

The eastern external border of the EU



A journey through the borderlands of the EU and its neighbours

Olaf Kamphuis
Nijmegen, July 2011

Borders are spatial and temporal records of relationships between local communities and between states (Wilson & Donnan, 1998: 5).

Cover picture: Bridges across the external border of the EU between Narva (Estonia) and Ivangorod (Russia) (author's photo, 2009)

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Summary

In this thesis, I explore the materiality of the eastern external border of the European Union (EU). The eastern external border of the EU is the line which is geographically located between Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the EU. The materiality of the border is recognizable and different at each place. It is a dynamic process which is being produced and reproduced in the same time.

The Second World War has divided the European continent. The aftermath of the war was the start for more European cooperation in order to prevent such a war would ever happen again. Decades later the EU is the result of this increasing European cooperation. Currently there are 27 member states and most of them are part of the Schengen area as well. The EU is stimulating the freedom of movement of goods, capital, services and people within its own space. There is also a negative side to this internal openness. The freedom is ending at the external borders of the EU, which are being heavily controlled. This thesis focuses on the eastern external border of the EU. The importance of the line between the EU and non EU countries is becoming bigger as the border receives a lot of priority in many policy fields. The border is developing into a political instrument being used as a cartographic line to order.

Satellite images will show a European continent with no clear beginning or end. The EU has territorialized a large share of the continent into EU space. This space has gradually expanded and the forecast is that the current eastern external borderline will be fixed for the next several years. The border divides the EU citizens from the "Other". By the creation of an EU identity a distance is being created towards the non-EU citizen. This is the creation of a "soft" border in our mind. The creation of such a soft border is the starting point for the creation of the border in space. This line is being represented on maps and is taken for granted. The boundary on the map is being conceptualized into metal fences decorated with barbed wire. This is being legitimized by the thought we have to secure ourselves from the other. In this way the border is being produced and reproduced. The manmade shape of the border becomes the reality of what a border is and the dominant discourse.

Different powers contribute to this process of bordering. The Schengen area is the space of internal freedom which is highly connected to the EU. The level of welfare and security within Schengen is high compared to EU's neighbours. This difference in standard of life attracts many people to migrate into the Schengen area. A lot of institutional restrictions disable the possibility to travel across the borders of Schengen. This causes streams of migrants trying to enter the EU in semi legal ways. In order to prevent those people from entering the EU territory, EU's external borders have become heavily guarded. The border is being seen in a context of "border management" and "security". Large sums of money are being invested into the creation of a secure line. The EU is showing its interest beyond its own borders as well. However this is very relative compared to the importance of the border confirming. I want to see the concrete results of the contribution of different powers in the process of bordering during a one month trip along the border myself.

The trip showed me the diversity of the materiality of the border and the variety of places. The connection of a place with the border and their neighbour is different everywhere. This relation is mostly the result of a contested history. The presence of the border has a significant impact on a place. This is visible in the level of development, as the difference in welfare between both sides of the border is huge. Almost all the border regions are economically the weakest of their country. The already present general difference in income level between EU and non-EU causes a strong distinction between both sides of the border. Small cross border trade used to be a positive external effect of the presence of the border. The EU limited the amount of cigarettes and alcohol to take across the border in a way it is hardly profitable to benefit from it while trading. However older people still use this opportunity to receive a marginal amount of extra income. At some border crossings the local population can profit from a local simplified visa regime. This is different along the whole eastern external border of the EU.

The low level of development in the borderlands is materially visible in the quality of infrastructure as well. The border infrastructure is often the best looking part of the borderlands. The border confirming receives more priority than the border transcending in terms of infrastructure. The amount of border crossings and public transport possibilities across the eastern external EU border is very limited. Moreover, there are long queues visible at several places in the borderland, where truck drivers can have to wait up to a week. This is all the result of the controlling function of the border. The demarcation of eastern external border of the EU shows a certain uniformity. The border infrastructure historically consisted in most cases merely of stones indicating the border. Over the years this infrastructure has been renewed towards a fence which is running along the whole external border stretch. On the EU side of the external border, the fence looks rather new. There have been cameras attached to the fence at many places as well. For example, half of the Slovakian border is completely controlled by thermo sensors which notify each movement. The non EU side of the border is being controlled more by man power. Parts of the Soviet Union border infrastructure, such as watchtowers, are still in function. The high level of border control I noticed in Romania, where I was informed each place of the border can be reached by border police at five minutes at the most. Recent political developments have led to the postponing of the Schengen accession of Romania and Bulgaria. This indicates the time of "fear" for the unknown other, where we as EU citizens are living in. The border is being used a protecting mechanism, rather than a space of opportunities. Residents living in the proximity of the border have to face the negative external effects of this.

The eastern external border of the EU is a heterogeneous space which is alive, being lived and full of material examples of the border. Borders have been created and are being produced and reproduced. The materiality of the border is visible in the presence of border guards, detention centres, barbed wire, separated communities and numerous other examples at different scales of which an amount never will be public. The border is more than a line of demarcation. It is a dynamic process which is different everywhere. I want to argue that the high political and communal interest in the eastern external border of the EU as policy tool is too dominant compared to the attention the EU has on the material, mostly being negative effects, of the eastern external border of the EU.

Preface

I started studying human geography at Radboud University in 2005. During my studies I became more and more fascinated by borders, especially in Eastern Europe. I will not forget what I noticed on the 10th of July 2006. On my way to do volunteering work in Dnipropetrovsk (Ukraine) I had to cross the Polish Ukrainian border. Sources informed it is the most practical to do this on foot between Medyka (Poland) and Shegini (Ukraine). I am shocked by the situation I find there. There is a queue which takes around four or five hours to cross the border. Mostly old people are waiting in the queue in order to trade cigarettes and alcohol. I see an old lady taking her pants off and putting cigarettes in her underwear without any shame. In the three hundred meter long zone of no-man's-land between the Polish and Ukrainian border crossing point, people are trading and climbing across fences in order to return their country of origin. The border police notice this without making any intervention. For an unclear reason I am allowed by the border police to skip the line which reduces the time I need to cross the border significantly. The situation is comparable with the photo below. The only difference this that the photo has been produced in a Polish newspaper five years later. Not much seems to have changed.



Picture 1.1: Pedestrians waiting to enter the EU (Gazeta.pl, 2011)

I want to thank all people who supported me, writing this thesis: The people who I interviewed during my one month trip along the eastern external border of the EU, my family, friends and supervisor Henk van Houtum.

I hope you enjoy reading my master thesis.

