and interests coalesce and/or clash with regard to the development of closer cross-border networks?
- What have been the national, regional and local responses to EU border policies at different stages of enlargement?
- What strategies have been developed by local facilitators to promote region building in terms of formal and informal integration processes? What governance functions can be realistically attributed to cross-border co-operation?
- What results in terms of perceived added value have been achieved through cross-border co-operation?
- Is cross-border region building (e.g. in the form of Euro regions) helping instil a sense of a common interest and European identity?

EXLINEA is thus concerned with the “bounding” of the EU on the one hand and a “blurring” of boundaries for interregional co-operation on the other. Simultaneous processes of “inclusion” and “exclusion” of defining the “new EU” versus a “non-EU Europe” will require strategies capable of bridging borderland communities, many of them in extreme peripheral locations. Perhaps it is these borderlands where “positive interdependence” and partnership can be pioneered as the EU enlarges eastward.

We will keep you regularly informed as to the progress of EXLINEA and hope you find the next three years with us stimulating and informative.

**James Scott**  
Project coordinator

## Project introduction

Over the last decade the conventional cartography of nation-states, delineated by hard and fast boundaries, has begun to be challenged by the emergence of new cross border co-operative alliances. The fact is that no longer regions, cities, interest groups and enterprise networks are defining the exclusive domains of national governments and international relations.

Assuming that the development of cross-border interaction mechanisms is a vital element in dealing with the political and socio-economic challenges of EU expansion, EXLINEA examines opportunities and constraints for local/regional cross-border co-operation in the CEE. State borders are viewed as socio-political constructs whilst cross-border region building is conceptualised as a process of formal and informal integration conditioned by overlying policies, co-operation practices and perceptions regarding the significance of cross-border interaction.

The core focus of this research is to study cross-border interaction processes and patterns as a result of policies at various

levels and established forms of co-operation practices, conditioned by the perceptions of various public and private actors.

The work will be carried out over a 36-month period. After a short preparatory phase, work will be centred on three successive empirical steps, the synthesis of data and dissemination activities. Project management (incl. the production of a final report) will be treated as a separate work package.

Milestones consist of workshops (discussion of cumulative results with various actor groups, experts, officials and practitioners), interim and final reports.

Expected results include: uncovering relations between the EU and national policies and local-level co-operation practices; enhancing conceptual clarity and comparability through analysing political, socio-economic and discursive dimensions of cross-border interaction and generating hypotheses to facilitate future research.



## The case study areas

The case studies under scrutiny are Finnish- Russian, Estonian- Russian, Polish- Ukrainian, Hungarian- Romanian-Ukrainian and Romanian- Moldavian. Regions in the Balkan Peninsula that typify Greece's unique situation as an external EU border will be treated as well. In addition background reports will be compiled for cross-border regions in the German- Polish and Austrian- Hungarian border regions.

All these regions are in many ways economic and political peripheries within the larger European context. They represent the challenges of enlargement in several ways: at these borders problems of accommodating the rights of ethnic minorities often coalesce with issues relating to trade, public security, the environment and infrastructure.

Furthermore, the six case studies and two background reports for regions represent different stages of border regime formation with respect to EU enlargement.

Geographically speaking, the case studies will focus on sub areas and/ or groups of cities where cross-border co-operation is spatially concentrated and where cross- border interaction is an important everyday issue.

It is important to note, that one- to- one comparability of the case study regions in terms of geographical extension, population and/or territorial units involved is not necessarily relevant to the research.

## Why was EXLINEA started

The aim of the project EXLINEA, “Lines of Exclusion as Arenas of Co-operation: Reconfiguring the External Boundaries of Europe – Policies, Practices, Perceptions”, is to examine capacities for “region-building” across national borders in Central and Eastern European border areas in anticipation of EU enlargement. The social, economic and political transformations associated with enlargement signify not only new regional development opportunities but also new problems and tensions as processes of “inclusion” and “exclusion” condition cross-border interaction. For this reason it is necessary to find mechanisms that mediate between external pressures and local concerns. Thus, within the EU’s Fifth Framework Programme, EXLINEA investigates issues of innovative regional governance as well as European integration and citizenship.

The EXLINEA project conducts analysis of cross-border co-operation in six major and two background case studies. These areas include Finnish-Russian, Estonian-Russian, Polish-Ukrainian, Hungarian-Romanian-Ukrainian, and Romanian-Moldavian, Greek-Bulgarian and, finally, German-Polish and Austrian-Hungarian border regions. While these border regions do not represent all the border regions of the European Union’s present and future external boundaries, they are an excellent cross-section — characterised as they are by socio-economic asymmetries, minority rights issues and the legacies of twentieth century geopolitics.

