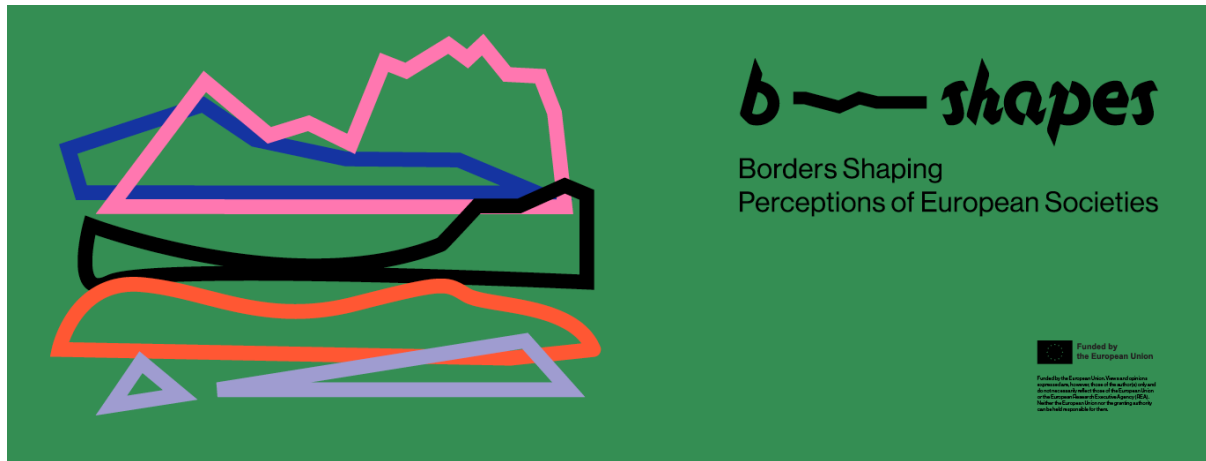




## **International Summer School:**

# **\_Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies**

12 -16 May 2025

Institute for Minority Rights, Eurac Research

Bolzano /Bozen (Italy)



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## **PROGRAMME**

### **Monday, 12 May: Thinking borders: theories and contexts (Conference Hall, Eurac Research, Viale Druso 1, Bolzano)**

9.00-09.30: Welcome by Roberta Bottarin (Vice-President Eurac Research) and introduction by the Eurac Team

09.30-11.00: Martin Klatt: Borders – shaping society?

11.00-11.30: Coffee Break

11.30-13.00: Chiara Brambilla: Reshaping Borders through the Lens of Borderscaping

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-16.00: What are borders for me? Informal exchange between speakers and participants on personal / academic experiences of borders.

### **Tuesday 13 May: Studying borders: methodologies (Conference Hall, Eurac Research, Viale Druso 1, Bolzano)**

09.00-09.30: Introduction

09.30-10.30: Studying borders I

- Elżbieta Opiłowska: Studying borders through the narrative lens
- Peter Balogh: Interviews and focus groups

10.30-11.00: Coffee Break

11.00- 12.30: Studying borders II

- Dorte Jagetic Andersen: Walking and talking the Borderland
- Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola: Border landscapes as heritage
- Marcus Nicolson: Zine-workshops

12.30-13.00: Discussion and Q & A

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-15.30: Participant Presentations to the Wider Group with Discussion

19.00-21.00: OPTIONAL: Performative Lecture & Dinner *IMAGINED Food Retrospections Across Geographies* with Leone Contini (Lungomare, Via Rafenstein 12). If attending, please reserve a spot here: <https://www.eventbrite.it/e/1323614218759?aff=oddttdtcreator>



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**Wednesday 14 May: Through the Prism of Borders (Lungomare, Via Rafenstein 12)**

09.00-10.00: Introduction by Lungomare on their curatorial contribution to B-Shapes  
“Through the Prism of Borders”

10.00-10.30: Presentation of the work “The Answer is Out There” by artist Anna De Manincor (ZimmerFrei)

10.30-13.00: Workshop by Anna De Manincor: “Turkey Stork and Peacock. Some pickings from the bird conference”

13.00-15.00: Collective Lunch and sharing of workshop results

15.00-17.00: Walk through the city of Bolzano, guided by the audio-guide *You Are But You Are Not*, together with artist Beatrice Catanzaro, followed by a discussion

**Thursday, 15 May: Crossing Borders? (Palais Toggenburg, Via dei Francescani, 2a)**

09.00-10.30: Jussi Laine: Borders as de/fences?