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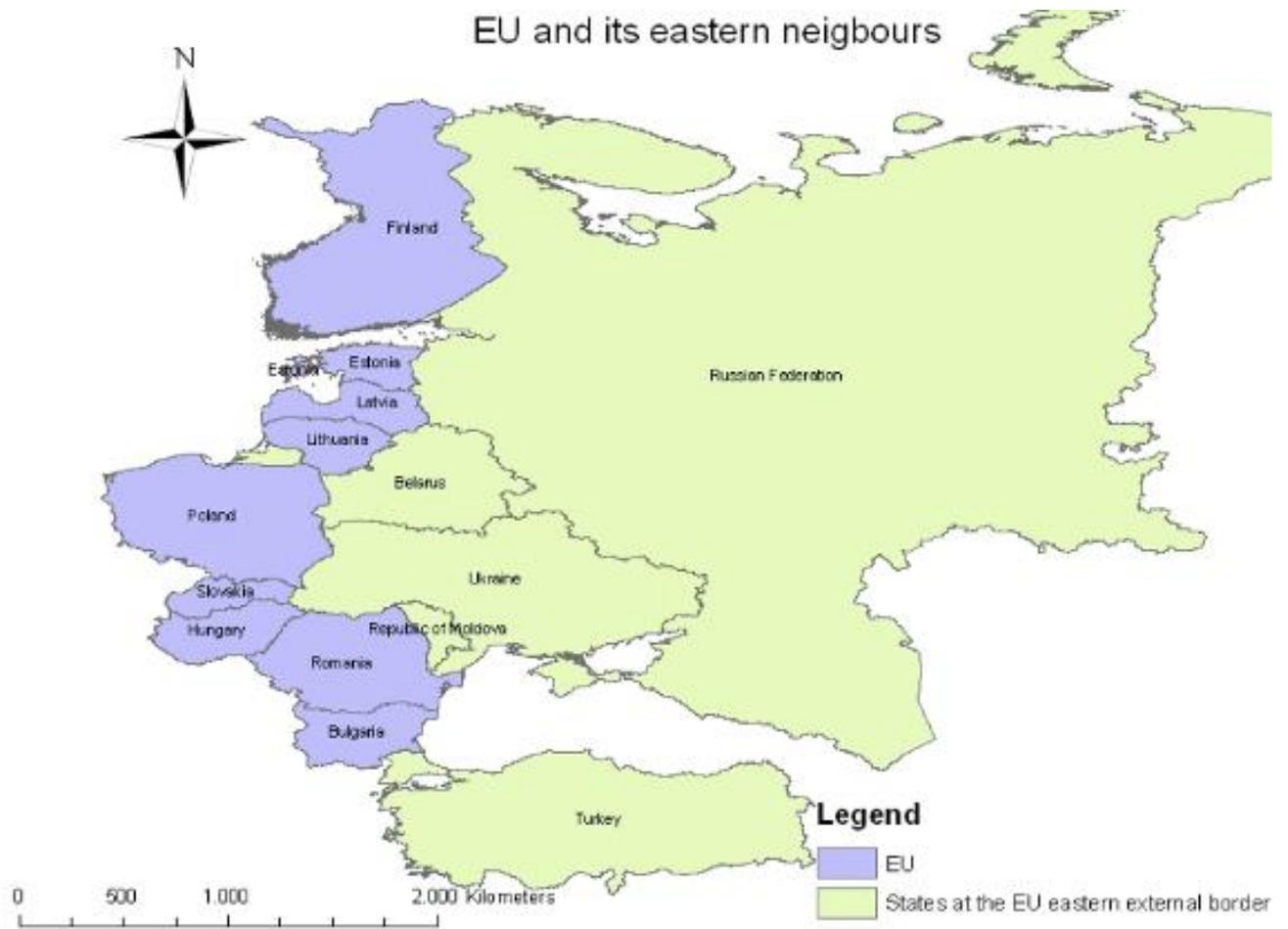
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1. Introduction: The European Union and its eastern border

The European Union (EU) territory is surrounded by different types of land. The border is demarcated by water in the south, west and north. The east of the EU is bordered by land. When looking on the map this border should be called a boundary, meaning a line of delimitation (Kramsch, 2010). Boundaries are lines recognized by international agreements to sustain sovereign powers. Globalization appeared to reduce the relevance of borders. Flows of money and people became more and more global over the years. On the other hand borders gained importance on the political agenda in order to respond to the multinational threat of terrorism and security. This contradiction of openness and closure of borders makes it very interesting to look at and study borders. This thesis will deal with borders within Europe.

The meaning of what Europe is has changed drastically during the last centuries. Regional economic, political and administrative changes have contributed to a different Europe. All those developments have led to the creation of a unique political and economical project in the second part of the twentieth century: the EU. This new Europe is sometimes being referred to as an “imagined community”, which is still being built on a daily basis (McNeill, 2004: 9). A European flag and European anthem has been created and every four years each EU citizen is voting for an EU parliament which has an increasing amount of influence on a national level. Moreover developments over the years have led to the removal of internal national borders within the EU. By means of doing this, the EU is trying to stimulate cross border flows of goods, services and capital within the EU. This internal freedom is located in a specific space: EU territory. Whereas there are no internal border controls within the EU, the level of control is increasing at its external borders, such as at the east of the EU. The east of the EU is bordering several former communistic countries. The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989 was the starting point for increased openness among those former communistic independent states and “Western Europe”. A lot of territorial changes occurred in the EU as the union expanded eastwards in 2004 and 2007, hereby absorbing several, not all, of those former Soviet Union and other former communistic states. A limited amount of states are still on the nomination to enter the EU domain.

The external border is the only point of border control in the EU and therefore all external borders, such as the eastern external border, are becoming controlled increasingly heavily. A physical and institutional wall is being created between the EU and its neighbours. In this thesis I will try to open up and denaturalize the common understanding of what the eastern external EU border is. On maps the eastern external border of the EU is usually deployed as a mere line which is separating different political entities. But how is the situation at the border in reality? Is EU’s external border a space which is being lived and where things are happening? These are the main issues which will be explored in this thesis.



Map 1.1: EU and its eastern neighbours - the fence is in between (author's editing, 2011)

1.1 Central goal:

The central goal of this research is to explore the characteristics of the eastern external border of the European Union by looking at representations and actual presence at the border and its close surroundings from own experience and relevant literature.

The European Union is a unique project. Within the union national borders are disappearing in an institutional way. Mental national borders are still present in the mind of EU citizens (see: Houtum van & Struver, 2002). However these perceptions could decrease over the years. Opposite to this internal openness is the high and increasing level of border control at EU's external borders. The EU tries at all costs to control irregular migration by securing its borders in the tightest way as possible. This securing comes along with imposed travel restrictions for large groups of non-EU citizens. All the eastern neighbours of the EU belong to this group with travel restrictions. They see their freedom in space of movement being reduced after the increased openness which was generated after the Soviet Union broke up.

In this thesis I want to explore this eastern external EU border. The border is a line on a map and is being used as an institutional limitation for the practice of policy. This line, however, can be more than just a tool and it has a certain materiality.

Turning a space into place, giving it meaning, it has been assumed, is the act of human intervention (...) Place is a contingent effect of the process of placing, ordering and naming that emerge from the actions of heterogeneous materials within a given network and the system of differences that are generated to stability to such a mobile process.

(Hetherington & Munro, 1997: 184)

I want to investigate the materiality of the border. How can we recognize the border? Is this a flag, an iron fence or a river? The border can have and has a big influence on local communities living in the border area and its input is present on different levels. The border is different for everyone who is dealing with it. This thesis will speak about truck drivers who have to wait for five days to cross the border, Diaspora having difficulties to visit relatives living on the other side of the border, semi legal cross border trade and more stories from the EU and non EU eastern borderlands. Every border has its own function, identity and relationship with its borderlands. Borderlands have been defined by Wilson and Donnan (1994: 8):

Zones of varying widths, in which people have recognizable configurations of relationships to people inside that zone, on both sides of the borderline but within the cultural landscape of the borderlands, and, as people of the border, special relationships with other people and institutions in their respective nations and states.

