Special Session Proposal

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

Matteo Berzi*, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
matteo.berzi@eu.europa.eu
Benedikt Herrmann, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
benedikt.herrmann@eu.europa.eu
Olle Järv, Digital Geography Lab, University of Helsinki
olle.jarv@helsinki.fi
* Corresponding convener

Abstract

The 2026 edition of the special session All Eyes on Border Regions: Advancing Cross-Border Cooperation through Data-Driven Policy Support builds directly on the discussion launched at ERSA 2025 and aims to continue the discussion focussing on the search for new data sources and analytical methods that can reliably map cross-border flows and commuter patterns in a quantitative and granular way, ultimately feeding the academic discussion on the delineation of functional cross-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. Participants 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.

We are looking forward to receiving proposals that focus on, but are not limited to, the following indicative topics:
• The conceptualization of functional cross-border regions.
• The exploration of non-conventional data sources to reveal cross-border interactions of people, goods, economic networks.
• The empirical data-driven evidence (especially indicators) to measure cross-border integration and support a more effective and targeted cross-border cooperation.
• The future of data-driven monitoring and governance of border regions

The session stems from the ACROSS project (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 project (Mobilities and Interactions of People Crossing State Borders: Big Data to Reveal Transnational People and Spaces) at University of Helsinki.