10.30-11.00: coffee break

11.00-12.30: Palais Talk: Crossborder cooperation and minorities

- Alice Engl (the Italian-Austrian border)
- Péter Balogh (the Slovakian-Hungarian border)
- Martin Klatt (the German-Danish border)

12.30-14.00: lunch (at Palais Toggenburg)

14.30-16.00: Visit to the Euroregion EGTC Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino with Christoph von Ach, General Secretary of the Euregio Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino

16.00-17.30: Caitriona Mullan (AEBR): Crossborder cultural heritage landscapes

**Friday, 16 May: Study Visit “Borders and/of migration” (NGOs “Organisation für eine solidarische Welt” and “Haus der Solidarität”, Via Vintler 34, Bressanone/Brixen)**

08.45: meet at Bolzano train station

10.00-11.00: Discussion with NGO practitioners from OEW (Adrian Luncke) and HDS: Borders and/of migration – practitioners’ experiences

11.00-12.30: Zine-making workshop

12.30-13.30: Lunch together at the NGO

14.25: train back to Bozen/Bolzano or free afternoon in Brixen/Bressanone



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## B-Shapes Summer School MAP:



- Eurac Research: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/k9o7YTmSprm3MtdX9>
- Lungomare: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/BARtKAKXEZBF3Zs2A>
- Palais Toggenburg: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/AiCxE7LsFy5tz5Bw5>
- Train Station – Bolzano: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/wyihebhoTF454wGg9>
- Kolping Accommodation: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/CebmJkZdh8JuyJup6>
- Organisation für eine solidarische Welt / Haus der Solidarität:  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/cPmHK3N2AxPx9RPC9>
- Euregio Office: Waaghaus/Casa della Pesa:  
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/45UbgQ9tHr2SFG61A>



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## LECTURE ABSTRACTS & SPEAKER BIOS

### **Dorte Jagetic Andersen: Walking and talking the Borderland**

The lecture will introduce the 'borderwalk method' to the students. Borderwalks have been used in the B-SHAPES project to gather material about borderlandscapes and borderland heritage. They are walking conversation where smaller groups of interlocutors, consisting mainly of people living in the borderlands investigated, get the chance to talk about what are meaningful sites for them in the borderlandscape, and how and why they are meaningful. Borderwalks produce text and visual material from the perspective of borderlanders, which can be used for multiple purposes – from scientific dissemination to more creative ways of publishing.

*Dorte Jagetic Andersen is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Southern Denmark, affiliated with the Center for Border Region Studies as well as the SDU Climate Cluster. She has a background in European ethnology and European continental philosophy and does research into European borderlands with a special focus on the everyday life of borderlanders, including humans and other species living in these lands.*

### **Katia Anguelova, Angelika Burtscher and Marion Oberhofer: *Through the Prism of Borders***

*Through the Prism of Borders* examines, through five artistic interventions, the complex political realities and troubled histories of two European border territories: the Czech-Polish border and the southeastern European border between Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. The artistic works aim to foster a deeper understanding of these regions while offering diverse perspectives on Europe's present and future possibilities. As part of a broader network of political and cultural discourses, the artistic research engages with historical events, local border symbolism, infrastructure, and the personal stories of those living in borderlands and those on the move.

*Katia Anguelova is an independent curator. She has developed various cultural projects in collaboration with art institutions, museums, and cultural centers; interested on the intersection between collaboratives processes, oral history, fictional narratives and in the practice of place and relationship between artistic practice and social space. Member of the curatorial team of Isola Art Center (2004–2009), and assistant-curator for Manifesta7 in Trento (2008), she directed the Bulgarian Pavilion at the 58. International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia in 2019. She worked in the ArtLine curatorial team from 2015 to*



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*2020 and then until 2024 as consultant to the Art in Public Spaces Department of the City of Milan. She is co-founder and since 2010 she has been co-director of Kunstverein Milano, an international art production network based in Amsterdam, Aughrim, Toronto, and New York.*

*Angelika Burtscher is co-founder and co-director of [Lungomare](#), a platform for cultural production and design based in Bolzano, Italy. She works at the intersection of artistic production and design with a focus on public urban space. With a transdisciplinary approach, she has completed multiple collaborations, exhibition and publication projects as well as site-specific artistic productions. In 2023, she co-published the reader *AS IF – 16 Dialogues on Sheep, Black Holes and Movement* (Spector Books). In 2022, together with Daniele Lupo, she initiated the multi-year artistic research project *FLUX – River Interventions and Explorations* to establish a new relationship between urban space, nature and landscape. Burtscher teaches in the Visual Design Department at the Art University Linz and on the Master on Eco-Social Design at the Faculty of Design and Arts in Bolzano.*

*Marion Oberhofer studied art theory, film, and cultural studies in Zurich and Vienna. She is a member of the Lungomare Cooperative and works as a curator at the intersection of art and science, focusing on artistic research and critical knowledge production. As part of the curatorial team at the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology, she contributed to the special exhibition *Foodprints* on the topic of nutrition, as well as to the permanent exhibitions *Climate. Knowledge. Action!* and *Science in Transition* (opening in 2026). Additionally, she is working as an independent art mediator and editor with a strong interest in the politics of memory and emancipatory practices.*

### **Péter Balogh: Interviews and Focus Groups**

This contribution will introduce and discuss interviews and focus groups as research methods. First, for what kind of projects are these methods worth considering? Then, questions around positionality will be raised. Next, the pros and cons of different types of interviews (structured, semi-structured, open) will be clarified. Issues around the order of the questions and how directed they should be are also brought up. Various experiences with accessing and interviewing ‘elites’ and ‘regular citizens’ will also be accounted for. The inclusion during interviews of some potentially helpful tools (such as play cards or pre-printed sheets including labels or images) will be discussed. Issues around recruitment and incentives may also be raised. Finally, experiences with a recent focus group discussion will also be shared.