The border will be denaturalized and opened up as a space of movement and interaction.

1.2 Research questions

Main question:

The central goal will be reached by answering the following research questions. The main question of my research is:

What is the materiality of the eastern external border of the EU?

Borders are significantly represented on maps, where they indicate a distinction between two different entities. The external EU border divides the political entity EU from its neighbours. In this thesis I will try to find out if this border is more than just a line. I will explain what the border physically and socially looks like and how this border has been demarcated. And, I will try to describe the impact of the physical presence of the border on the local borderlands. The term “materiality” refers to the content that has been given to a certain space as an act of human intervention. The presence of the border gives content to space, making it a border place, rather than space.

The following sub-questions will help me to explain and explore the materiality of the border.

Where is the eastern external border of the EU on the map?

This question will introduce the used terminology used in this thesis. The EU and Europe are two different terms. However the influence of the EU is significant in non-EU Europe as well. It will give a short introduction over what the EU is and why the external EU border is located at the place where it is now. A theoretical outline will be given on the creation of borders, border narratives and representations of the border which are being derived from here. Different kind of maps will show the location and the arbitrariness of the location of the border. It is very relevant to understand how borders are being created and represented when looking at the materiality of this border in the borderlands itself. Borders are often represented as natural phenomena, which they are not.

Which factors contribute to the materiality of the external EU border nowadays?

By answering the first question, the location of the border is described. The second question will be answered by exploring the factors which contribute to the materiality of the current border space. Global processes, such as migration lead to a policy reaction from different authorities. The EU has different main responsibilities. These responsibilities include border control, which is a multinational issue. The policy which the EU is executing influences significantly the current image of the border. The answering of this question is necessary to understand border while being there. Which powers influence the landscape in the borderlands? Why are there EU flags visible at the border and why is the control of the border so strict? Attention will be given to different geopolitical ways (Walters, 2004) of the use of the border referring to historical tactics in this field.

What materiality is concretely visible at the external EU border?

In this chapter I will describe my journey through the borderlands, in combination with the creation of a scheme of indicators of the EU eastern external border. The previous two questions describe how the border is conceptualized in forms of representation and policy. I want to find out if this border it is possible to summarize a 5000 kilometre long line in single representations and policy documents. Own subjective findings and photos will be supported with relevant literature and photo material from external sources. This will lead to an insight if the border is a cartographic line or if the border is a space where things are happening and interaction takes place.

1.3 Social/societal relevance of the project

This paragraph will explain what the societal relevance of my research on the eastern external border of the EU is and why this border, which is geographically far away, in other fields much closer is.

The former communistic countries in the east of Europe have faced a lot of changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Countries which were historically connected to their east are politically heading more and more westwards. The EU welcomed several of those former communistic countries as new member states in 2004 and 2007. Most of these countries have recently joined the Schengen area as well. Free transport of persons, goods, services and capital is possible between the Netherlands and all the other member states. Cooperation is highly stimulated among the countries which are “in” the EU, including the new member states. The border of the Netherlands is now synonymous to the border of the European Union. Hence, if the Netherlands wants to protect its borders, border management should be effective at the external border of the EU. The longest external land border of the EU is at the east and runs from the Finnish – Russian border in the north towards the black sea and the Bulgarian – Turkish border in the south. Romania and Bulgaria would join Schengen somewhere in the middle of 2011; however this date has been postponed recently again. This means the Schengen border is not exactly the same as the EU border. I would argue that conducting EU/Schengen border research is a synonym for conducting research on the Dutch border, as the only control to enter the Netherlands is the control at border crossings where the EU can be entered, being at the physical external border or at modern border zones such as airports and train stations. The EU external border is being used as a mean of separation and exclusion. The “war” on illegal migration (Houtum van, 2010a: 3) is being conceptualized at the geographical ends of EU space. The EU is optimizing at high financial and humanitarian costs the control at the external border. Global inequality is the cause of most migration streams. The EU tries to “protect” itself by means of strict control at the external border, while residents of the borderlands, who have nothing to do with those global migration streams, are being heavily affected by this policy as well. These residents face negative external effects of their lodging close to the EU external border, without having significant influence on those processes.

The location of the border is also still part of discussion. In case Turkey joins the EU, the eastern external border will be displaced and will run along Georgia, Iraq, Armenia, Syria and Iran. Hence, the border should not be taken for granted, as a fact. The presence of this cartographic line in a region causes different situations everywhere. That is why it is important to investigate the local / social effects of the border and its physical image as well. Put differently, the EU border is more than a separating mechanism. Conducting research on the border itself contributes to a better understanding where for instance local communities, local policy makers and international policy makers can gain from. Specific aims on a global scale are targeted by a strict border regime; however there are different external effects on a local scale which are largely being neglected. This indicates the social relevance of this research project.

1.4 Scientific relevance of the project

Borderlands are a very interesting topic for several scholars. The “Nijmegen centre for Border Research” at the Radboud University Nijmegen as one of the several worldwide border research centres is an indication for the importance of the theme. The dynamics in the field of border research are huge. The map of Europe and the idea of what Europe is, are changing rapidly over the last century. Several wars divided the continent. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a part of Europe is uniting more and more. The best example of this “coming together” is the European Union. Within the EU, border control is decreasing and people can move easily through the continent. Labour migration in the EU is still relatively low, but the opportunities are big and this type migration is being stimulated by the EU. Contradicting to this internal openness is the fact that the control at the external borders of the EU is being increased. The largest share of the actual eastern border has been formed since 2004 (the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary) and 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria). The situation at these EU borderlands is relatively new and the EU is still executing a lot of policy to “secure” the external border in order to combat the flow of migrants which is trying to enter the EU by crossing the external border. Migrants are innovative in finding their way towards the EU; if they cannot enter through the Mediterranean Sea they will try to enter the EU through Turkey and Greece. In this way the border is becoming a geopolitical instrument where control becomes increasingly important. A lot has been written in the academic world about the geopolitical function of the border in a global landscape: The border as a mean to protect the EU inhabitants from unwanted migrants. The concept of Euroregions which crosses the external EU border receives attention as well, focusing on institutional aspects, such as cross border governance (for example: Popescu, 2008). The attention on the physical and social image of the border itself is scarce. Therefore I will focus on this “new border” where little research on has been conducted yet. I want to explore what this border looks like and whether this is more than the line on the map which is dividing the EU from the non EU. The research will have an explorative character as there is no common theory on the materiality of a specific border. The conclusion of this research can initiate further research upon the eastern external border of the EU.

1.5 Methodology

This paragraph will explain the methods which I used in my thesis. Chapter by chapter I will point out the way how I answered the connecting sub question. Most attention will be given to the fourth chapter which describes my journey through the borderlands of the EU.

In the second chapter of my thesis I will show where the eastern external EU border is located on the map. I will connect thoughts on the creation of border narratives and the issue of representation with the current eastern external border of the EU. Merely looking at the map and lines is a classical geopolitical way of conducting research. I will try to go beyond this classical way of thinking. The eastern external border of the EU has a different function and “place” on various maps. In combination with the first paragraphs, this will show the arbitrariness of the presence of the border at a particular place. Within Europe, national border lines have been changing a lot over the years. This has caused problems especially for people having social, economic and cultural ties across the border in the eastern part of Europe.

