# Cross-border governance, de-bordering and re-bordering in the EU. The case of Central European border twin towns.

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## Abstract

Borders and border relations used to be extremely problematic elements of international relations and social interactions between Central European states and nations in the 20th century. However, after the collapse of communist regimes Central and Eastern Europe has witnessed a remarkably quick proliferation of local cross-border cooperative initiatives. Since 1989 border twin towns (described also as divided towns) in particular began to play a symbolic role as European integration laboratories, where the European project is being tested in micro-scale, combining different legal, cultural, economic and social systems in everyday coexistence. Spatial conditions were an interdependent factor in this regard. The main question that appeared then was that of tools and models of governing twin settlements forming a common space and sharing – under changing border regimes – common needs, opportunities, problems, etc. These were settlements that represented at the same time different political, economic, social and cultural realities. This paper's aim is to analyze the challenges related to governing cross-border settlements in Central Europe in the context of European integration, with governance approach being a theoretical prospective of the investigation. The main presumptions will focus on the multi-level character of border twin town governance, where joint management of the public sphere has to involve not only the administrative structure of the divided towns in question, but also non-governmental organizations and the inhabitants as well as state and European levels. Additionally de-bordering and re-bordering tendencies in the region - especially in the light of the current immigration crises - contribute to different patterns of governance.

**Keywords:** cross, border cooperation, cross, border governance

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