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*Péter Balogh is a political geographer and border scholar based in Budapest. He is lecturer at the Dept of Social and Economic Geography at Eötvös Loránd University and research fellow at HUN-REN CERS IRS. Péter gained his PhD in Human geography at Stockholm University (2014) where he partook in a project on Polish-German cross-border contacts in the increasingly transborder agglomeration of Szczecin. Since then Péter has focused on two interrelated fields: on the one hand, on the various meanings of spatial imaginaries (such as Europe and Central Europe), and on the other, on cross-border relations in Hungary's borderlands especially toward Ukraine and Slovakia. His research has appeared in Eurasian Geography & Economics, the Journal of Borderlands Studies, Nationalities Papers, and elsewhere.*

### **Chiara Brambilla: Reshaping Borders through the Lens of Borderscaping**

This lecture explores the critical conceptual, methodological, and applied potential of the emerging conceptualisation of the border as borderscaping to investigate imaginations and practices of border making from the geopolitical level to the level of social practices, cultural production, and everyday life. Specifically, I argue that borderscaping fosters a productive understanding of border imaginations and practices by highlighting three aspects: the politics-aesthetics nexus; the 'time-print' of borders; the need for a political and performative method. In the lecture, I will provide examples from my multi-sited collaborative action research with young people in the Italian/Tunisian borderland that serve to inquire into conceptual, methodological, and applied potentialities of borderscaping.

*Chiara Brambilla, PhD in Anthropology and Epistemology of Complexity, is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Bergamo (Italy). Her research focuses on anthropology, critical geopolitics and epistemology of borders; border studies and border theory; the Mediterranean border-migration nexus; border aesthetics; landscapes, territories and identities; borders in Africa. She has published extensively in her research focus areas within Italian and international journals and volumes. She has authored the monograph *Ripensare le frontiere in Africa. Il caso Angola/Namibia e l'identità kwanyama* (2009). She has edited, with B. Riccio, the volume *Transnational Migration, Cosmopolitanism and Dis-Located Borders* (2010), and, with J. Laine, J. Scott and G. Bocchi, the volume *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making* (2015). She is regional editor for Europe of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies*.*



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**Beatrice Catanzaro: Guided walk of the city of Bozen/Bolzano, guided by the audio-guide *You Are But You Are Not* and discussion**

*We Are All in Orbit*

If we don't look into each other's eyes, we will have nothing to say to each other. Eight years after the launch of *You Are But You Are Not*, we find ourselves living through times of disruption—where waves of emergencies, with their far-reaching ripple effects, have generated fragility on multiple levels. In light of the current moment, the closing sentence—We are all in orbit: if we don't look into each other's eyes, we will have nothing to say to each other—feels less like a conclusion and more like an invitation. It's a proposition to engage in a collective reflection, considering a potential fourth chapter still waiting to be written. Beginning with your personal resonance with the audio guide, we aim to create a space for shared self-reflection, where we can explore possible directions for the narrative to continue.

*Beatrice Catanzaro is an artist that has extensively practiced in the field of public art and participatory art, researching and working throughout Europe, Asia and the Middle East. She has a particular interest in participatory processes, often unfolding in self initiated and independent projects aiming at challenging the concrete possibility of art in imagining and creating situations/spaces that are able exist beyond the sphere of Art.*

**Leone Contini: Performative-Lecture and Dinner “*IMAGINED Food Retrospections Across Geographies*”**

When food is actively imagined, it becomes a powerful catalyst for shaping family and community identities—threads that can reweave connections across distant geographies. The performative lecture *IMAGINED Food Retrospections Across Geographies* draws from a constellation of projects that Leone Contini has developed over the years—beginning in his own neighborhood between Prato and Florence, and reaching outward toward an “elsewhere” that is never truly far away. Presented in collaboration with Kunstverein Milano.

*Leone Contini studied Philosophy and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Siena. His research unrolls at the intersection of anthropology, aesthetics and politics and his mediums include lecture-performances, collective interventions in public spaces, textual and visual narratives, drawings.*



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**Anna de Manincor (ZimmerFrei): *The Answer is Out There***

*The Answer is Out There* (2025) is a video and audio installation by Anna de Manincor, a member of the ZimmerFrei collective. The work is part of the research and exhibition *Through the Prism of Borders – Episode 2: Artistic Journeys In-Between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*. Developed through extensive fieldwork in the Bulgaria-Turkey border region, it interweaves unchanging landscapes with personal narratives from border communities, inviting viewers to reconsider borders as symbolic forces that shape human experience.

*Turkey Stork and Peacock. Some pickings from the bird conference*

The artist Anna de Manincor will lead us through a workshop, starting from the perspective of birdwatchers who, by observing migratory and resident birds, perceive territory as a means of organizing—staying together when needed and apart when necessary. On the basis of their working method, the borders, the shore, the boundary, can best be represented, rather than as a place of conflict and conquest, as a place of rivalry, of gathering and spectacle. Perhaps the birds are mainly interested in spectacle.