In the third chapter the main focus is on the different powers and policy makers which are dominantly influencing the current landscape at the EU eastern external border. A summary will be given on the way the external border of the EU is being conceptualized and which budgetary programs are available. Together with articles from various journals an introduction will be given on the phenomena which are relevant towards the external border. Two important scholars in this field, who think critically about the border and consider the border more than merely a line, are for example Walters and van Houtum. Walters (2004) recognizes several geostrategical border concepts. I will briefly address those concepts and will look at the end of my thesis if it is possible to categorize a border as such.

The most important input for the fourth chapter is a one month long trip I have made along the eastern external border of the EU in June 2009. *Those stories will be displayed with italic font to indicate the subjectivity of those parts.* It is impossible to give an exact representation of the border. The view I will give of the border comes from the trip along the border, which could be described as nonparticipant observation. Nonparticipant observation integrates all your senses into conducting research such as: seeing, hearing, feeling and smelling (Flick, 2006: 216). I did not want to focus on just negative or just positive material aspects of the border. The border is not necessarily purely bad or good. Strict border control has a price, but it helps to execute the policy of the political power which we as a European society have chosen. I will not take a position in this debate, but describe the materiality of the border and stimulate discussion on the border. This academic method has been largely inspired by the book "Het einde van Europa" ("the end of Europe") (Linde van der & Segers, 2004), in which two Dutch journalists travel the eastern border of the EU from the north to the south in 2002. This motivated me to do something similar seven years later. Therefore I will explain why personal observation can function as a useful method.

Observation makes you perceive how something finally works or occurs (Flick, 2006: 215). In order to reach the goal of my research I recognize observation as a good applicable method. Sidaway (2007: 162) refers to this in a part as a semiotic analysis: science dedicated to the production and meaning of society. Tilley (2001: 262) defines the relation between material, objects and space as:

The generated and generative, material forms distributed in social space-times are both the medium and outcome of human actions in the world.

Megoran (2006) states that observation as a method largely is being ignored by political geographers. This method can address imbalances and open new research directions by preventing the neglecting of people's experiences and everyday understandings. Different scholars address the importance of personal observations as a method. Cloke & Jones (2001) have connected this way of conducting research to landscapes, Sidaway (2007) to borderlands and Megoran (2006) to international boundaries. The speciality of each place is being emphasized. Place is central within geography and daily life without consensus over what "place" means in academic terminology (Cresswell, 2004: 1). Agnew (1987: 42) tries doing this in a political geographical way as:

Place is defined as the geographical context or locality in which agency interpellates social structure. Consequently, political behaviour is viewed as the product of agency as structured

by the historically constituted social contexts in which people live their lives – in a word, places.

Hereby Agnew recognizes three interrogated elements for the term “place” as a meaningful location: “Locale” (the settings (either informal or institutional) in which social relations are constituted), “location” (the relationship between a place and other places) and “sense of place” (the subjective orientation engendered by living in a place) (Agnew, 2003: 608). These elements I tried to conceptualize by the creations of different indicators which will be explained in the fourth chapter. Here I will continue to explain which methods I used during my trip.

I observed and experienced the several visited sites in a specific way. Before my visit I tried to have enough knowledge of the place to have special eye catchers to focus on. Flick (2006: 217) describes different phases for observation. I will address those phases one by one and position them connected to my research.

- The selection of a setting

The chapter describes the route which I have taken in a chronological order, starting at the Polish – Belarusian border, up to the northern part of the border in Russia and ending southwards in Romania. I am aware of the fact that own experiences during this trip are in a way subjective. First of all, the choice to visit specific places contributes to my own perception of the border. Those choices are based on specific characteristics each place has. Consequently, I tried to inform myself as good as possible about the practical possibilities of the accessibility of those places. As I am also visiting places outside the EU, a visa was required to enter Russia and Belarus. The impossibility of the reception of a double entry visa to Russia has led to the decision to skip a visit to Finland. For the rest of the trip I decided as much as possible to visit both sides of the border on the same place. By doing this I attempted to minimize the argument of physical determination for theoretical differences between both sides of the border.

I tried to arrange as many appointments with local experts or residents before my journey. The presence of a contact person in a specific place has influenced my travel itinerary as well. For practical reasons I visited Belarus first to travel northwards from there. After visiting Russia I decided to travel southwards again. Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary have not been visited during this trip as it would be too much for a one month trip. The Baltic States have all their own interesting characteristics relevant for my thesis, mostly related to issues dealing with Russian ethnical minorities. Several contacts in Estonia made the decision “easy” to go there. Taken those arguments into account this has led to the following travelling schedule in 2009:

Date	Location	Work done
15-jun	Terespol (Poland)	Photos Polish – Belarusian border Interview fruit sales man at border point
16-jun	Brest (Belarus)	Visit to: Tric "Contact without borders"
17-jun	Brest (Belarus)	Travel day
18-jun	Svetogorsk (Russia)	Travel day
19-jun	Svetogorsk (Russia)	Photos Russian – Finnish border Visit municipality Svetogorsk (Negative) contact with border police
20-jun	Sint Petersburg (Russia)	Contact students from Pskov (Nijmegen – Pskov town twinning)
21-jun	Ivangorod (Russia)	Photos Russian – Estonian border Impression of a Russian village
22-jun	Narva (Estonia)	Interview Estonian border police Interview Russian minorities in Estonia
23-jun	Narva (Estonia)	National holiday (midsummer night) – Interview Russian minority
24-jun	Tartu (Estonia)	Interview Estonian students on Russian minorities
25-jun	Travel day	Travel day
26-jun	Przemysl (Poland)	Interview local tourist office
27-jun	Medyka (Poland)	Interview Polish border police
28-jun	Lviv (Ukraine)	
29-jun	Zhuravichi (Ukraine)	Visit to Detention centre
30-jun	Uzhgorod (Ukraine)	Interview Carpathian Foundation - Ukrainian branch
1-jul	Kosice (Slovakia)	Interview Carpathian Foundation - Slovakian branch
2-jul	Solotvino (Ukraine)	Salt lakes and holes in the ground
3-jul	Sighetu Marmatiei (Romania)	Interview Romanian border police
4-jul	Solotvino / Rakhov (Ukraine)	Visit to the "centre" of Europe
5-jul	Iasi (Romania)	Contact local geography students
6-jul	Iasi (Romania)	Interview "Romanian – Ukrainian – Moldovan Cooperation" Interview Dr Soitu (university of Iasi)
7-jul	Chisinau (Moldova)	Interview former trainee EUBAM (European Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine)
8-jul	Chisinau (Moldova)	Contact local geography students
9-jul	Chisinau (Moldova)	Interview UN Refugee Council Moldova
10-jul	Travel day	
11-jul	Galati (Romania)	Contact local students
12-jul	Bucharest (Romania)	



Map 1.2: Fieldwork trip in June 2009 (author's editing, 2011)

- **The definition of what is to be documented in the observation and in every case**

Each place along the border is different. This means each place has specific indicators with certain values for me to focus on, which contribute to the image of the border. At border crossings I experienced procedures and the amount and kinds of traffic. When travelling the border, I used several types of public transport and hereby I noticed the differences in infrastructure. Sometimes I experienced a language barrier, which was from time to time problematic. The level of English spoken at the border is an indication for education and culture. The level of English could indicate a certain urge to belong together with the EU.

