



10TH ANNIVERSARY

2018 European Public Policy Conference  
Borders in Transition: Creating, Removing, Reimagining

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Sofia, Bulgaria

# 10TH ANNUAL EUROPEAN PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

Borders in Transition:  
Creating, Removing, Reimagining



Hertie School  
of Governance



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# FOREWORD FROM IPLI FOUNDATION

Dear EPPC 2018 Participants,

IPLI Foundation has been a proud supporter of the EPPC since its Budapest edition in 2011. Prior to that date, in my personal capacity as a public policy student, it was a distinct privilege to participate in the foundational EPPC event in Athens in 2009.

Coming to 2018, the EPPC has achieved an impressive milestone. Ten years have passed since the launch of this unique initiative. Emerging from its humble beginnings in Athens, when the EPPC sprang to life thanks to the efforts of a handful of motivated public policy students, the event has grown tremendously and has since taken place in Istanbul, Budapest, Barcelona, Paris, Rome, Warsaw, Ljubljana, Prague and now Sofia.

By choosing Sofia as the location for this year’s event, at a time when Bulgaria holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union, organizers have underscored the importance they attach to contributing to the continuing debates on the future of EU public policies. On behalf of the IPLI Foundation, it is a distinct pleasure to laud this year’s impressive initiative and to heartily thank all participants, hailing from all over Europe and beyond, for coming to make this ten year anniversary so special!

Respectfully,  
**Timothy Reno**  
Director  
IPLI Foundation



## ABOUT THE EPPC 2018

### **BORDERS IN TRANSITION: CREATING, REMOVING, REIMAGINING**

The conventional notion of borders as existing between nation-states has its roots in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. However, recent political, technological and societal developments have made it clear that this conventional definition of borders and its impact on policy-making requires rethinking and reevaluation. The migrant and refugee crisis in Europe has raised questions regarding stability; technological advancements have removed borders in both communications and the financial sector; and within nations and communities, societal boundaries have profound political implications. In essence, borders are bifurcating -- simultaneously being built up in certain areas, while being removed or broken down in others.

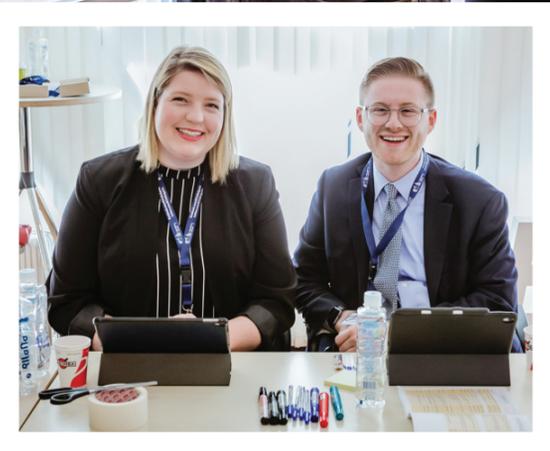
Europe, in particular, has been at the forefront of these issues. Through the removal of national borders, the free flow of labor, the single-market economy, and the Common Security and Defense Policy, the European Union defy the classic understanding of borders. Recent events have found Europe challenged by both conventional and unconventional border issues. The secessionist movement in Catalonia, for example, and the right to self-determination more broadly, make it clear that the discourse surrounding traditional notions of borders is still very much in contestation. At the same time, Europe must also be prepared to address newer, more abstract border issues such as internet privacy and how to govern borderless spaces.