*Anna de Manincor, member of The ZimmerFrei collective which was founded in Bologna (Italy) in 2000 and creates documentary films, video art, mixed-media installations, soundwalks, performances and interventions in the public space. For over twenty years, ZimmerFrei's practices have explored transforming urban and rural contexts within temporary communities. Focusing on the boundaries between public space and private territories, they have invented their own original language that combines oral narration with analogue and digital means, in ever-different audiovisual prototypes.*

**Martin Klatt: Borders – shaping society?**

My lecture will introduce into borders and how they shape our perceptions of society. Borders mark states' sovereignty and are the core element of the world's territorial division into states. Borders are not static, though: they are the result of historical processes and constitute both barriers and meeting points. Borders' character has changed over time – and is still changing. Some borders are porous and not even clearly marked, others are heavily militarized. In B-SHAPES, we aim to find out about how borders shape our perceptions of society assuming them to be a key factor: we usually identify by our passport and the bordered, territorial state we are from (as Germans, French, Danish etc.). But is it that clearcut? Border region residents might identify differently, especially if they belong to a national minority with a kin-state across the border, as is the case here in South Tyrol. We are interested in border region residents



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stories about borders, about how they have changed in their lifetime, about how they influence their daily lives and their perception of local, regional, national and European society.

*Martin Klatt is coordinator of the Horizon Europe research project Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies (B-SHAPES) at University of Southern Denmark's Centre for Border Region Studies (2023-2026). Martin Klatt has been affiliated with the Centre for Border Region Studies since 2001. His research fields are nationalization processes, minority accommodation and cooperation in European border regions, with a strong focus on the Danish-German border region and its national minorities. In 2022, he became head of the research cluster Minority Issues in the Denmark-Germany Border Region at the European Centre for Minority Issues.*

### **Jussi Laine: Borders as de/fences?**

Amid an increasingly turbulent and unpredictable global landscape shaped by overlapping crises, borders have reasserted themselves as key sites in the performance of state power and the production of difference. This presentation explores how securitized narratives around borders have gained hegemonic status, often diverting attention from the deeper structural causes of insecurity. Borders are being materially and discursively fortified in response to perceived threats, reshaping the ways states define themselves and their place in the world. Within this framing, borders are not only protective mechanisms but also psychological anchors—material manifestations of the desire for control in an uncontrollable world. Drawing on global trends and using the Finnish-Russian border as an illustrative case, the talk explores how the emergency framing of events legitimized the thickening of international demarcations. Finland's recent shift from pragmatic cross-border cooperation to heightened security posturing reflects broader patterns of ontological insecurity, whereby the once-pragmatic border has become redefined as a geopolitical fault line. This talk highlights how the securitization of borders is not only a response to immediate threats, but also a political strategy and an affective reaction to the erosion of long-standing geopolitical narratives and identities. Ultimately, the talk invites a critical reconsideration of how borders function not merely as lines of defense, but also as mirrors reflecting deeper anxieties about order, identity, and global belonging.

*Jussi P. Laine is a professor of multidisciplinary border studies at the Karelian Institute of the University of Eastern Finland, holding the title of Docent of Human Geography at the University of Oulu, Finland. By background, Dr. Laine is a human geographer, yet in his*



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*approach to borders, he combines influences from international relations and geopolitics, political sociology, history, anthropology, and psychology.*

### **Caitriona Mullan: Crossing Borders: the case of cultural heritage**

This talk explores some of the recommendations made by recent B-Shapes policy work on cross-border cultural heritage towards releasing the potential of this kind of cross-border cooperation for borderlands. It will also explore ideas relating to the importance of liminality and borderlands to the European psyche and how borderlands have a role to play in the expression of intersectionality, shared heritage and cohesion.

*Caitriona Mullan is a cross-border cooperation and governance specialist working across the EU. She is a senior Expert with European Commission DG REGIO (structural funds) where she is currently advising on the design and resilience of cross-border health systems in Central and Eastern European countries. She also works with the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise in Multilevel Governance at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, with recent missions supporting the Governments of Armenia and Finland in relation to decentralization processes. In addition, Caitriona advises the Association of European Border Regions on the EU b-Solutions initiative delivered for the European Commission by the Association of European Border Regions, which addresses and solves cross border obstacles to mobility, integration and EU citizens' rights across the EU and on EFTA and IPA borders. She has authored a range of publications and articles on a range of territorial co-operation themes with NESC, CCBS, ICLRD, the European Commission and AEBR. In Ireland/Northern Ireland, Caitriona holds senior research associate roles with the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development; and she provides strategic advisory support to a number of North South Ireland/UK co-operation initiatives including the Astronomical Observatories of Ireland which combines scientific heritage, research and placemaking on a cross-border and transboundary basis. Caitriona is an historian by training and has extensive experience of developing cross-border ecosystems and multilevel collaboration for spatial economic, social, environmental and infrastructural development. She is also a writer and winner of the Irish Writers' Centre 2024 Novel Fair for her first novel which is in the genre of borderlands literary fiction. Caitriona's personal and professional practice combines strategic executive work in the area of cross-border cooperation with an artist practitioner approach to a body of work. Caitriona is based in Derry/Londonderry, a border city in Northern Ireland, and is the mother of two teenagers.*



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### **Marcus Nicolson: Zine-Making in Border Studies**

Marcus will share his experiences of using a creative arts research method, zine-making, with young national minorities in borderland areas as part of the B-Shapes project. Zine-making is a participatory and collaborative research tool which can be effective in getting young people to think about complex issues of identity and share personal reflections on border politics. Marcus will discuss some initial findings from the B-Shapes zine-making workshops and discuss the potential value of creative arts research approach.

