



# Reshaping Europe



## Why reshaping Europe?

**'We are not forming coalitions of nation-states, we are uniting people.'**

These historical words of Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, highlight the substantial ambitions that lie at the heart of the emergence of the European Community. Five decades later, it appears that this comprehensive social objective has been marginalised in favour of economic goals.

## Why borders matter?

As far as the European Commission is concerned, **border-areas** are recognised as **significant places where the success of European (Union) integration will be tested.**

Thus it is unsurprising that the European Commission places so much emphasis on addressing border-related issues by enabling and promoting different forms of cooperation across borders.

## What is a border?

**Borders are ambiguous human constructions, constituted by various types of overlapping boundaries** (incl. geographic, political, social, cultural or economic).

The overcoming of negative border effects (e.g. their barrier function) requires solutions for all boundaries which constitute the respective border. Therefore interdisciplinary border considerations play a decisive role for the success of the 'European Union'.

### Read more:

Haselsberger, B. (forthcoming) The Shaded Reality of Borders. A Hidden Perspective for Territorial Cohesion in Europe. *European Journal of Spatial Development.*

Haselsberger, B.; Bennenworth, P. (2011) Cross-border Communities or Cross-border Proximity? Perspectives from the Austrian-Slovakian Border Region. In: Adams, N. et al. (Eds.) *Territorial Development, Cohesion and Spatial Planning. Knowledge and policy development in an enlarged EU.* Routledge, pp.229-254.

Haselsberger, B. (2009) Back to the Future: A new Planning Agenda? *Town Planning Review*, 80(6), pp.iii-viii.

Fabbro, S.; Haselsberger, B. (2009) Spatial Planning Harmonisation as a Condition for Trans-national Cooperation. *European Planning Studies*, 17(9), pp.1335-1356.

Sociologists' border considerations

Planners' border considerations

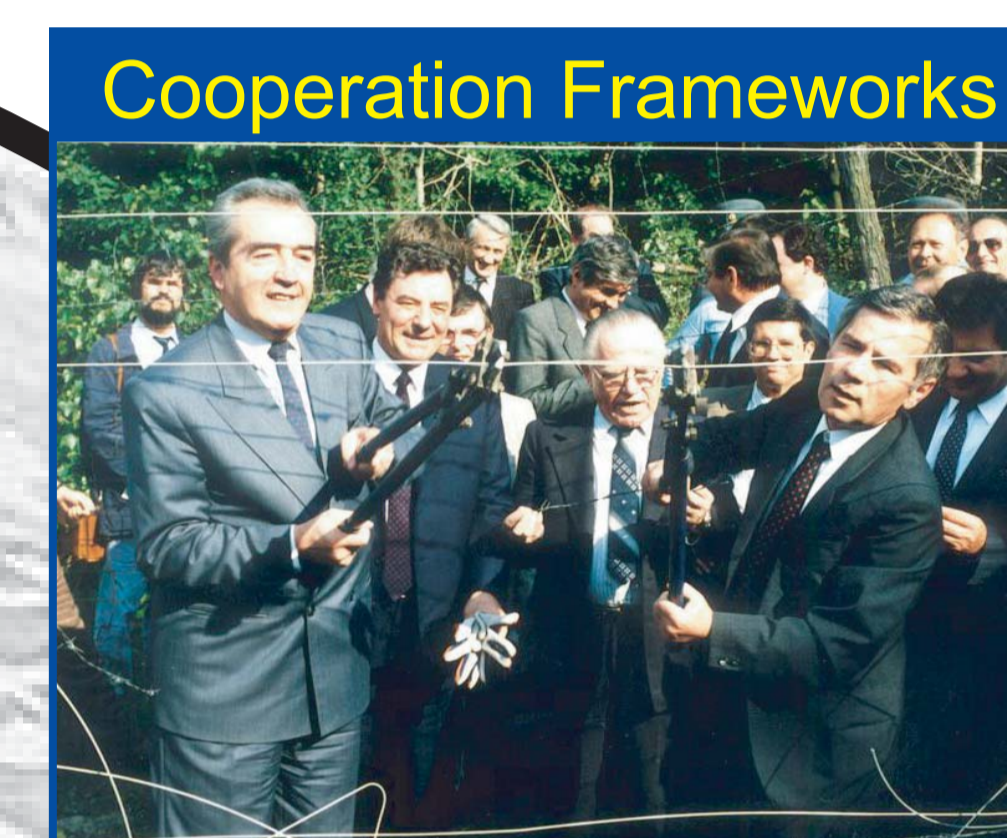
## Collective Memory matters!

Borders are often deeply rooted in the minds of people, manifested through subjective stereotypes and expressed through distrust and fear.

Transforming the socially rooted picture of a border implies understanding the underlying collective memories (a reconstruction of the past, shared, permanently adjusted and passed on by a particular social group or society through personal experiences and traditions).

### Emerging future challenge:

*Overcoming the burdens of history by bringing conflicting pasts of different groups together and merging them into a new collective memory.*



TOWARDS

# 'A UNITY OF DIVERSITY' THROUGH...

**EUROPEAN IDENTITY** facilitating the collaborative development of a European value base as well as of shared visions.

**COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS** establishing common governance structures for trans-border cooperation projects.

**COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION** building up physical and non-physical symbols, enabling people to identify themselves with Europe.

**COOPERATION PLATFORMS** creating a lively environment for coming together, networking, strategy and decision making.

## Sociologists' inputs for the reshaping process of Europe

## Lieux de Mémoire matter!

Borders are essential elements contributing to the contending desires of every human being for 'sameness' and 'difference', differentiating between 'us' and 'them'.

Within a bounded territory, societies identify themselves through lieux de mémoire (time- and place independent cultural patterns, such as monuments, patron saints, rites or songs).

### Emerging future challenge:

*Taking collective concerns (such as common history, tradition, values, natural elements) as a starting point for establishing lieux de mémoire transcending national borders.*

## Governance matters!

Trans-border policy delivery and strategy making is dependent on the competencies and responsibilities of the partners involved as well as on the underlying framework structures.

The success of trans-border undertakings does not necessarily correspond to the deepening nature of the different degrees of formality (ranging from 'unwritten agreements' or political declarations to the drafting of white papers or territorial charters).

### Emerging future challenge:

*Figuring out the most appropriate degree of formality for any specific trans-border undertaking as well as for the whole 'European Union'.*

## Planners' inputs for the reshaping process of Europe

## Participation matters!

Participation in trans-border planning processes facilitates the building up of proximity (e.g. mutual understanding and reciprocal trust) across borders.

Effective trans-border participation networks need to be structurally organised, as they are uncertain processes with actors on either side of a national border requiring reasons, in the sense of common concerns, for working together.

### Emerging future challenge:

*Establishing dynamic trans-border spaces of interaction and communication so that the European Union really becomes an ever closer Union between the people of Europe.*