The public policy community both within Europe and internationally must work to diagnose these issues and strive for innovative and effective solutions. The role borders play has changed vastly in the last thirty years. The advent of globalization and digitalization has only further complicated and obfuscated these complexities at all levels of society. In an effort to address this, EPPC 2018 draws upon traditional conceptualizations of borders and reimagines them in the context of 21st century issues. The conference addressed three conceptual areas:

1. (In)stability, Borders, security and the nation-state
2. (Dis)connection, Technology and the removal of borders
3. (In)visible, Borders within society





## FILM SCREENING "POSOKI"

On Friday night, the conference opened with a film screening of the Bulgarian movie Posoki which has recently been nominated for multiple film festival awards including the Cannes Film Festival and has won an award for best screenplay at the Gijon Film Festival. Posoki is a road movie set in Sofia in present day Bulgaria, a country that remains optimistic, mainly "because all the realists and pessimists have left". The movie begins with a small business owner, who drives a cab to make ends meet, and discovers at a meeting with his banker that the bribe he will have to pay to get a business loan has doubled. At his wit's end, he shoots the banker and then himself. The incident sparks national debate on talk radio about how despair has taken over civil society. The story continues to follow six taxi drivers and their passengers who move through the night, each in hope of finding a brighter way forward. The movie which the conference participants got to enjoy in Bulgarian with English subtitles gave a glimpse at issues on the mind of many in Bulgarian society. Moreover, the film also broached issues of migration and economic divides while connecting seemingly unrelated storylines in a bigger narrative similar to this year's EPPC itself. Afterwards, the participants had the chance to speak to Simeon Ventsislavov, one of the screen writers, who offered entertaining stories from the filming and gave an insight into the themes of the film.



## KEYNOTE SPEECH WITH HEAD OF REPRESENTATION, OGNIAN ZLATEV

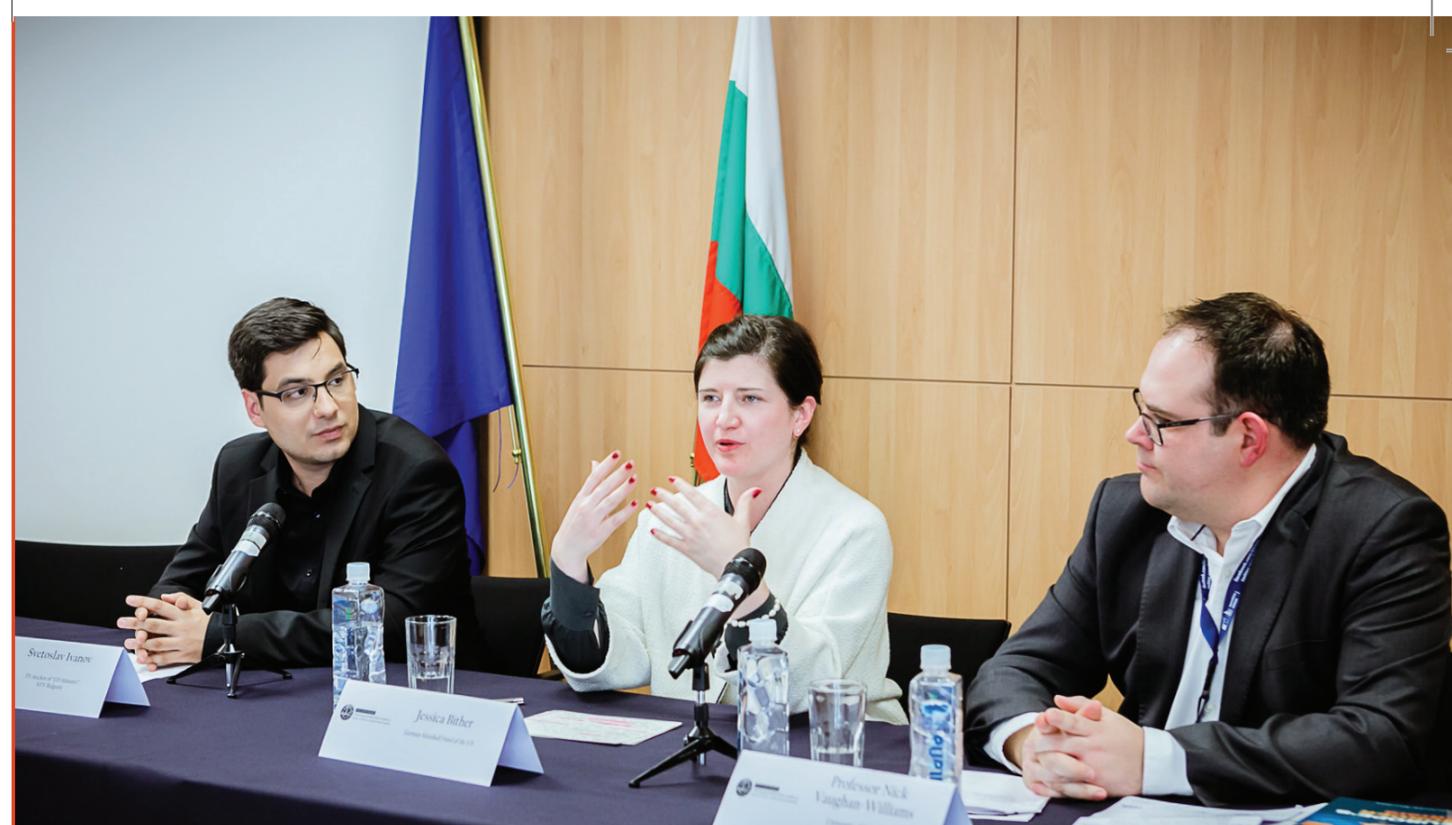
The conference participants had the immense pleasure to listen to this year's keynote speaker Mr. Ognian Zlatev. Mr. Zlatev is the head of the European Commission representation in Bulgaria and has previously worked in media sector before making the career change to work in the EU. As a high level EU official he provided a unique perspective on the situation of the EU, commented on the current developments and the changing global dynamics, and presented his conviction that the EU means opportunities for all of its citizens. Living through the fall of the Soviet Union and the integration of Bulgaria into the EU, he was able to share his personal experience with the removal of borders and how the EU has improved life in Bulgaria. From his perspective "solidarity always improves life". But Mr. Zlatev also acknowledged that there are large challenges



