

## *Cohesion at the EU's External Borders? The EUBORDERREGIONS Project Investigates Regional Development Options between Co-operation and Exclusion*



Border crossing at Solontsi / Vel'ke Slemence divided by the border between Slovakia and Ukraine

The EU-funded project EUBORDERREGIONS (Grant: SSH-2010-2-266920) investigates possible impacts of cross-border interaction for the development of regions at the EU's external borders. The project situates local development issues in selected borderlands within wider perspectives of an emerging European "neighbourhood" that goes beyond more territorially restricted notions of European Cohesion.

With the fall of the "Iron Curtain" and the advent of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, citizens, communities and regions along the external confines of the EU have chosen to open new avenues of communication with their counterparts across state borders. These initiatives reflect attempts to use the border as a resource for economic and cultural exchange as well as for building political coalitions for regional development purposes. However, the majority of these regions must not only deal with high unemployment, limited diversification and demographic decline but also with constraints generated by borders themselves and security and management policies that have made EU borders harder.

This project will identify challenges to and opportunities for economic, social and territorial cohesion in eleven borderlands at the EU's external frontiers. As such, these border regions are treated as interfaces between development dynamics and policy frameworks operating within the EU, on the one hand, and in neighbouring countries, on the other. With its Neighbourhood Policy, the EU has envisaged the partial transfer of community practices beyond the EU's own borders. However, in order to avoid new regional divisions in the future it might be necessary to think of cohesion beyond the EU. With this project, we will develop scenarios and realistic policy options that address the specific and critical situations at the political "edge" of the European Union.



The University of Eastern Finland co-ordinates EUBORDERREGIONS. The 14-member consortium includes participants from Austria, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Hungary, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Turkey.

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