

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE CONCEPT OF BORDERLESS EUROPE?

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE PERSPECTIVES
OF BORDER POLICIES AND TERRITORIAL
COOPERATION IN AN AGE OF MULTIPLE CRISES

PANEL 3: Towards cross-border citizenship



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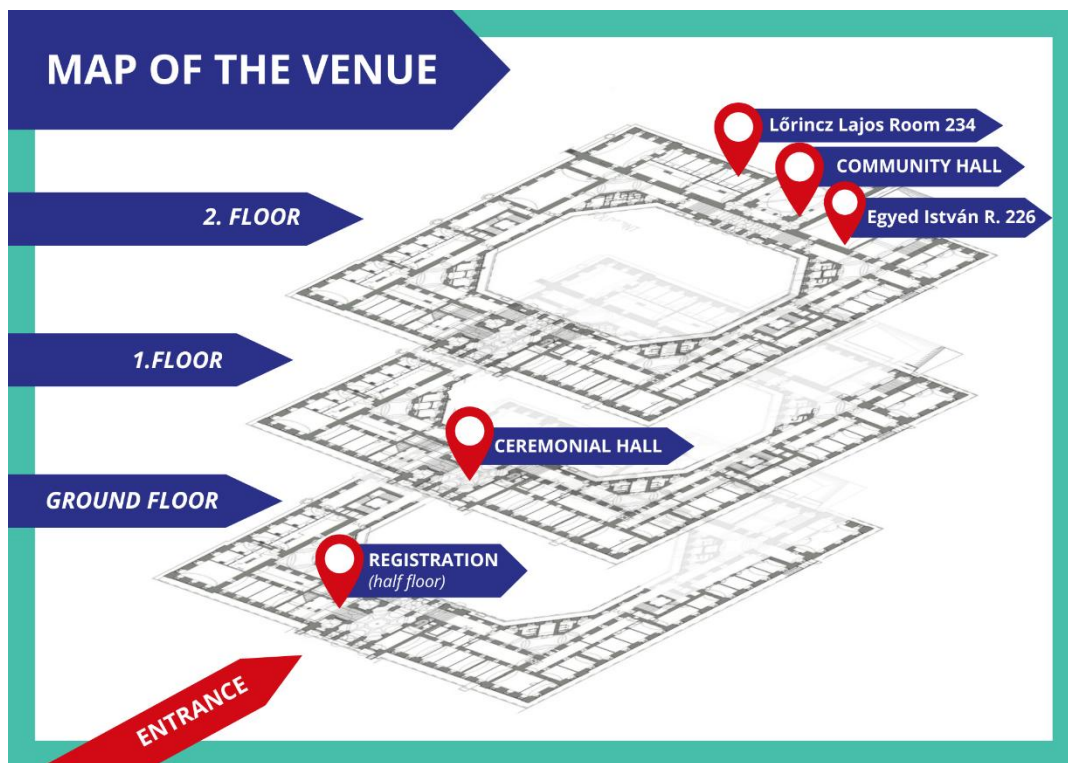


Time

13 May 2025: 14:50 to 16:20

Venue

The venue of the panel is Ludovika University of Public Service, Ludovika Main Building, 2nd floor, Lőrincz Lajos Room 234



Topic

The panel aims to analyse social phenomena challenging the nation-state paradigm and national confines, namely cross-border mobility, multiple citizenships, cross-border social networks, and citizen engagement in cross-border developments.



Speakers and presentations

Iban Larrandaburu

Euro-Institut Pyrene, France

Iban Larrandaburu is a PhD student in Public Law, focusing on the institutionalization of cross-border actions by French local authorities, using the Western Pyrenees as a case study. Affiliated with the Euro-Institut Pyrene, a collaboration between the Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (France), Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea/Universidad del País Vasco (Spain), and Universidad Pública de Navarra (Spain), his research examines mobility and cross-border citizenship in the Basque border space from a legal perspective.