ahead of the EU resulting especially from the economic and migration crisis in strong right wing movements throughout all of Europe. Borders in their context are defining national identities. Now more than ever, it is time for shared responsibility among member states through financial support and capacity building instead of setting boundaries between each other. The EU is attempting to do their part, particularly in regards by making technology available to everybody, by removing social and economic borders, and by creating more policies with great care. After emphasizing the importance of dialogue in his speech he opened the floor to questions "because it is time to talk and it is time to talk openly." His responses were honest and resulted in a lively back and forth where he highlighted the importance of democratic participation, commented on the need for a new mindset in Bulgaria to take advantages of the opportunities in the EU, and again called for more dialogue.

## PRESENTATION: "DIGITALIZATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR" WITH ROMAN BECK

The advent of technology has brought with it an unprecedented ability to share and access information. In doing so, however, society has lost a crucial sense of privacy and ownership. In his presentation, Professor Roman Beck examined the role that blockchain can play in reasserting these rights in the the digital era. At the same time, however, he highlighted the difficulties that blockchain-enabled technologies present for governing bodies, as they rely on a decentralized ledger system. Raising issues ranging from the EU's recent enactment of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to ensuring compliance and authenticity when selling automobiles, blockchain empowers individuals' rights but creates political and regulatory challenges for states.



## PANEL 1

### "MIGRATION: NARRATIVES BETWEEN SECURITY AND INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION" WITH NICK VAUGHN-WILLIAMS AND JESSICA BITHERS

Among one of the most salient topic in recent years, our conceptualization of borders has been greatly challenged. Professor Nick Vaughn-Williams and Jessica Bither spoke about the conflicting narratives taking place. One the one hand, the Schengen Zone has chipped away at the traditional understanding of borders; on the other, the spectre of nationalism in response to the wave of migrants crossing the Mediterranean reveals that borders still very much define people's perception of security. In looking at policy recommendations, both Vaugh-Williams and Bither emphasized the need to not let border security come at the expense of human rights.