During the observation process I made photos of the border and collected stories from the places visited. Several (non) specialists gave their opinion about the eastern European external border, such as people working at NGO's, scholars, ordinary citizens and soldiers guarding the border. Apart from my own photos I "travelled" the external eastern EU border digitally as well. On the website www.panoramio.com "photos of the world" photos are placed on a map, so in this way I can expand my photo collection of images along the external EU border. A good photo can tell more than many words and helps to visualize and contribute to my writings on the border. "*Cameras allow detailed recordings of facts as well as providing a more comprehensive and holistic presentation of lifestyles and conditions* (Flick, 2006: 234)." In the conclusion of this chapter I will come up with a scheme where all places visited will be summarized along several indications for development, transport and relational issues, giving an overview of the materiality at the places visited, while being aware of the limited validity of this scheme.

- **Descriptive observations that provide an initial, general presentation on the field**

During my trip I tried to experience the border in its broadest sense. Therefore I analyzed as objective as possible and described merely what I saw without using prejudices. I wrote everything down at the end of each day, documented my own feelings and behaviour, varying from interviews to walks in the borderlands. This variety of material will result in an insight on the materiality of the border and the homogeneous or heterogeneous outlook of it. Moreover it is in my opinion impossible to define whether each observation can be connected to the presence of the border. This I will not question, as I am trying to describe what I am seeing, which will result in a larger view on the materiality of the eastern external border of the EU. Therefore it is already questionable if it is possible to give a general presentation on the materiality of the border. Along my trip I will discover whether I can generalize my findings at the border.

- **Focused observations that concentrate on aspects that are relevant to the research question**

I picked locations to visit according to the specific aspects of that place and the border line. For example relevant literature informed me, there is still a large ethnical Russian minority living in Estonia, which appeared interesting for my research. Narva is the city with a high share of ethnic Russian people, so it seemed a good choice for me to pick this place along the Estonian part of the border.

Another example is coming from a source (an online newspaper) (YLE, 2008), which wrote about a protest of citizens of the small Russian city Svetogorsk at the border point against the lack of improvement on the infrastructure which had been promised to them. The citizens used the border in this way as a way to express their feelings. This connection from the local population with the border made me decide to go to this particular place.

Those are two examples of choices I have made for focused observations that concentrate on aspects that are relevant to the research question.

- **Selective observations that are intended to purposively grasp central aspects**

At several sites I photographed border demarcation markers. However, I should be aware of the mostly illegal character of obtaining photos of the border. Doing this, I emphasize the physical presence of the border. This is selective in a way that the exact demarcation is more interesting for me than the residents of the borderland which most likely will give more priority on the presence of (social) facilities. The presence of detention centres is another phenomenon which is present in the borderlands, but well hidden. During my trip I wanted to find one centre to describe this relatively new phenomenon close to the border.

- **The end of the observation, when theoretical saturation has been reached, which means that further observations do not provide any further knowledge**

The end of the observation was in my case always influenced by practical limitations. It is impossible to explore every single square centimetre around the border for thousands of kilometres. I had to make choices in the places to visit. Generally speaking, the moment to end the observation was dependent on the specific situation of the particular place. After all I felt satisfied with the information obtained from my observations. Language was the most important barrier in several cases to speak with people and get more insights on the observed place.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have unfolded my research plan. The following chapters will answer the question of materiality at the eastern external border of the EU. The external border of the EU is becoming increasingly important as the internal borders within the EU are disappearing. The Dutch land border is practically located a thousand kilometres more eastwards. European border policies affect local residents in those borderlands “far away”. These are important indicators for the societal relevance of this research project. Moreover the situation at this border is relatively young as the EU has expanded eastwards just several years ago. This is the place where the EU is trying to secure “us”, as EU citizens from the Other. The materiality of this young situation is scientific very relevant because the amount of research which has been conducted on this specific topic is limited. I have decided to observe and travel the border myself for one month as a method to answer my central research question. In this way I have been doing nonparticipant observation at the border. The decision on which places I would visit has been based on places which are interesting according to several sources and practical issues. Flick (2006) describes different phases of observation which I used during my research. The practical travel plan I followed almost completely and gave me a good insight in the materiality of the eastern external border of the EU.

2: Borders and Europe

This chapter will be focused on the location of the eastern external EU border and why the border is located at that particular place. Another important item in this chapter will be the border itself. What is a border? How is it conceptualized and how is it often represented? The concept “border” will be explained along with different cartographic representations of Europe. This indicates the arbitrary place of the border in the beginning. This leads to a better understanding of the situation in the borderlands itself, later on in this thesis.

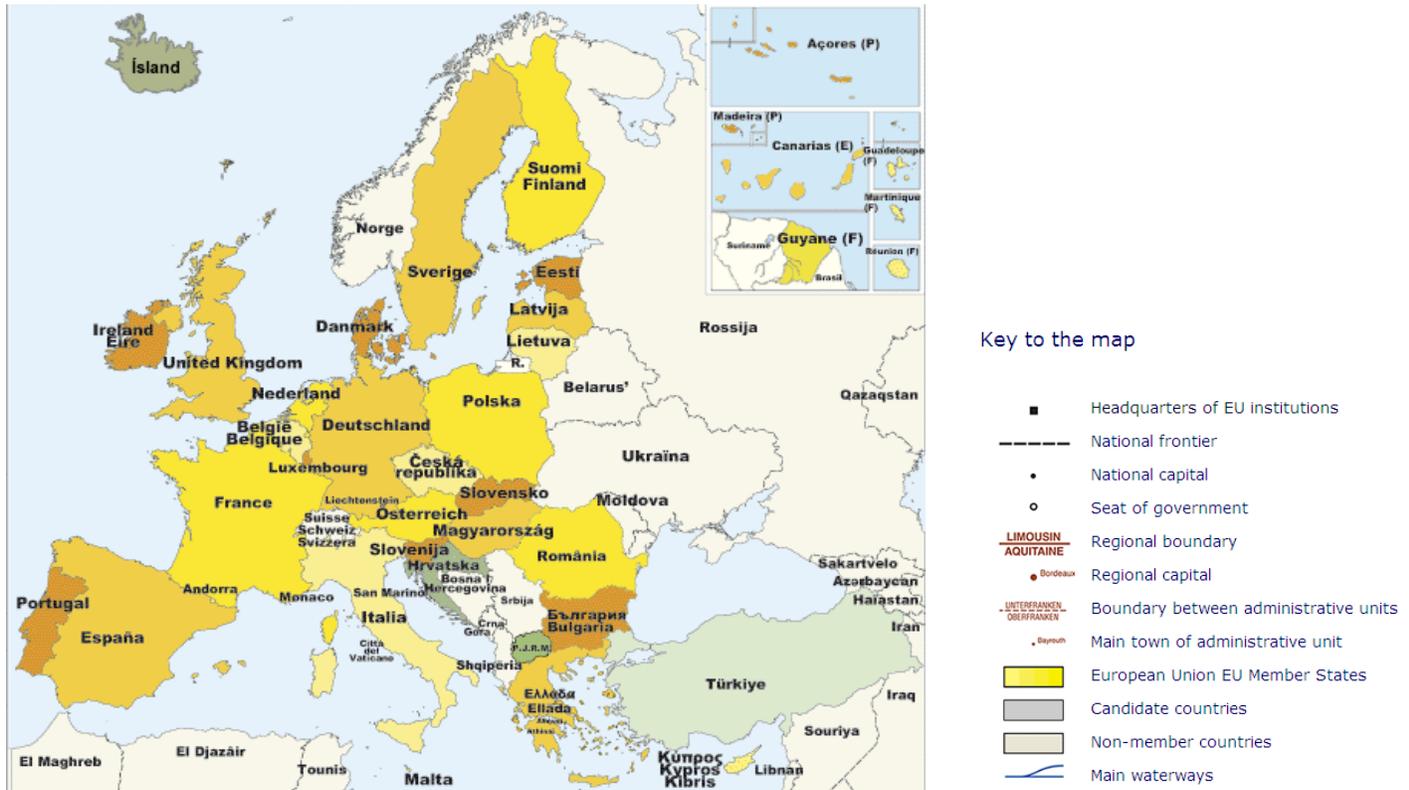
Borders are significantly represented on maps. The lines on the map suggest a certain uniformity of what a border is. On thematic and political maps a boundary seems just a line to indicate the limits of the characteristics of a certain space. If a border or boundary is more than a line, is it possible to generalize those concepts in to certain uniformity? There are numerous maps of Europe to be found focusing on different aspects each. Maps are specialized in the representation of a certain issue the maker is willing to show. *“A map says to you: Read me carefully, follow me closely, doubt me not”* (Markham, 1983). It is important to take into account when looking at maps; it is not a “scientific” or “objective” form of knowledge creation. One should start with the premise that cartography is not always what cartographers say it is (Harley, 1989: 1). In this context it is very interesting to look at maps of the EU and the relation to the eastern external EU border on those maps. Each representation has clearly a different point of focus. Most geographical features on maps are embedded within geographical discourses. Therefore we will not look at maps focusing on binary relations as for example “true and false” or “accurate and inaccurate” (Harley, 1988: 277). Maps are representations of power and knowledge. Maps of the EU, religion in Europe, the level of human development, gross domestic product (GDP) and ethnicity will show that assorted subjects show very different maps of the same space. All maps have various themes and the dividing lines on the maps have diverse values. It is easy to find EU maps with a lot of interesting thematic data per country from the EU institution Eurostat. European maps with thematic data on EU and non-EU countries together are much harder to find. The relative little amount of those maps is already an interesting issue. Hence, I will address in this chapter how borders look like on the map and in theory.