*Marcus Nicolson is a postdoctoral researcher at Eurac's Institute for Minority Rights. He received his PhD from Glasgow Caledonian University in 2023 with his study investigating young people's migration narratives in Scotland. He has published his research in academic journals including; Identities, International Migration, Comparative Migration Studies, and Social Inclusion. He is interested to explore the intersections of border narratives, identity, and political perceptions, as part of the B-Shapes project.*

### **Elżbieta Opiłowska: Studying borders through the narrative lens**

Since the so-called narrative turn in the 1980s and 1990s, the narrative approach has become increasingly popular in the social sciences and humanities. In borderlands studies, scholars have explored how borders have been narratively constructed at different scales and how borders and identity can be studied through the narrative lens. During the lecture, I will discuss how the narrative approach can be used to study territorial, social and discursive borders, borderlands and bordering processes. Special attention will be paid to bottom-up agents, such as borderland communities and minorities, who are particularly sensitive to border transformations and narrative struggles at the supra-national and national levels. In addition, drawing on the visual sociological methods, I will illustrate how to search for materialised narratives encoded in cultural landscapes. The lecture is based on research findings from the Horizon B-Shapes project and my previous research experience.

*Elżbieta Opiłowska, sociologist, Associate Professor at the Institute of Sociology, Director of the Institute of Sociology and Head of the Centre for Regional and Borderland Studies at the University of Wrocław. She studied German Philology at the Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin and European Studies at the University of Leipzig. Her main research interests include borderland studies, migration studies, European integration, memory cultures, and German-Polish relations. She is currently leading three research projects at the University of Wrocław: Resilience of Cross-border Cooperation in Europe - a comparative analysis of the German-Polish and German-French border*



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*areas, funded by the German-Polish Science Foundation; LYMAS: Life Strategies of Young Labouring Migrants in Ageing Societies, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (PI at UWr); Horizon Europe International Project: B-SHAPES: Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies (PI at UWr).*

### **Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola: Border landscapes as heritage**

The presentation will focus on European border landscapes and how people perceive and value border landscapes as heritage. In the European Landscape Convention (2024), landscape is defined as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. Landscape is also understood contributing especially to the formation of local cultures, heritage, and identity. The presentation will discuss and provide examples of border landscapes as institutionalized heritage and as people’s heritage, and trace a path towards more inclusive heritage-making in Europe.

*Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola is professor in human geography at the University of Oulu and holds a title of docent in human geography and border studies at the University of Eastern Finland. Her research and teaching interest include border and border region research, cross-border resilience, border landscapes, identity and heritage.*

### **Roundtable: Cross-border cooperation and national minorities**

This round table explores the intersection of cross-border cooperation and national minorities in European border regions. Drawing on diverse case studies, the speakers offer insights into how historical legacies, the socio-political context, and EU-level frameworks shape cooperation across the Italian-Austrian (Alice Engl), Slovakian-Hungarian (Péter Balogh), and German-Danish (Martin Klatt) borders and which role minorities play in these processes. While minorities can act as bridge-builders between neighbouring states due to shared cultural, linguistic, or historical ties, their involvement in cross-border relations also raises political and legal challenges, particularly in contexts marked by contested identities or strained bilateral relations. Together, the panel addresses how minorities are both subjects and agents of cross-border relations, showing how local identities, EU instruments, and international norms interplay at the borders of Europe.

With Péter Balogh, Martin Klatt and Alice Engl



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*Alice Engl is Senior Researcher and Leader of the Research Group “Autonomies, Boundaries and Identities” at the Institute for Minority Rights of Eurac Research. She holds an MA and PhD in political science (University of Innsbruck) and postgraduate MA degree in European Studies (University of Vienna). Her research focuses on sub-state cross-border cooperation and integration processes, with a particular focus on border regions with minority identities, and policy processes within EU regional policy and European territorial cooperation. Further research interests are minorities and autonomies, especially the development of South Tyrolean autonomy. Dr. Engl has published peer-reviewed articles and book chapters as well as a monograph with well-established publishing houses such as Taylor & Francis, Springer, Brill, Nomos, University of New Orleans Press, Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag. She co-lead or participated in various third funded projects (e.g. FP7, Interreg Italy-Austria and other international and local research grants) and has been guest lecturer at the Universities of Innsbruck and Bozen/Bolzano. Dr Engl is General Secretary of the South Tyrolean Political Science Association, where she co-edits the South Tyrolean Political Science Yearbook.*