1. Mobility and cross border citizenship in the Basque border space: a legal analysis

Cross-border citizenship is a marker of a borderless Europe. It stands as a stated objective of the European Union, yet it lacks a clear legal framework. It is fundamentally based on the free movement of inhabitants across borders, enabling their attachment to their cross-border spaces. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the interdependence between mobility and cross-border citizenship, as restrictions triggered mobilization among residents to defend their right to free movement. More importantly, it shed light on two aspects of cross-border citizenship within a dynamic space shaped by a strong cross-border territorial identity, such as in the Basque Country—an area where cross-border mobility remains extremely marginal and therefore does not align with the classical approach to European cross-border citizenship. The analysis of cross-border citizenship reveals two complementary dimensions: patrimonial and functional. I) Mobility as a Means of Asserting Cross-Border Patrimonial Citizenship. Cross-border citizenship is first rooted in a shared heritage, inherited from previous generations and passed on to the next. The concept of a borderless identity serves as a cornerstone of this citizenship. This heritage is both intangible (language, culture, shared history) and tangible (common natural spaces). Mobility is essential for citizens to reclaim and preserve these patrimonial elements. Crossing the border strengthens the sense of belonging to a shared territory and facilitates the transmission of common heritage. Specific public policies support this dynamic, such as mobility programs focused on preserving cross-border regional languages or organizing specific territorial governances in some cross-border mountain areas. II) Mobility as an Essential Condition for Functional Cross-Border Citizenship. The second dimension is functional: it relates to the daily lives of citizens who regularly cross the border to work, study, access healthcare, or engage in economic activities. Drawing on theories developed by thinkers such as Denis De Rougemont, the European Union promotes this approach by integrating cross-border mobility into its territorial cohesion policies (INTERREG). Overcoming border effects relies on adapted governance structures and cross-border transport infrastructure that ensure smooth access to essential services. The development of functional areas within the INTERREG POCTEFA 2021-27 program is a



revealing example of this approach. These two dimensions, which represent two sides of the same coin, demonstrate that cross-border citizenship cannot exist without mobility. It requires the opening of borders and the recognition of a true right to cross-border mobility, allowing citizens to fully exercise their rights and anchor themselves in their specific territory. The European Union, along with its Member States, plays a central role in further developing this new citizen status—one that lies between borderless and cross-border.

Mariya Mendzhul

Uzhhorod National University, Ukraine

Mariya Mendzhul, Doctor of Sciences (Law), Professor of the Department of Civil Law and Procedure, Faculty of Law, Uzhhorod National University. 287 scientific and educational and methodological works. Over the past five years 108 works have been published, including 1 solo monograph and 6 monographs in co-authorship, 13 scientific articles in foreign publications indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection and/or Scopus databases, 55 scientific articles in professional publications of Ukraine and foreign countries, is the author of the first textbook in Ukraine "Comparative Family Law", co-author of 7 textbooks and manuals. For the past five years, he has been engaged in researching cross-border cooperation and involving citizens in these processes. From 2023 Deputy Director of the Research Institute of European Territorial Cooperation, Uzhhorod National University.

Yuliia Fetko

Uzhhorod National University, Ukraine

Yuliia Fetko, Director of the Research Institute of European Territorial Cooperation, Associate Professor of the Department of International Law, Uzhhorod National University, Doctor of Philosophy in Law, Associate Professor. Over the past five years, more than 55 scientific works have been published, including 5 co-authored monographs, 35 scientific articles in professional publications of Ukraine and foreign countries regarding EU law; legal regulation of European integration processes; legal regulation of EU territorial cooperation (transnational cooperation, interregional cooperation and cross-border cooperation); Legal regulation of relations between Ukraine and the EU, legal regulation of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine. Involved as an expert in the field of cross-border cooperation in more than 15 national and international projects. Over the past 5 years, has been a speaker at international and national conferences. Participated in various discussion panels on territorial cooperation EU (cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation).



