

## BORDERS, TRANSBORDER RELATIONS AND GOVERNANCE. INTRODUCTION

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In the contemporary, fast-changing world we can also see a change in the role of borders, border areas, cross-border cooperation and governance. The character and spatial range of transborder relations keep widening, and their institutional context changes as well. Those are issues addressed by the current volume of *Quaestiones Geographicae*. Today border-related research demands an interdisciplinary approach, and this interdisciplinary trait can be found in the volume too.

An inspiration for this theme issue was a series of workshops on “Small-scale European integration by cross-border cooperation” organised under the ERASMUS Lifelong Learning Intensive Programme by four universities: of Koblenz-Landau, Strasbourg, Joensuu, and Poznań. In 2009 the workshop took place in the German-French borderland (a border between the “old” EU members), in 2010 in the Finnish-Russian borderland (an external EU border), and the 2011 one is scheduled to be held in the Polish-German borderland (a border between an “old” and a “new” EU member). Lectures, discussions, literature studies and fieldwork conducted during the workshops have shown that problems of borders, transborder relations and governance – despite the diminishing role of borders

in Europe – are not only still of topical interest, but also have to be enriched with new issues and methodological approaches. The present volume has been compiled with this idea in mind, and the authors of the articles are largely the organisers and participants of the workshops as well as other recognised experts in border research.

The journal opens with an article by Andreas Pudlat on institutionalised border protection, its perceptibility, and experience of inner-European borders. Border protection is a special indication of border areas. Although systematic control has disappeared from the borders following the Schengen Agreement, this does not mean – in the author's opinion – the end of border protection, but rather a change in the manifestation and perceptibility of borders and border areas. The article suggests four perspectives in which they could be experienced and perceived: a cognitive, an affective, a visual-haptic, and an aesthetic one.

The institutional context is also present in the next article by Jirka Zapletal. The author devotes it to a new tool facilitating cross-border cooperation and governance: the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The legal nature, main tasks, organisation, state control and liability of the EGTC are discussed, followed by the

geography and further steps of the implementation process.

A very important element of cross-border cooperation is environmental issues. This is the topic addressed by Jarmo Kortelainen in his article on environmental governance and reshaping border areas. He focuses on the European Green Belt (EGB), a concept designed to create a network of conservation areas along the borderline that used to divide Europe into the socialist and the capitalist block.

Yet another domain of cross-border cooperation is security, the subject tackled by Emilia Bogacka with modern Europe as an example. She presents selected European institutions and organisations fighting cross-border crime, programmes of external border control in Europe, and problems of security of the Polish borders.

The article by Patricia Zander shows, on the example of Strasbourg in France, how an inflow of asylum seekers can change a border town. It also shows an evolution of the notion of a border, which is less and less "physically visible", but is fixed in people's awareness and manifests itself, e.g., in the creation of new border-like spaces for asylum seekers.

Transborder relationships depend on a number of factors. The next authors, Sylwia Dołzbłasz and Andrzej Raczyk, discuss the role of the so-called integrating factor in the shaping of those relations. They seek to identify in particular what drives cooperation in the Polish-German and Polish-Czech border areas.

Specific problems of cross-border cooperation can be found at the external boundary of the European Union and the Schengen Area. Tadeusz Palmowski illustrates them on the example of relations between Poland and the Kaliningrad Dis-

trict of the Russian Federation. He concludes that the opening of Europe to Kaliningrad and vice versa as well as their cross-border cooperation may be a chance for the region to overcome its peripheralisation.

In the next article Alexander Tölle argues that in the times of globalisation the idea of cooperation across state borders is not limited to territorial entities physically adjacent to them. In particular, big cities as increasingly important actors in the international arena try to define their own "foreign policies", which may include establishing transnational alliances, networks and cooperation areas. The article presents the transborder networking of the city of Poznań in Poland, with a focus on the strategic network of the Oder/Odra Partnership.

While the boundaries of the European Union states become more and more open, there are still many countries in the world where a border is an impenetrable barrier. An example is the one between North and South Korea. Even there, however, limited forms of cooperation have been instituted lately, as exemplified by Special Economic Zones located in the Korean demilitarised zone. This topic is taken up by Bernhard Köppen, the author of the last article in the volume. This may be one of the few examples of English-language studies devoted to this Asian region for which reliable information is extremely hard to obtain. The article shows that in the Korean context the concepts of the border, cross-border relations and governance assume a totally different meaning.

I hope that such a broad treatment of the theme of this issue of *Quaestiones Geographicae* will meet with the interest and kind reception of its readers.