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## **PARTICIPANT BIOS**

### **Abd Alkader Alhag Fteah**

Over the past decade, I have worked and been educated in four distinct countries: Syria, Romania, Spain, and Germany. Throughout, I have broadened my knowledge and expertise by participating in various courses in numerous European countries (Romania, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Italy, and Malta) on the subjects of immigrants, refugees, integration, international migration, and intercultural mediation. Moreover, I have several years' experience as an intercultural mediator, aiding immigrants, refugees, and minors in both Romania and Spain. My doctoral thesis is based on two years of fieldwork interviews with immigrants and refugees in Spain and Germany. I have been repeatedly captivated by the insights offered by immigrants and refugees who shared their experiences, painting vivid pictures of resilience and hope. I have felt the weight of responsibility to amplify their voices and tell of their experiences.

### **Natavan Alieva**

My name is Natavan Alieva, and I am from Georgia. I hold a Master's degree in International Relations and currently work at the International Black Sea University. My research areas cover Georgia's European integration, ethnic minorities, security, and conflict studies, particularly focusing on the underlying causes of ethnic conflicts, the impact of border disputes on minority communities, and the role of minorities in democratization and peacebuilding efforts. I am also deeply interested in the dynamics of ethnic minorities' relationships with their kin-states and how these interactions shape both national and regional political landscapes.

### **Daria Anna Bajsarowicz**

My name is Daria Bajsarowicz and I am a master's student in Global Studies at the University of Opole in Poland. My main area of interest is culture. My hobbies include language learning. I sing folk songs from all around the world (typically in Farsi, Kurdish or Turkish) and play various instruments such as guitar and Native American flute. I also like to draw realistic drawings of people from different cultures. During my bachelor's, I studied English Philology - Practical Profile. Thanks to my internship in Turkey, I had the opportunity to explore diverse cultural societies and regional conflicts. Additionally, I have done another internship in Iran, which allowed me to immerse myself in the Iranian culture, which I am very fond of.



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### **Dorota Urszula Błaszczyk**

Hi, I'm Dorota Błaszczyk, a 24-year-old Polish student currently on Erasmus in Krakow as part of the Erasmus Mundus Master's in European Politics and Society. I spent the last 3.5 years in Prague, where I earned my BA in Liberal Arts and Humanities at Charles University, focusing on sociocultural anthropology. In 2022, I took part in a summer school in Cieszyn/Český Těšín, which sparked my interest in border cities and their unique dynamics. I have a strong interest in languages, especially Slavic ones, and currently work part-time as a barista. After finishing my studies, I hope to pursue a career in diplomacy.

### **Julia Ciolek**

I hold a BA in Artes Liberales from University of Warsaw (2023), and I am currently pursuing an MA in Sustainable Heritage Management at Aarhus University. In September 2024, I began my PhD studies in a "4+4 program," allowing me to simultaneously complete my master's while conducting PhD research. My interests lie in critical heritage studies, environmental humanities—with a focus on deconstructing the nature/culture dichotomy—and in conceptualizing heritage and bordering as intertwined dynamic processes. I am also drawn to investigate and advance the ways in which research in the humanities contributes to addressing contemporary global challenges.

### **David Córdoba Bou**

David Córdoba Bou holds a Bachelor degree in Audiovisual Communication and another one in Tourism Management from the Polytechnic University of Valencia. Nominated European Journalist of the Year in 2017 by Prix Europa, he has spent the past three years visiting national minorities. Drawing on his extensive research and personal experiences, David is completing a book that exposes the structural challenges minorities face, offering insights into their ongoing struggles and rights across Europe.

### **Camilla Cristofolletti**

Camilla Cristofolletti is finalizing her master's degree in "Gender, Culture, and Social Change" at the University of Innsbruck, following completion of a bachelor's degree in foreign Languages with a focus on culture and literature at the University of Venice. Her studies included two Erasmus Semesters, one at the University of Hamburg and one at the University of Liège. She is currently a trainee researcher at the Center of Migration and Diversity at Eurac Research. She is bilingual in German and Italian as well as fluent in English and reached the CEFR level A2 in Serbo-Croatian and French.



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### **Hadia Fiaz**

Hadia Fiaz holds an International Master's in Security, Intelligence, and Strategic Studies. She has policy experience in Canada's national security sector, with a focus on counterterrorism and cross-border cooperation, and has participated in field programs on migration and conflict in Europe and the U.S.–Mexico borderlands. Her interests lie in critical security studies, particularly where borders, migration, and climate change intersect. She is currently a teaching assistant in Social Justice and Peace Studies, supporting undergraduate learning on global justice, conflict, and inequality.

### **Paola Gatti**

BA in Social Anthropology from the University of the Republic (Uruguay). Graduated from the (Remote) Certificate in Afro-Latin American Studies at Harvard University. Advanced MA student in the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master MITRA (Transnational Migrations) coordinated by the University of Lille (France), for which I completed semesters at the Free University of Brussels (Belgium), the University of Wroclaw (Poland), and the Cheikh Anta Diop University (Senegal). My research focuses on the intersection of migration and borders, interconnecting South America and West Africa.

