

Policy Forum

Synergy in border regions

On **Monday 26 October 2026**, the Nijmegen Centre for Border Research at **Radboud University**, in collaboration with the **Euregio Rhein-Waal and Interreg Deutschland-Nederland**, is organising the policy forum 'Synergy in border regions'. This policy forum is taking place as part of the international research project Borders in Globalization (BIG, www.biglobalization.org).

About the organising partners

BIG is an international and innovative network of academic and societal partners (governments, the business sector, non-governmental organizations) engaged in border issues. The network is led by the University of Victoria (Canada) and consists, next to partners from North America, of consortia from all over the world. Radboud University and Euregio Rhein-Waal are participating in this project as partners in the Dutch-German border region.

Themes of the policy forum

These developments provide an opportunity to renew discussions on cross-border cooperation. What is often overlooked is that synergy can lead to more and better results than the sum of individual activities – a concept sometimes referred to as '1+1=3'. During the policy forum, which will take place at the Euregio Rhein-Waal in Kleve (Germany), synergy in border regions will therefore be the central focus.

Four themes will be central within the broader topic of synergy:

- Resilience
- Better governance
- Investments & infrastructure
- Sustainable prosperity & social cohesion.

Programme of the policy forum

In the following months, the exact programme of the policy forum will be elaborated.

The morning of the policy forum will begin with an introduction to the topic, followed by keynote speeches on the four themes by guest speakers from home and abroad. In the

afternoon, two parallel sessions will take place, in which there will be interactive discussions about these themes.

9.00-9.30	Walk-in	
9.30-10.15	Opening and keynote about synergy	Plenary sessions
10.15-12.30	Presentations on the four topics	
12.30-13.30	Lunch break	
13.30-15.30	Discussion sessions	Break-out sessions
15.30-17.00	Closure	Plenary sessions

Speakers

Here, we provide an overview of some speakers who have already conformed to present at the event. Please keep in mind that more (non-academic) speakers will present as well.

Chao Jiang

Doctoral researcher at the Karelian Institute (University of Eastern Finland)

Chao is an economic geographer. He is interested in border studies and spatial organization. He is investigating two Interreg-funded projects: the Bothnian Coastal Routes and Adrioncycletour. By conceptualizing spatial organization and outcome evaluation, his research offers novel perspectives on debates on space in geography and EU Cohesion Policy.

Jussi P. Laine

Professor of Multidisciplinary Border Studies at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu, Finland)

Jussi P. Laine is a human geographer whose work spans international relations, geopolitics, political sociology, and anthropology. His research examines the multiscalar production of borders and critically explores the relationship between state, territory, citizenship, and identity. He has also written extensively on border mobility, migration, the ethics of borders, and borderland resilience in the face of geopolitical shifts.

Vincent Pijnenburg

Managing director, Regional Collaboration Office South-Limburg

Vincent Pijnenburg brings over a decade of experience in Dutch-German cross-border collaboration, with a strong focus on human geography, labour mobility and regional economic dynamics. His career spans applied research, programme management and senior governance roles. Today, he plays a key role in strengthening the practical foundations of euregional collaboration within the trinational Euregion Meuse-Rhine, ensuring that policy ambitions translate into concrete, cross-border results.

Julia Roelofsen

Innovation Manager, in the Project TransRegINT, in the Center for Research, Innovation and Transfer (Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences)

Julia Roelofsen has more than 20 years of international business experience. Her work focuses on creating business and growth opportunities through university-industry collaboration, open innovation and internationalisation. Her areas of expertise and interest include innovation management, business development, regional innovation systems and strategic foresight. She is keen on applying these approaches to strengthen regional positioning and long-term competitiveness sustainably.

Jan Niklas Rolf

Researcher at the Faculty of Society and Economics (Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences)

Jan Niklas Rolf is a member of the competence centre of societal transformations (ccst) with an interest in international politics. His current research revolves around issues of national identity and regional integration. He has published widely on Central Asian and European politics and has conducted various projects in the German-Dutch border region.

Christophe Sohn

Researcher at the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER)

Christophe Sohn is an urban geographer and border scholar whose research focuses on cross-border integration, territorial cooperation, and regional governance. He is particularly interested in the ways national borders may function as economic, political, and symbolic resources for border cities and regions. His recent work explores the meaning-making functions of borders in cross-border regionalization initiatives across Europe.

Martin van der Velde

Researcher at the department of Geography, Planning and Environment (Radboud University Nijmegen)

Martin van der Velde has extensive experience in coordinating and doing research in the field of borders and mobility. He is interested in the effects borders do (still) play on mobility in a constantly changing process of bordering, debordering, and re-bordering, not only on a (more concrete) (inter)national scale, but also in more abstract forms in societies and communities.

Practical information

The policy forum will take place at the Forum building of the Euregio Rhine-Waal in Kleve, Germany. A limited number of parking spaces is available at the rear of the building. For those travelling by public transport: bus SB58 stops directly outside the venue every hour (and sometimes every half hour) at the 'Euregio' bus stop.

Address:

Emmericher Straße 24, 47533 Kleve, Germany

English will be the working language during the presentations and plenary sessions.
There is no charge for participation.

If you would like additional information, please contact Martin van der Velde:
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