First of all in I will show a single representation of Europe and introduce the terms border, boundary and frontier (2.1). The following paragraphs will explain along with thoughts of Foucault the issue of representation (2.2) and the construction of borders (2.3). Further on I will look at the length of the eastern external border (2.4), different cartographic representations of Europe and the place of the eastern external border in the EU (2.5). In this chapter I will try to “open up” and “denaturalize” the borderline within power representations.

2.1 Representations of Europe: borders, boundaries and frontiers

A well known representation of the EU is visible on map 2.1. This is the EU as shown on its own website. The distinction between EU and non-EU member states is clear here. The key to the map defines the boundaries between countries as “National frontiers”. Internal borders within the EU have the same “value” as the external border of the EU. This is how the EU is representing itself. There is no difference at all between the boundaries on the map. The coloured countries are “in”

and the rest is “out”, referring to the political status in relation to the EU (member, candidate, and non-member). The member states have each a slightly different colour, however in the key of the map only one colour corresponds with EU member states.



Map 2.1: European Union (EU, 2011)

The lines on maps, which distinguish different spaces from each other, are often called “boundaries”. The content of the term boundary differs from borders and frontiers. Ladis (1959: 269) points out that the physical and political elements are very important in a theoretical understanding. Both frontiers and boundaries are results of political manifestations. A “frontier” is not an explicit line and contradicts in this way with a boundary. It is located “at the hither edge of free land” (Jackson Turner, 1893) and is often mentioned as “borderland” or “March” (Walters, 2004: 683). The frontier indicated the difference between civilization and non-civilization or the difference between an agricultural society and a nomad society. Therefore the frontier has never been a legal term, but the conceptualization of mental barriers. The Roman “limes” was the borderlands or frontier of the Roman Empire (Walters, 2004: 690). The frontier means literally “the front” in context of a one universal state society. The frontier indicated the beginning of the state.

A boundary is easier to define and indicates the established limit of a given political unit. This demarcation process creates possibilities to govern, function and to control people and territory. “The line is clear and this is what we have”. Neighbours are marked off by political boundaries. This implies a fundamental difference between frontiers and boundaries. However meanings are being mixed up in language and representations. Frontiers are focusing on the external, while boundaries reflect on the internal. A frontier is a transition zone and integrating factor between two different spaces. The boundary separates two political units and has been created by the central government.

It has no life of its own, not even a material existence. Boundary stones are not the boundary itself. They are not coeval with it, only its visible symbols. Also, the boundary is not tied inextricably to people-people teeming, spontaneous, and unmediated in their daily activities on, along, or athwart the border. It is the mediated will of the people: abstracted and generalized in the national law, subjected to the tests of international law, it is far removed from the changing desires and aspirations of the inhabitants of the borderlands.

(Ladis, 1959: 272)

The analysis of boundaries has always been focused on an international scale and the relation between politics and geography (Newman & Paasi, 1998: 186). Paasi (1999) conceptualizes boundaries as institutions and symbols that are produced and reproduced in social practices and discourses. The creation of the modern Westphalian state system has been enabled in this way. This system has been based on national sovereignty and the absence of external influence in domestic structures. The last decades this focus is changing towards border processes. Borders are more than just the edges of territory and processes of bordering, debordering and rebordering are relevant to understand the social aspects of borders (Rumford, 2006: 166). Berg and van Houtum (2003) define a border as following:

The border as a concept is not so much an object or phenomenon, something to erase or install, but rather an outgoing, repetitive process that we encounter and produce ourselves in our daily live.

There are many different lenses to look at borders and/or boundaries. Boundaries are multidimensional in spatial, thematic and disciplinary perspectives (Newman & Paasi, 1998: 198). Borders became a phenomenon bringing together geographers, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, literary scholars, legal experts, along with the border practitioners engaged in practical aspects of boundary demarcation, delimitation and management in the last decades (Newman, 2006: 171). The contemporary border situation in and around the EU is very interesting to look at. More than ever before, the place of birth related to borders is determining one's life. The place of birth decides which nationality is written in ones passport and later on this will determine the ease of movement within the world. Therefore borders and its construction are becoming increasingly important. The social construction of borders, the management of borders and borderlands or frontier zones are subject to changing situations during the last centuries. The political map of Europe has never been stable for a significant period. The unstable location of the border in combination with the changing compositions of nation states has led to a lot of dynamics of the border line over the centuries in (eastern) Europe. How does it come those borders are changing and how are those processes occurring? That is why I will address how borders are being constructed in order to estimate the border during my trip. A theoretical view on the construction of borders and boundaries will be explained in the next paragraph along with Foucault's (1983) notion of representation.

2.2 Ceci n'est pas une frontière

Ladis (1959) explains that boundaries have no material existence. Boundary stones or other physical demarcations are not the boundary itself. The question of representation (of borders)

comes here into place and I will try to connect this with the world famous painting “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” (“this is not a pipe”) from the Belgian painter Magritte.