2. The impact of digitalization on cross-border cooperation and citizen engagement: on the example of cooperation within the framework of the “Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine” programs

The analysis of four competitions held within the framework of the programs "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013" and "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI CBC Programme 2014-2020" showed positive dynamics, in the first program 2 projects with the participation of the university were supported, and under the second Program for three competitions - 15 projects (first competition - 0 projects, second competition - 9 projects, third competition - 6 projects). In percentage terms to the total number of supported projects, under the program "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013" with the participation of universities, 6.4% were supported, and under the program "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI CBC Programme 2014-2020" - 18.75% (first competition - 0%, second competition - 19.56% of projects, third competition - 20% of projects). When comparing the two programs, the growth of projects with the participation of higher education institutions is 12.35%, and with a thorough analysis of all three competitions within the framework of the second program, despite the decrease in the number of projects that won in the second competition (9 projects) and in the third competition (6 projects), in percentage terms to the total number of projects, positive dynamics and even a slight increase (by 0.44%) are observed. A substantive analysis of projects with the participation of universities revealed that digitalization is still creating conditions for their proper organizational and technical support, since first the COVID-19 pandemic, and then the full-scale war in Ukraine made adjustments to the free mobility of various project participants, both main performers, experts, and beneficiaries. The use of various digital tools, including platforms and services for online collective communication, seminars, and other events, allowed the successful implementation of these projects. We conclude that modern risks caused by possible pandemics, military actions, and other emergencies lead to the intensification of digitalization of cross-border cooperation, there is a need to create a single expert online platform - interstate dialogue, exchange of experience at various sectoral levels. At the same time, it is necessary to improve existing legal acts and norms of international treaties in order to guarantee proper security protection for all participants in cross-border cooperation.

Hynek Böhm

University of Opole Poland, Technical University of Liberec, Czechia

Dr. Hynek Böhm is affiliated with the University of Opole, Poland, and the Technical University of Liberec, Czechia. His research interests include political and cultural geography, with a focus on cross-border cooperation and regional development in Central Europe.



Karolina Czabanowska

University of Opole, Poland

Karolina Czabanowska is a PhD candidate at the University of Opole. Her research focuses on cross-border cooperation, with particular emphasis on the b-solutions initiative. She collaborates with Hynek Böhm on examining the historical and contemporary aspects of cross-border citizenship, particularly in the context of the Czech-Polish border.

3. Post-War Population Transfers and Their Legacy for Potential Cross-Border Citizenship: The Case of Czech-Polish Euroregions

Euroregions are key instruments of European cross-border cooperation (CBC), fostering regional development and integration beyond national confines. However, their effectiveness varies significantly depending on historical, demographic, and institutional factors. This contribution examines how post-World War II population transfers—particularly the expulsion of German speakers—have shaped contemporary CBC in the Czech-Polish borderland, with a focus on the Praděd Euroregion (ERP). Unlike other Czech-Polish Euroregions, where cross-border mobility and cooperation are dynamically evolving, the ERP has long been characterized by a relatively low level of integration. We argue that the forced displacement of pre-war populations and the resettlement of newcomers from distant regions weakened historically rooted cross-border social networks, disrupting pre-existing cross-border functional spaces. During the socialist era, strict border controls further hindered the renewal of natural socio-economic and cultural linkages. Today, the absence of a historically continuous cross-border citizenry manifests in weaker CBC structures, lower levels of interpersonal trust, and institutional fragmentation. Applying the multidimensional framework of cross-border integration developed by Decoville et al. (2013), our research evaluates how these historical ruptures influence contemporary CBC across structural, institutional, functional, and ideational dimensions. Based on statistical data analysis, interviews with CBC actors, and analysis of Interreg-funded initiatives, we assess the extent to which disrupted settlement continuity still affects cross-border cooperation. Our findings contribute to understanding how historical population shifts continue to shape cross-border citizenship in the EU and offer possible advices for fostering stronger CBC in historically affected regions.