The basic philosophy underlying EXLINEA’s research design interprets borders and regions as socially constructed entities subject to multilevel constraints and opportunity structures. We contend that a focus on attitudinal and action-centred constructions of border regions can reveal much about their abilities to facilitate collective action and conflict minimising

governance mechanisms. The conceptual centre of the project is the notion of “regionalisation”, understood and measurable in terms of attitudes, practices and policy frameworks that condition cross-border co-operation. Consequently, we believe that the particular value of EXLINEA lies in its conceptual aims as well as in its pragmatic and policy-oriented perspective. The “research framework”, focusing on “policies,” “practices” and “perceptions” will provide a consistent basis with which to manage the empirical diversity of the case studies. Through the synthesis of data gathered from these different regional contexts, the project consortium aims to generate policy-relevant as well as state-of-the-art scientific results.

“EXLINEA’s project team” consists of scholars from experienced border research institutes. Coming from various scientific backgrounds, the scholars represent EXLINEA’s wider European dimension. Regular team members come from Estonia, Germany, Greece, Finland, Poland, the Netherlands, and Hungary. Through regular communication and exchanges of information scientists who are working on similar projects in Russia, Romania, the Ukraine and elsewhere are also consulted.

“Dissemination activities” will include a project web-site, a newsletter, scientific articles, policy papers, seminars, the production of material for university-level courses, and a book publication. The aim is not only to address other scholars and EU policy makers and representatives of respective international organisations in Europe, but also to reach other target groups on all levels of regional and national policy-making and governance.

**By James Scott and Silke Matzeit**

Project co-ordinators

## Objectives

The aim of the project is to examine capacities for cross-border cooperation and governance in CEE in anticipation of EU expansion. Cross-border region-building in Europe has developed in response to political and socio-economic challenges of integration as well as to opportunity structures provided by the EU. Still, its overall political (and problem-solving) significance in the context of enlargement is as yet unclear.

The project seeks to contribute practical and scientific knowledge to this important policy area through

- 1) conceptualising cross-border region-building as a product of social and spatial practices involving formal institutionalisations (explicit political constraints and opportunity structures) and informal integration (social interaction, participation of civil society), and
- 2) informing the wider scientific and policy debate by providing empirical data.



## EXLINEA start up meeting held in Tallinn 10.–12. January 2003

EXLINEA held their first meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, on January 10-12, 2003. Altogether, 26 people from the EXLINEA Consortium attended the meeting. It was one of the six workshops to be held during the project expected to last for 3 years. The second consortium meeting will take place in September 2003 in Hungary.

The meeting lasted for three days and was professionally chaired by the project co-ordinator James Scott, who in addition provided the project participants with the remarks regarding the contract conditions and management requirements. As it was a first meeting, there were presentations on the deliverables and milestones of EXLINEA, discussion on some questions that arise regarding changes to work-packages and budget. Detailed project plans were discussed and the setting up of smaller working groups.

During the meeting there were presentations regarding the end user needs in promoting CBC and regional development in European border areas; presentation about structure of EXLINEA web-site and newsletters. The theoretical framework and methodology, within the supranational studies and EU policy, was also discussed.

All the participants were very pleased with the initial meeting, which was a great starting point for the research work to last for the next three and half years.

The meeting was organised and hosted by Peipsi CTC.

## Forthcoming events

EXLINEA was started in January 2003, and the next couple of months will be devoted to preparing background reports for case studies in all border areas and putting together a template for an empirical framework.

The first summary reports, from the case study areas on national and sub national level, will be launched in March 2004. Below is a short list of the most important forthcoming events.

April 2003

**Background reports for case studies**

September 2003

**Empirical framework. Final draft ready and discussion at the next workshop in Hungary.**

**Next issue of the EXLINEA Newsletter**



## Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention: A case study on “Shared Cities” Narva – Ivangorod

Culture and cultural activities are essential to promote or re-establish the dialogue between cultural communities. To analyse the sources and mechanisms at the origin of conflicts between cultural and religious communities, to define preventive actions and to undertake activities aimed at the strengthening and restoration of dialogue between communities, the Council of Europe launched the *Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention Project*. As a part of the project, the Council of Europe Cultural Policy and Action Department initiated the “Shared Cities” activity that will define guidelines for policy-makers, civil society and cultural agents, publish a compendium of good practices, and encourage, through creation of a shared cities network and joint projects. This work includes preparation of a series of case studies highlighting the impact of cultural projects on the promotion and reconstruction of inter-community dialogue in “shared cities”. The cities chosen for case studies are Belfast (Northern Ireland), Nicosia (Cyprus), Narva (Estonia), Uzhgorod (Ukraine) and Mitrovitsa (Kosovo).