Picture 2.1: Ceci n’est pas une pipe (Magritte in: Foucault, 1983: 1)

The painting obviously refers to a pipe. The text below the painting makes us question ourselves as it denies the fact this is a pipe. What does Magritte mean with this text? Various things could be the case. For example it could mean the text below the painting is not a pipe. Or it could refer to the word “this”, which is not a pipe. Another possibility is the painted pipe which is not a real pipe but the visual representation of a pipe. Foucault comments in his 1983 work “This is not a pipe” on the painting. Foucault is critical towards language on a former historic-epistemological base (Foucault, 1983: 5). Signs are arbitrary as the bond between the signifier and the signified is of essentially, circumstantial, conventional and historic nature. Words and/or signs are points within the system we call “language” and are not the same as “things” themselves. Words are conceptual significations which makes us distinguish the signified from other objects. This is a very complex approach to language, creating more difficulties, than solving problems. However it is an important philosophical point of view when looking at words, objects and phenomena such as borders. In Europe one assumed for a long time that language was coming from Adam, given directly by God (Foucault, 1983: 6). Language was the perfect transparent resembling for things. This “perfect” worldview has been destroyed later on:

The relationship of languages to the world is one of analogy rather than signification, or rather, their value as signs and their duplicating function are superimposed; they speak the heaven and the earth of which they are the image; they reproduce in their most material architecture the cross whose coming they announce – that coming which established its existence in turn through the Scriptures and the Word.

(Foucault, 1970: 48)

The identification of words with the essences of things is what Magritte is questioning with his work (Foucault, 1983: 7). Modern art is nothing else than itself and is not resembling something else.

Ceci n'est pas une pipe exemplifies the penetration of discourse into the form of things; it reveals discourse's ambiguous power to deny and to redouble.

(Foucault, 1983: 37)

Words or images can replace objects in reality. This is what Magritte is showing with his work where he is playing with words and images and its relation. Moreover he is dismissing according to Foucault (1983: 44) the old equivalence between resemblance and similitude:

Resemblance has a "model", an original element that order and hierarchizes the increasingly less faithful copies that can be struck from it. Resemblance presupposes a primary reference that prescribes and classes. The similar develops in series that have neither beginning nor end, that can be followed in one direction as easily in another, obey no hierarchy, but propagate themselves from small differences among small differences. Resemblance serves representation, which rules over it: similitude serves repetition, which ranges across it. Resemblance predicates itself upon a model it must return to and reveal; similitude circulates the simulacrum as an indefinite and reversible relation of the similar to the similar.

Magritte opens up the relationship between the both in more of his work. Foucault sees similitude as an "advantage" over resemblance. Resemblance stands for the clearly visible and similitude shows what recognizable objects hide. When one would argue an image resembles reality, one assumes the ontological superiority of the latter (Whitmore, 1997). Within similitude the claim of the status as model for the rest is gone and makes it easier to deal with. Magritte reacts to this with the notion that resemblance and similitude scarcely have been differentiated and that only thought resembles (Magritte in: Foucault, 1983: 57). In the citation above Foucault mentions a "simulacrum". A simulacrum refers to an image people have from a phenomenon without ever having seen it in real (Baudrillard, 1994). Could we say a border is in a way a simulacrum? Van Houtum (2010b) makes a connection between this painting and a border. "The reality of a border then is created by the meaning that is attached to it" (Houtum van, 2010b: 127). For example many people presume to know how a crashing plane looks like, but this image is only based on creations of the media (movies for example) (of course there is a small share of people who have seen a plane crashing)(Baudrillard, 1994: 21). We only know the projections of our own language. There is no absolute knowledge, as we derive knowledge from representational resources, being verbal or pictorial could be two conclusions derived from Foucault's work "this is not a pipe". The border is a simulation, a manifestation of a copy with a reality that is being created by the meaning that is attached to it (Houtum van, forthcoming: 3).

What has this all to do with the eastern external border of the EU? The knowledge of Foucault teaches us we should not take the border for granted. The border is the border which is being reproduced by our language discourses. A border cannot be resembled in an image as there is not a single perfect model of what a border is. What remains for the representations of a border is similitude. In this way the word border is an ever changing similitude: a manifestation of a copy. Following the argumentation of Foucault this would imply "a series without beginning or end". Coincidentally this assumption could be placed literally in space as the border does not have a

beginning or end. Taking this into account we continue on our route of border construction with Eder's argument (2006) that border narratives are used for the creation of hard borders.

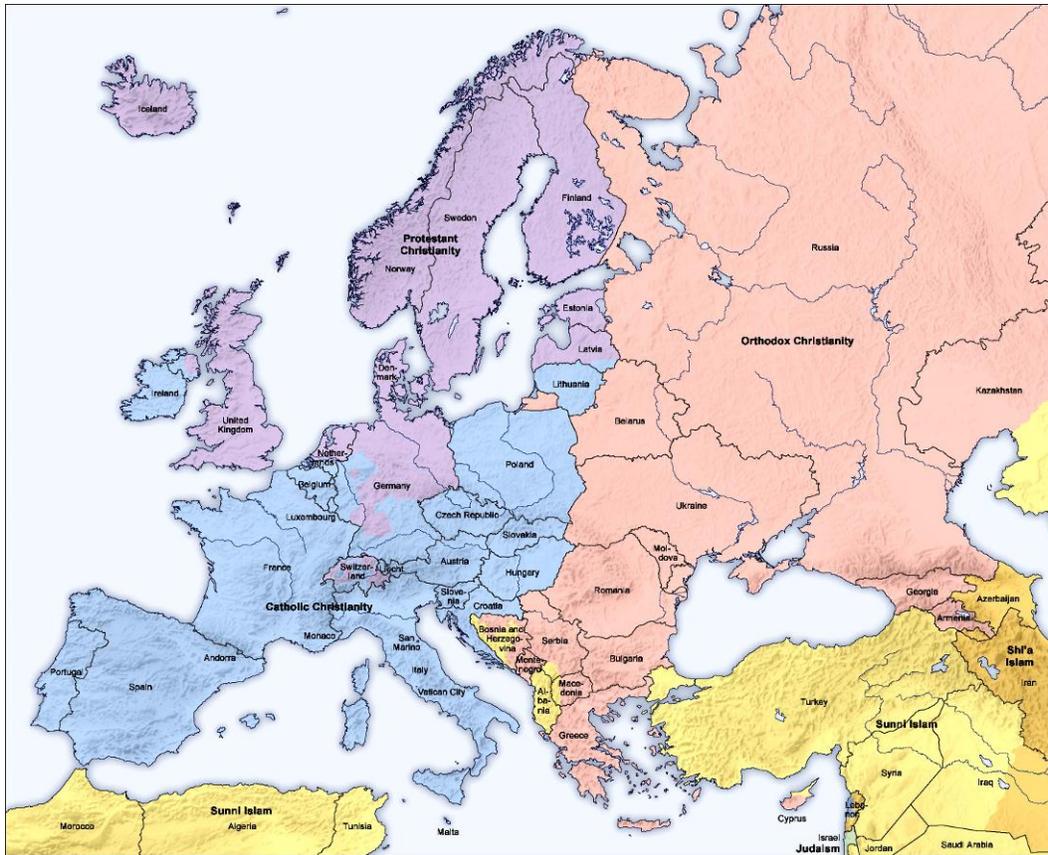
2.3 Construction of the border

Borders can be seen as hard facts which restrain individuals in their spatial behaviour: "Stop: This is a border". Soft facts are boundaries which are drawn between people (Eder: 2006: 255). The construction of soft borders is often being used to contribute to the naturalizing of hard borders and the creation of "objective borders" in this way. Border discourses on imaginary boundaries play a significant role in the creation of the borders around the EU. The claiming of an existing European identity is an important phase in creating borders between "us" and "them". "Objective referents" are being used for the creation of such an identity. Selective elements of the contested history of Europe are being used to define its current borders.