Thayse Figueira Guimarães*

Federal University of Grande Dourados, Brazil, University of Aveiro, Portugal

Thayse Figueira Guimarães is a professor at the Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD), Brazil, and is currently conducting a postdoctoral research stay at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, with funding from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). Her research focuses on the Border Bilingual and Intercultural Schools



Program (PEBIF) between Portugal and Spain, analysing bi/multilingualism in Ibero-American border contexts, with an emphasis on language education, cross-border cooperation, and language policies for diversity.

Maria Helena Araújo e Sá

University of Aveiro, Portugal

Maria Helena Araújo e Sá is a Full Professor at the Department of Education and Psychology at the University of Aveiro (UA), Portugal. She specializes in language teacher education and supervises master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral research. She coordinates the Research Centre on Didactics and Technology in the Education of Trainers (CIDTFF) and the Doctoral Program in Education. She is one of the scientific coordinators of the Border Bilingual and Intercultural Schools Program (PEBIF). Her research areas include networked intercomprehension, plurilingual and intercultural communication, and language policies for language education.

4. The Bilingual and Intercultural Border Schools Project (PEBIF) as a Strategy for Linguistic Integration and Cross-Border Cooperation: An Example of an Educational Project Between Northern Portugal and Galicia

The concept of a borderless Europe, reinforced by the Schengen Area's free movement regime, is facing increasing challenges in light of recent crises. The temporary reintroduction of border controls during the COVID-19 pandemic, successive migration crises, the war in Ukraine, and the tightening of territorial policies within the European Union (EU) have significantly impacted cross-border cooperation dynamics. However, local initiatives such as the Bilingual and Intercultural Border Schools Project (PEBIF) emerge as spaces of resistance and innovation, reaffirming the commitment to regional integration, multilingualism, and interculturality in education, with the support of institutions that regulate school operations. Established during the 30th Luso-Spanish Summit in 2018, PEBIF is a joint initiative of the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science, and Culture (OEI), in collaboration with the governments of Portugal and Spain, as well as their Autonomous Communities, aiming to strengthen cross-border education along the frontier between the two countries (Matesanz, Ferreira, Araújo e Sá, 2023). The program seeks to promote bi/plurilingual and intercultural education, encourage student mobility, and reinforce cultural ties between border communities. By integrating Portuguese, Spanish, and other regional and local languages, PEBIF aims to move beyond a binary conception of bilingualism, adopting a dynamic and hybrid model of multilingualism management. This study is based on Spolsky's (2004) language policy model, which emphasizes the interconnection between language beliefs, practices, and management, as well as the concept of glottopolitics (Del Valle, 2014; Lagares, 2018), to analyze the political processes underlying language choices. The research investigates the pedagogical practices and discourses of teachers involved in PEBIF, using a



case study of two mirror schools—one in Galicia and the other in Portugal. Employing a qualitative approach that combines participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, the study seeks to understand how cross-border pedagogical dynamics are implemented and what contributions these experiences offer to reflections on European language policies. The results indicate how teachers organize their practices, considering PEBIF’s institutional guidelines, local cultural and linguistic repertoires, and their relationship with the environment, community, and territory, incorporating artistic expressions such as music and poetry, as well as elements of nature. The management of cross-border multilingualism is based on students’ linguistic biographies, integrating Spanish, Galician, Portuguese varieties, and migrant languages such as Brazilian Portuguese. The study further suggests that PEBIF could expand its scope by incorporating new approaches to valuing linguistic diversity. In this sense, the program not only challenges the hegemony of national languages but also proposes a new paradigm for multilingualism management at the border, anchored in diversity and the construction of a hybrid intercultural identity. This process transforms the school into a space for negotiating and (re)shaping language policies, both locally and globally. The PEBIF experience demonstrates that cross-border cooperation in education can be a driving force for integration, even amid the tightening of EU borders. However, persistent challenges include discrepancies between the curricular policies of Portugal and Spain, binational bureaucracy, and the instability of migration policies. Given the current scenario of redefining the EU’s internal borders, PEBIF represents a laboratory for rethinking cross-border language education, showing that both the economic and humanistic aspects of this education deserve greater recognition for cross-border integration.