### **Chloe Gleeson**

My name is Chloe Gleeson, I am Franco-Irish and am currently studying a Joint Erasmus Mundus Master's in Euroculture in Krakow, Uppsala and Osaka. I also have an undergraduate degree from Trinity College Dublin, which included a year at Science Po Grenoble. I am currently focusing my MA research on grassroots mobilisations in EUropean borderscapes, following different experiences volunteering in NGOs working with people on the move in Northern France and Greece. My current research intends to explore the experiences of grassroots activists at the Polish-Belarusian border.

### **Tobias Heyduk**

I am a Research Associate and former Senior Officer of the Kehl Institute of Applied Research at the University of Applied Sciences Kehl and PhD student at the University College Cork in the field of Cross-Border Cooperation and Public Administration. My areas of expertise include cross-border cooperation, administrative autonomy, comparative public administration as well as multi-methodology research designs based on set-theory, congruence analysis, and process tracing. My recent publications and research focus on political asymmetry and parliamentary functions in cross-border cooperation as well as cross-border cooperation in the border regions on the Upper Rhine and on the island of Ireland.



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### **Melinda Istenes-Benczi**

Melinda Istenes-Benczi is a researcher and professional specialising in cross-border cooperation. She holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Sopron, where she studied the role of national minorities in cross-border economic cooperation. She earned a BA in English and American Studies and an MA in Comparative Public Policy from the University of Southern Denmark. With experience as a policy analyst in Brussels, Washington, and London, she now works as an international coordinator at CESCO in Budapest. She has published in peer-reviewed journals, presented at international conferences, and is a co-founder of the LUPS-CESCO Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation. In her free time, she enjoys folk dancing, hiking, and knitting.

### **Olga Jerjomina**

Olga is a PhD candidate at Witten/Herdecke University in Germany, where she studies ethnic cleavages and political behavior. Her research focuses on the Baltic states, comparing regions bordering Russia with more western areas to understand how geography and external actors shape ethnic minority-majority relations. She is particularly interested in how identity and geography intersect to influence political behavior in ethnically diverse societies. Originally from Riga, Latvia, she holds an MSc in Political Science from Leiden University. Before starting her PhD, Olga worked in Brussels, gaining hands-on experience in European affairs.

### **Jessica Jordi**

Jessica Jordi is a PhD candidate in Social Sciences at KU Leuven, Belgium. Her research lies at the intersection of migration studies, border studies, conflict and memory. Focusing on the 'transitory' aspects of displacement, she explores how Burundians navigate conceptualizations of mobility on their journey towards South Africa. Her work contributes to understanding the lived experiences of displaced individuals across shifting contexts and highlights broader implications of (violent) mobilities in migration dynamics. Jessica holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Zurich.

### **Gabriel Olegario**

Gabriel Olegario holds bachelor's degrees in Political Science (University of Hradec Kralove, Czechia) and International Relations (Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil). After working for two years at the Migration Institute of Finland, he started the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree Redesigning the Post-Industrial City. In the



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previous semester, he worked in a shared position between the University of Oulu and the City of Oulu, bridging academic knowledge and public policy to attract and retain international migrants in the City of Oulu. His interests are: Urban theory, Migration and Securitization.

### **Majd Owda**

Dr. Majd Owda holds a Ph.D. In International Relation and Diplomacy from the Center for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies in Paris, a Master's in Democratic Governance, Human Rights, and Democracy from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and a Bachelor's in Law from An-Najah National University. She has worked as An Assistant professor, lawyer, legal researcher, and human rights officer with OHCHR-OPT. Her research focuses on human rights, international law, and the Palestinian question.

### **Sascha Preßnig**

I am a law student at the University of Graz, specializing in international law, human rights, and peacebuilding. My academic interests include conflict resolution and international diplomacy. Growing up in the Austrian region of Carinthia, right along the border with Italy and Slovenia, I have always been aware of the historical and contemporary dynamics of national identity, minorities and cross-border cooperation. I have also participated in several international programs such as the Helga Pedersen Moot Court and the Padova Model UPR.

### **Valentina Rodani**

Valentina is an architect and postdoctoral researcher in the research project “Italian Borderscapes after 2020” at DASTU–Politecnico di Milano. Her research interweaves theoretical-critical insights and design experimentation to explore the spatiality of borders, exile and migration, intersecting architecture, landscape and anthropology. She graduated in Architecture (University of Trieste 2017), she was a visiting researcher (University of Ljubljana 2021) and earned a Doctor Europaeus with honours (University of Trieste 2022). Her awarded dissertation (Gubbio Prize 2024) investigated the liminality of design projects that re-shaped the Italo-Slovenian borderscape by deconstructing spatial ordering while composing thresholds of spatial belonging and temporal becoming.

### **Srishtee Sethi**

Dr. Srishtee Sethi is a sociologist by training and has recently completed her postdoctoral research at LMSAI, Harvard University. She completed her MPhil & PhD as a CSDS fellow



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at TISS Mumbai and an Erasmus plus fellow at the University of Tampere, Finland. Dr. Sethi has held positions at the Centre of Public Administration at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, where she wrote a monograph on Border Management for IAS officers. Previously she was an Assistant Professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai where she was teaching and mentoring research on Southasian Perspective on Borderlands.

