

Conference announcement and call for papers

Regional development challenges of EU border regions in the context of the interaction between the EU and countries of its immediate “neighbourhood”

Venue and Date: 16 - 17 June 2008, Tartu, Estonia

Organisers

University of Tartu Institute of Politics and Government and Eurocollege
Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation
Estonian Foreign Policy Institute
Institute of Advanced Studies - Vienna

Discussion

The EU eastern border regions have become “borderlands” at the eastern edges of the EU with the several waves of the enlargement of the European Union - of 1981 (Greece), 1995 (Austria, Finland), 2004 (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) and 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). With the last vestiges of the “Iron Curtain” vanishing, citizens, communities and regions have chosen to open new avenues of communication with their neighbours across state borders. Furthermore, in those contexts where states have (re)gained their independence (e.g. Baltic States, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Balkans) and new borders have emerged, Euroregions, economic partnerships, twin-city investments, cross-border urban networks and similar forms of interaction have also come into being. This cooperation reflects the attempt to use the border as a resource for economic and cultural exchange as well as for building coalitions for regional development purposes.

The *border areas* also function as “gateways” for the European Union, situated as they are at important transcontinental road and railway networks. To the extent that they develop locational strengths beyond mere transit spaces for goods, people and infrastructure, the cross-border cooperation could contribute to economic dynamism and socio-cultural development of those border regions.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that regions at the EU’s eastern borders represent a considerable challenge to national development policies as well as to European cohesion. These regions are, by and large, peripheral areas, not only far from the dynamic centres of “Core Europe” but often distant from prosperous national centres as well. Many of them continue to suffer from *outmigration*, *de-industrialisation*, and negative demographic trends. In addition, neighbouring regions on the other side of the border are similarly disadvantaged, resulting in “*double peripheries*” within a greater *European context*. The regions under consideration are thus potential areas of serious social and economic problems.

The conference objective

The conference will discuss regional development challenges and opportunities of the EU's easternmost regions in the context of the interaction between the EU with the countries of its immediate "neighbourhood" – Russia and other CIS countries – Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The conference will address three major topics:

1. Economic and social development patterns of border regions. Impact of relevant EU¹, national and regional policies to the development of border regions. Border areas as gateways - development of cross-border transport, including tourist routes, and economic infrastructure across borders. Cross-border cooperation practices.
2. Research and innovation in border areas; strategies for cross-border cooperation in research and higher education.
3. Interplay of European, national and regional identities along and across the new eastern borders of the European Union

Papers will be selected on the basis of abstract of 500 to 750 words. Abstracts have to include author's current position and contact details (e-mail, phone). Accepted papers will be published in the conference proceedings.

Deadline for Registration and Abstracts: April 11, 2008

Notification of Acceptance by the Programme Committee: May 2, 2008

Full Paper Submission: June 6, 2008

Conference information: www.ctc.ee/CBCconference/

Please register to the conference at <http://www.eformular.com/piretuus/june2008.html>

Please submit your abstract to Piret.Uus@ctc.ee

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¹ The EU policies include the Lisbon Agenda, EU Cohesion Policy, EU Research and Technological Development Policy, the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the EU – Russia strategic partnership/four common spaces.