Irina M. Cavaion

Science and Research Center Koper, Slovenia

Dr Irina M. Cavaion is a researcher at the Science and Research Centre Koper, specialising in multilingual and intercultural education, particularly in border regions. Her work explores the implementation of innovative teaching methodologies in multilingual education, recognising that language learning is inherently linked to social and political dynamics. She emphasises that teaching and methodology are not merely pedagogical tools but also forms of political engagement - especially in historically multilingual border areas - where they play a crucial role in language acquisition planning. Dr Cavaion is also committed to promoting high-quality action research, strengthening collaboration between university researchers, school practitioners, and local and regional policymakers to enhance educational outcomes and policy development. She developed CoBLaLT (Contact-Based Neighbouring Language Teaching and Learning), a method addressing both the theoretical and practical aspects of neighbouring language teaching in border regions.



5. Co-Crossing Borders with/through Neighbouring Languages Teaching and Learning: Collaborative Pathways for People, Schools, and Language Policy Development between Italy and Slovenia

Italy and Slovenia are part of the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion, established in 2006 with goals of promoting peace, stability, cooperation, and cultural heritage preservation. However, despite these aspirations, the region has yet to develop a specific policy to enhance the learning of Euroregion languages. This gap is considered a significant barrier to cross-border cooperation by the European Association of Border Regions (AEBR), which has long argued that language differences hinder collaboration in border areas. Scholars stress the importance of language for fostering cross-border communication. Klemenčič (1987, in Bufon, 2002, p.459) identified “command of the neighbour’s language” and a “positive attitude towards the neighbouring population and cooperation” as crucial factors for effective cross-border communication. According to the EU’s communication “Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions” (COM(2017) 534 final) border regions could on average be potentially 8% richer if all current barriers were removed and a common language was used by all, reporting instead of an inflexible use of different languages on both sides of a border. European policies have timidly highlighted the importance of teaching neighbouring languages—through recommendations like the Committee of Ministers’ Rec(2005)3 on teaching neighbouring languages in border regions, and the Council’s recommendation on comprehensive language learning (SWD(2018) 174 final). However, no concrete language policy exists that underscores its significance or urgency, as emphasized in the symposium’s introduction. This paper will explore the contradictions arising from the lack of policies and attention to the teaching of neighbouring languages. It will also present the experiences of students and teachers involved in a three-year cross-border language-learning project in the Gorica-Nova Gorica area, which is now the European Capital of Culture in 2025 with little attention again on the teaching and learning of border languages. The project is part of CONTATTI!, a study involving seven schools across Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia, and five languages (Italian, Slovenian, Croatian, English, and Istrovenetian). Students collaborate virtually and in person to create a meaningful, relationship-focused approach to language learning. In this research, two twinned schools—one from Slovenia and one from Italy—participated, involving three classes and around 70 pupils aged 11-14. Teachers of neighbouring languages, history, geography, science, and art engaged in activities and discussions on local language policy. The research focused on these questions:

- How do children, teachers, heads in border areas perceive linguistic needs for young people living near borders?
- What do children think about reciprocal learning of neighbouring languages, based on their three-year-CONTATTI! experience?
- How did the socioconstructivist approach encourage them to see language learning as a matter of contact, collaboration, cooperation, and cultural exchange?



- How did it foster self-engagement and individual agency in language learning?

Conducted from April 2021 to June 2024 in a post-COVID border region, the research revealed limited, often unsuccessful initiatives from organisational viewpoint, certainly very tiresome and little awareness within school communities regarding the importance of local language policies. While students, teachers, and school leaders see learning neighbouring languages as valuable, they often perceive it as unattainable. Schools tend to operate without support from local administrations, reflecting a deep mistrust in political efforts to address the needs of border communities. The project and its many discussions have sparked a new process, fostering a sense of self-confidence around the valuable initiatives led by schools. Unfortunately, these efforts are ignored by local institutions and administrations, out of the "big politics" which on the contrary should provide the necessary support and a structured framework to help them flourish.

** Speaker presenting the paper*