## “YUGOSLAV OR HABSBURG HERITAGE? THE INTRANATIONAL IDENTITY BOUNDARIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY WESTERN BALKANS” WITH NAOUM KAYTCHEV

In a very detailed presentation, Professor Naoum Kaytchev from the local Sofia University explored the intranational identity borders of the Western Balkan states. Tracking the cultural divisions and self-identifications of the people in former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2011, he demonstrated the complex identities that changed even over the course of 20 years. As an entertaining and fairly recent example of the fluidity and complexity he explained the history of the former “Alexander the Great” airport in Macedonia which was recently renamed, partially because current day Macedonia has little to do with historic Macedonia. Breaking down identities into smaller groups, he observed the emergence of new identities such as Serbian Serbs and Yugoslav Serbs, as well as the transformation of muslim Yugoslavs into Bosniaks, all of which lends itself to a greater point regarding the immense difficulty of defining cultural and identity borders.



## PANEL 2

### “THE EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF BORDERS IN EASTERN EUROPE” WITH KATHERINE QUINN-JUDGE, ANNA KRASTEVA AND NENAD STEFANOV

The second panel discussion of the weekend featured Katherine Quinn-Judge, Anna Karasteva and Nenad Stefanov speaking about the emergence and transformation of borders in Eastern Europe. In the nearly thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism more generally, borders in the context of Eastern Europe denote unique ideas about inclusion, identity, and Europeanization. Katherine Quinn-Judge highlighted how the ongoing conflict in the Donbass region of Eastern Ukraine is now being leveraged as a tool for nation-building in Ukrainian society. Using Bulgaria as a reference point, Anna Karasteva highlighted that borders are the laborious production of division and difference. Regardless if difference exists or not, she noted, the raising of boundaries creates the notion of difference. This has had profound political repercussions, particularly in recent year following the migration conflict and the push towards greater Europeanization. Rebordering across Europe is seen as a rebuke against the tides of globalization and a return to symbolic politics. Civil society must play a more active role in removing the borders that are being recreated.

# WORKSHOPS



## WORKSHOP 1

### “CUBE: EUROPIA: YOUR VISION OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION” WITH BAHAR MAZARI

Facilitator Bahar Mazari first introduced CUBE and its mission. CUBE targets the youth to encourage political participation in Europe to build a more cohesive and communal society as well as channels for marginalized people - be it because of skin color, cultural, love, gender, age, class - to participate freely. First, the participants discussed what political participation means to them, what they think of as European society, and what they think of when they hear discrimination. In the discussion, the group deconstructed the core of CUBE and talked about civic duty, voting privilege, European community, values and identities, as well as inequality of opportunities. In the second part of the workshop, participants exchanged their personal ideas on what participation could look like and what they would change, before they split into groups and created policy recommendations which consisted of three parts: Closing gap by increasing participation across society (especially youth and political participation), creating a better social environment by expanding youth civic education, and increasing equality by establishing equal basic human rights standards and equal opportunities.

## WORKSHOP 2

### “BORDER EXTERNALISATION: CHALLENGING EUROPE’S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA” WITH INGA TRAUTHIG

Inga Trauthig, who is a Research Fellow at the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and a PhD candidate in War Studies at King's College London. Her interactive workshop focused on the issue of EU border externalization with regards to North Africa. After initial brainstorming on the phrase “border externalisation”, the participants split into groups and worked on a multifaceted approach to address migration including a stronger development strategy for Africa,



enhancing capabilities for border protection, tackling the collective action problem in the EU (burden sharing), and external monitoring of “asylum centers” to guarantee human rights. One controversial point during the discussion was the issue of “asylum centers” in North African countries (as for example proposed by the French president Macron). It was stressed that the kind of implementing partners are especially important in this regard and that asylum centers could facilitate a quota system for the distribution of migrants and refugees within the EU.

### WORKSHOP 3

## “BORDERS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: CASE EXAMPLES FROM THE BALTIC SEA REGION AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA REGION” WITH MARTIN KERNTOPF

Sweden prolongs border controls in Malmö. China is creating artificial island in the South China Sea. Borders seem to (re-)appear in various spots in world. The workshop prepared by Markus Kerntopf who is PhD student at the International DFG Research Training Group “Baltic Borderlands” at the Ernst Moritz Arndt University Greifswald, focused on the role of regional intergovernmental organizations (IGO) and assessed the impact on crises within a research framework. The participants observed that there is no such thing as a completely open or closed border, they are rather moving along a spectrum. Borders are performed into being through rituals (processuality). In defining those standards of appropriate behaviour, IGOs are normative to the regional integration and socialisation process. Through the examples of the Baltic after the fall of the Soviet Union and the current developments in the South China Sea participants explored the process through which borders are negotiated, drawn, moved, and redrawn. Borders, it seems, are constantly in flux.