She is interested in researching the intersections of Borderlands and Migration using multi-site ethnographic methodologies to unpack the lifeworlds of borderland communities and how 'border management' encompasses their aspirations.

### **Aleksandra Szymczyk**

Aleksandra Szymczyk is a PhD Candidate and Teaching Assistant in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester. Her research examines political engagement, mobilization, and everyday politics in a small Polish town in the run-up to the 2023 parliamentary elections, with a focus on the ways in which political actors and local intellectuals understand and navigate political division, the relationship between local governance and national politics, as well as the role of memory and heritage in local politics. Szymczyk holds a BSc in Psychology from the University of East Anglia and an MA in Social Anthropology from the University of Manchester.

### **Hewan Tonini**

Hewan Tonini is a recent graduate of the Master of Arts in East European and Eurasian Studies (MIREES), a joint degree awarded by the University of Bologna, Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, and the University of Zagreb. As part of her studies, she spent a year at Comenius University in Bratislava and conducted research for her thesis in Budapest, which examined historical memory and collective identity among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia through archival research and semi-structured interviews in two twin border towns. Her main interests concern history, sociology, and critical border studies.

### **Natalia Trzmielak**

Natalia is a Service Design researcher invested in developing tools that foster reflexivity and dialogue. My interests include urban regeneration, storytelling for social innovation, and exploring how design can influence policymaking. I focus on territories and communities, aiming to strengthen people's connection to place. I've worked with the city of Espoo to enhance belonging and civic engagement, and co-founded Stra Barriere, a collective addressing divides between city centers and peripheries. In my thesis, I



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created a tool to share minority narratives, focusing on Italian LGBTQ+ families, exploring how co-created stories can challenge perceptions and foster inclusivity.

### **Alessandra Volgger**

Alessandra is a Global Studies MA graduate, currently working as a research assistant at the Free University of Bozen – Bolzano. She is part of the PRIN project “Italian Borderscapes after 2020”, exploring the borderscape between Innichen-San Candido and Sillian. The project further looks at the borders between Italy -France and Italy – Slovenia. The borderscapes are situated in a time and space of polycrisis – socio-economic, political, humanitarian, ecological, and health-related – and investigated as laboratories of resilience. In her spare time, Alessandra is part of her local choir and a printmaking artist collective.



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## The B-Shapes Project:

“[Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies \(B-SHAPES\)](#)” is a Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action project coordinated by the Centre of Border Region Studies at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). B-Shapes analyzes and assesses how borders still are a key factor in how we understand societies. In cooperation with Europeans living in border regions, we examine the role of borders through three lenses:

- Euroscepticism in border regions,
- minorities in border regions, and
- border landscapes as heritage.

Our focus on borderlands promises new insights on how borders shape perceptions of societies, but also how the story of borders can be narrated differently than from a purely national perspective.

## Project consortium:

Academic partners: University of Southern Denmark (PI), Brunel University London, Eötvös Loránd University, Eurac Research, Halmstad University, Technical University of Liberec, University of Oulu, University of Strasbourg, University of Wrocław

Non-academic partners: Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS), National Museum of History (Bulgaria), Kreatus, Lungomare

## Eurac Research

[Eurac Research](#) is a private research centre based in South Tyrol, Italy, with researchers from a wide variety of scientific fields focusing on three major themes: regions fit for living in, diversity as a life-enhancing feature, and a healthy society.

## Institute for Minority Rights

[The Institute for Minority Rights](#) at Eurac Research pursues basic and applied research on the protection of minorities and the management of cultural diversity. Cohesion, equal participation and minority protection are among the central challenges of a diverse society. Our interdisciplinary and international team recognizes the diversity of South Tyrolean society – its autonomy and system of minority rights - as foundation for research and point of reference to advise on minorities worldwide. Our work is based on the premise that human and minority rights are indivisible - for everyone. We explore



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issues which relate to discrimination, equal opportunities, participation and diversity governance in terms of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and we seek to overcome the traditional categories of historical minorities, new minorities and indigenous peoples. By analyzing boundaries and identities - be they territorial or social, real, perceived or constructed - we seek to address the challenges faced by minorities throughout the world. At our core, we investigate respective developments at the intersection between global events and local situations. Our research groups comprise expert knowledge in the areas of law and political science, history and anthropology, and enable close co-operation with research institutions, universities, international organisations, and NGOs.

### **Lungomare:**

Lungomare is a platform for design and cultural production. We carry out commissions and initiate artistic projects. In collaboration with clients, artists and other experts we develop strategies and concepts that focus on finding the appropriate form for the content to be conveyed. Our work encompasses communication, exhibition design, spatial concepts and curatorial projects. We create meeting places and experiential spaces in the urban context and we invite artists to work with us to develop thematic and site specific projects. Lungomare operates in a variety of different spaces: public and private, virtual and print, urban and curated.

### **Organising Team (Eurac Research):**

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