The Narva case study report was prepared by the Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation. The report describes the history of and political and economic situation in Narva: discusses the role of cultural links in promoting co-operation between the border towns of Narva and Ivangorod as well as in helping integration of the Narva “Russian-speaking” community into Estonian society: and formulates some general recommendations for use of cultural activities in promoting cross-border co-operation and cultural integration in Narva. These recommendations could also be possibly used in other border areas in Europe.

Concerning the cross border co-operation of Narva with Ivangorod and other Russian towns, the conducted study confirmed that in the context of the European enlargement

the ongoing process of interaction between Narva and Ivangorod develops in a positive direction. The co-operative arrangements will be developing towards forming a twin town – with a commonly accepted border zone status that provides certain rights and opportunities due to and contrary to the state border and cultural co-operation plays an important role in this process. However, given the recent eventualities of political conflicts in this border region, this process of stabilisation and development requires time. A condition for this process is institutionalisation of the cross-border co-operation through creation of clear procedures and structures for cross-border co-operation. The entrance of Estonia into the EU is an important positive factor in promoting stability and cross-border co-operation through supporting diverse co-operation projects of Narva with Ivangorod.

This study of the role of cultural activities and links in promoting the intercultural dialogue in Narva and supporting the process of integration of the Narva non-Estonian population into Estonian society showed that cultural activities play an important role in promoting the dialogue and that there is a very wide range of methods and approaches effectively used in Narva by different groups of people for overcoming difficulties of the unstable development and fears connected with the border position of Narva. Efforts of the local municipality, the educational institutions and people of Narva aimed at supporting the revival of the historical cultural heritage of Narva are on the way and with time it will also help to develop a shared local identity among the Narva local community and to improve the image of Narva in Estonia and in Europe.

**Jane Susi and Gulnara Roll**

Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation



## Description of the participants with contact details

### FREE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN (Germany)

FUB is a multi-disciplinary working group incorporated within the Department of Geography at the Free University of Berlin.

Presently it encompasses various aspects of urban and regional development and planning.

Name Dr. James Scott (Project Coordinator)

Tel 49 30 83870169; 49 30 83870201

Fax 49 30 76706435

E-mail Jscott@geog.fu-berlin.de

### PEIPSI CENTER FOR TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION (Estonia)

CTC is an international, non-governmental organisation which aims to promote sustainable development and cross border co-operation in the border areas of the Baltic States and the New Independent States.

Name Dr. Gulnara Roll

Jane Susi

Tel 372 7 302 302

Fax 372 7 302 301

E-mail Gulnara.Roll@ctc.ee

Jane.Susi@ctc.ee

### THE NIJEMEGEN CENTRE FOR BORDER RESEARCH (Netherlands)

NCBR's important themes are concentrated on the policy of Euro-regions, bi-national cities, the governance of cross-borders economic, social and political networks, democracy and legitimacy in border regions, cross-border labour markets, borders as barriers, regional and national identity, mental borders and borders as social and political constructs.

Name Dr. Henk van Houtum

Tel 31 24 3612725

Fax 31 24 3611841

E-mail H.vanHoutum@nsm.kun.nl

### THE UNIVERSITY OF JOENSUU (Finland)

UJOE's task is to carry out basic and applied research into the intellectual and material development of Eastern Finland and Karelia.

Name Dr. Ilkka Liikanen

Tel 358 13 251 111

Fax 358 13 251 2472

E-mail Ilkka.Liikanen@joensuu.fi

### UNIVERSITY OF TARTU (Estonia)

The UT is concentrated in two aspects, one is the negotiation with Russia over the border and the other refers to socio-economic cultural and political conditions of the borderlands.

Name Dr. Eiki Berg

Tel 372 7 375 311

Fax 372 7 375 154

E-mail berg@cie.ut.ee

### THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, CENTRE FOR REGIONAL STUDIES (Hungary)

The CRS is concentrated in the development of cross-border relations on Hungarian-Romanian and Hungarian- Ukrainian boundaries.

Name Dr. Béla Baranyi

Tel 36 52 455 371, 36 52 504 336

Fax 36 52 455 371

E-mail baranyib@rkk.hu

### THE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY (Greece)

The UTH is concentrated in regional economic development and policy, urban and regional planning, transportation planning, public administration and policy, geography and methods of analysis, social and environmental issues.

Name Dr. George Petrakos

Tel 30 4210 74468

Fax 30 4210 74285

E-mail petrakos@uth.gr

### THE UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW (Poland)

EUROREG is an interdisciplinary research and educational institution specialising in regional and local studies and policies. The institute carries out research on the transformation processes in Central and Eastern European countries and conducts comparative studies of the development of science and technology.

Name Dr. Grzegorz Gorzelak

Tel 48 22 826 16 54

Fax 48 22 826 21 68

E-mail Gorzelak@post.pl

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