## PRESENTATION: “CROSS-BORDER ORGANISED CRIME AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING” WITH NADYA STOYNOVA

In the presentation on Human Smuggling and Organized Crime, Nadya Stoyanova, Analyst for the Center for the Study of Democracy Security Program presented the results of a study into the developments in organized crime and human smuggling in Bulgaria which is a transitory country on the Balkan route with Greece border closing in 2015 numbers increased significantly to 10.900 immigrants a year in has been described as the fastest growing crime sector. Mrs. Stoyanova walked the audience through a typical, professionally organized smuggling networks. A typical smuggling operation has a coordinator present in the destination country who organizes transportation and accommodation with cooperation partners in the origin and transit country. The research showed that there was a significant redirection towards smuggling from low-levels criminals to crime bosses who engaged in human smuggling as an additional source of revenue. The migrant crisis have changed this smuggling and trafficking because up to 2007 there was an overlap. Now smuggling activities have been rising separately and do not interfere with trafficking operations. Counteractions have been slow because of low prioritization and insufficient disjointed national responses to internationally organized crime groups. Her recommendation is to sustain law enforcement operations and improve the integration with law enforcement in source countries.



## PRESENTATION: "LOVE BEYOND BORDERS: THE RIGHTS OF RECOGNISED SAME-SEX PARTNERS MOVING ACROSS THE EU" WITH LILIYA DRAGOEVA

At a heart clenching last event of the conference Lily and Dari, a same-sex couple from Bulgaria, inspired the audience with an intimate view inside their fight for equal rights, sharing their personal stories and describing the LGBT experience in Bulgaria. Lily Dragoeva from the Central for the Study of Democracy explained that Bulgaria ranks sixth lowest on Rainbow Europe's legal index among EU countries and while civil society rights are granted to same sex couples, they are denied almost all family rights such as marriage or civil partnership. This conflicts with the EU Free Movement Directive that defines the right of citizens of the Union and their family members -spouse or registered partner- to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. Lily and Dari's struggle to simply be a married couple and live together as a family in safety and security began when their claim to recognise their UK marriage was rejected. Their appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court of Bulgaria was still pending. Since then the European Court of Justice ruled that same-sex marriages are to be mutually recognised by all member states. Their effort to change the hearts and minds in Bulgaria and to receive equal treatment in front of the law continues. On behalf of the whole organizing team, we wish them all the best on their journey!



## CLOSING REMARKS WITH AMBASSADOR ANTÓNÍ MARTINS DA CRUZ

Once again, EPPC was lucky enough to welcome Ambassador Antóni Martins da Cruz to speak to the delegates. In his closing remarks, the Ambassador took the opportunity to deconstruct the conference's position paper and present some differing perspectives on the history of borders in Europe and the challenges and changes we are now experiencing. Bringing a wealth of experience and first-hand insight, the Ambassador injected an aire of realpolitik to provide some interesting, and at times controversial, remarks. Touching on the responses to the migration crisis, he states that the influx of refugees to Europe, and not nations closer or more culturally similar is an unusual situation. Addressing the issues of security in Europe, he raised the point that a lack of a common security system across the EU inherently reinforces the borders between countries. The EU is not a security-focused entity and rather points to NATO as the body to examine security-related issues. The perception of boundaries within society are another anomaly given that the middle class has never been stronger in Europe. Looking forward, he notes that the issues that the conference sought to address reflect a response to the unfettered push towards globalization and are less related to the raising or removal of borders. The Ambassador ended his remarks by empowering the delegates to work towards creating future opportunities for greater cooperating.





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