



## Special Session Proposal

### All Eyes on Border Regions: Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation through Data-Driven Policy Support

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#### Abstract

This session focuses on understudied phenomenon on border regions in research by addressing the relevance of border regions as a resource and mitigating the theory-practice gap. In particular, border regions in Europe are seen as a key towards balanced and sustainable spatial cohesion within the EU - cross-border regions are as living laboratories of European integration. With open internal borders for citizens and entities of the EU people cross borders for working, studying, shopping, tourism and visiting friends and family. Companies and organizations advance collaboration across borders to be more successful, while public sector collaborate to better plan and develop border regions as one functioning system.

However, regardless of the growing importance of border regions, one of the main challenges is the lack of detailed and up-to-date information on border regions and their cross-border interactions. The collected official statistics are delineated by national borders, thus neglecting border regions as one functioning region as a unit of its own. Not the least, little attention is given to cross-border interactions of people, goods and economic networks due to absence of relevant data available and suitable methodologies to collect such data.

By highlighting the current challenges and new opportunities, this session aims to enhance cross-border cooperation and interactions in EU border regions by welcoming the latest theoretical and conceptual advancements on, empirical data analyses and knowledge sharing regarding border regions. The session seeks also to bridge the gap between research (data availability and cutting-edge analyses) and policymaking in border regions. We expect scholars to present case studies, data analyses and knowledge sharing approaches on border regions, which offer valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and other

stakeholders. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in discussions on enhancing cross-border cooperation and integration of border regions through data-driven research and policy support.

The session stems from The ACROSS (Data and Analysis for cross-Border regions) project, an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and Joint Research Centre (JRC), and BORDERSPACE (Mobilities and Interactions of People Crossing State Borders: Big Data to Reveal Transnational People and Spaces) project at University of Helsinki.

We are looking forward to receiving proposals that focus on, but are not limited to, the following indicative topics:

- The conceptualization and rethinking of cross-border regions;
- The exploration of digital data sources to reveal cross-border interactions of people, goods, economic networks;
- The operationalization of data infrastructures to facilitate informed and evidence-based cross-border policymaking and cooperation;
- The empirical data-driven evidence on cross-border regions to foster cross-border integration and advance more effective and sustainable cooperation;
- The future of data-driven monitoring and governance of border regions.