These moments produce what we call collective identities, snapshots of the history of drawing boundaries. Sometimes such identities are consequential, at other times they are not. In the former case, they change the course of time and produce evolutionary leaps, in other cases, they keep the events in the course of the time within one evolutionary path. Identity construction is therefore embedded in more than just strategic games or normative conflicts. They are embedded in a 'structured' time sequence, when identity construction results from former effects of producing identity and difference. Europe provides a particular sequential pattern of the permanent making of Europe over centuries. Structural patterns such as the north-south and east-west axes of difference construction shape the path dependency of present-day discourses on the borders of Europe, i.e. its claim to have an identity.

(Eder, 2006: 257)

This identity is now used for the institutional borders of the EU. Narrative constructions have led to a distinction who can call himself "European" and who cannot. The drawing of a boundary needs some "narrative plausibility" to create legitimacy. Complex societies can be understood with the mechanism of communicating differences. Everyone in the world speaks a language and is part of the global language community. Stories and narratives are created within specific language discourses, with large differences in the understanding between the various language communities. This makes language an important mark for a community. Stories and narratives of the border are communicated within language communities to the next generation as a discursive tradition. Eder (2006: 259) calls this a minimalist theory of identity: "everything can serve as a boundary within a historically specific situation." Narratives become identity indicators through processes of communication. More concretely there has always been a division of East-West within Europe. The "East" has always been regarded as a frontier, something Europe is different from. The East is "the Russians", "Tsarist Russia" or "the Mongols" for example. The 2004 expansion of the EU opens up a new space for narratives of boundary construction on where the Eastern border is.



Map 2.2: Europe by religion (Eupedia, 2011)

Legend:

- Blue: Catholic Christianity
- Red: Orthodox Christianity
- Purple: Protestant Christianity
- Yellow: Sunni Islam
- Orange: Shi'a Islam

Religion is an argument used in the discussion of European identity. Historically the “Occident” (the Western World) was characterized by Christendom (Eder, 2006: 260). It is still the dominant religion within the EU, but migration in the last decennia created a much more multicultural society. Religion is crossing the borders of the EU. Orthodox Christianity is dominant in the south eastern EU member states as in their eastern neighbours. The Islamic country of Turkey is an EU candidate member state. The Islamic aspect is a problematic issue for conservative European political parties. Those could be influenced by Samuel Huntington’s theory (1996) on “The clash of civilizations”; suggesting culture and religion are the primary source of modern conflict. People however, should all have the same equal worth, not focusing on the place of birth or particular religion. Judging people on those aspects should be seen as discrimination (Houtum van & Boedeltje, 2009: 228). Moreover Europe is not connected to just Christianity as religion anymore at the same level as it used to be. As Eder (2006: 260) argues Europe used to be bounded by

Christianity and semantic functions, now it has become a unit constructed by political and economical practices.

The history of Europe is very heterogeneous, full of emotions, including a lot of different regional narratives, which hardens the creation of a common identity. A bitter past often produces a powerful narrative. A common feeling of guilt, pride and responsibility are references which can make people “recognize” each other (Eder, 2006: 267). The cruelties during the Second World War were the direct cause for the end of national narratives as function for collective identities. The European identity is being created by “getting its history” right. This can lead to soft borders where hard (political) borders (for example the eastern external border) can be derived from.

Paasi (2001) describes the social processes and discourses in relation to borders. His emphasis is not merely on narratives, and is giving significance to images of Europe and the link between state and territory as well. The relation between boundaries and the state is contradicting. Boundaries are highly significant in the sovereignty of space, however less hard than in earlier times. The boundary is still the distinction between different national institutions and cultures and on the other hand the regulator of cross border activities. Along with the creation of a European identity, an identity of the non European is being created as well. The meaning of Europe has historically always been seen in relation to the “Other”. The question of a possible European identity is a complicated issue. As Paasi (2001: 8) describes identity:

It is typical to suggest that territory in question – “place”, “region” or state – automatically has a more or less fixed “identity”, which can be defined by using parameters that in fact may illustrate the power of some actors or organizations to inscribe this identity or structure of meanings on people rather than being something that has a permanent essence and that “belongs” to every citizen.

A common European identity is almost impossible to create. A theoretical European identity should take a lot of uncertainties, ambiguities and contradictions into account. There are a lot of different identity discourses within Europe and it is very complicated to territorialize all those discourses. The EU however, tries to stimulate this European identity. This is being done for example by means of the creation of a European culture capital of the year. An EU press release (2004) notes: *European capitals of culture: strengthening the European identity*. This press release symbolizes the way the EU is trying to create this hardly existing identity. Currently it lacks “strong” national symbols as war monuments and national monuments. European flags on infrastructure partly financed by the EU are weak substitutes for this (Sidaway, 2007: 166).

Boundaries are complicated, historically contingent phenomena that are concomitantly both contextual social institutions and symbols and are constituted on various spatial scales in various institutional practices and discourses.

(Paasi 1999: 679)

The border is complex and contested. The citation above indicates the shift in thinking from Ladis’ (1959) view on the boundary towards a younger generation of border thinkers. There is no truth on what a border is and how it can be legitimized. However this does not prevent scholars and politicians from trying to, as several monopolies of truth or rational and essential order are often

being claimed (Berg and van Houtum, 2003: 2). Stories on the borders, border narratives, are being created and used to justify the border. Some will support those narratives, others will reject them.

2.4 The length of the border

After having explained how a border is being created, represented and justified I will connect those issues with the eastern external border of the EU, my field of interest within this thesis. I will look at this borderline from northern Finland to the Black Sea. The total length of the eastern external border is around 5600 kilometre. One could expect there would be consensus on the exact length of the national borders in order to create narratives from here. Data on border lengths differ in different sources. The length of land boundaries according to the CIA world factbook are being shown in figure 2.1:

Land boundaries in km	Russia	Belarus	Ukraine	Moldova	Total
Finland	1313				1313
Estonia	290				290
Latvia	292	171			463
Lithuania	227	680			907
Poland	432	605	428		1465
Slovakia			90		90
Hungary			103		103
Romania			538	450	988
Total	2554	1456	1159	450	5619

Figure 2.1: Land boundaries in km (CIA, 2010)

The following note is added with these statistics:

This entry contains the total length of all land boundaries and the individual lengths for each of the contiguous border countries. When available, official lengths published by national statistical agencies are used. Because surveying methods may differ, country border lengths reported by contiguous countries may differ.

(CIA, 2010)

To control this hypothesis, if country lengths differ because of surveying methods, I looked up land boundary lengths using other regional and national statistical institutions (such as: the Finnish embassy and the Polish Statistical Office). These provide the following results:

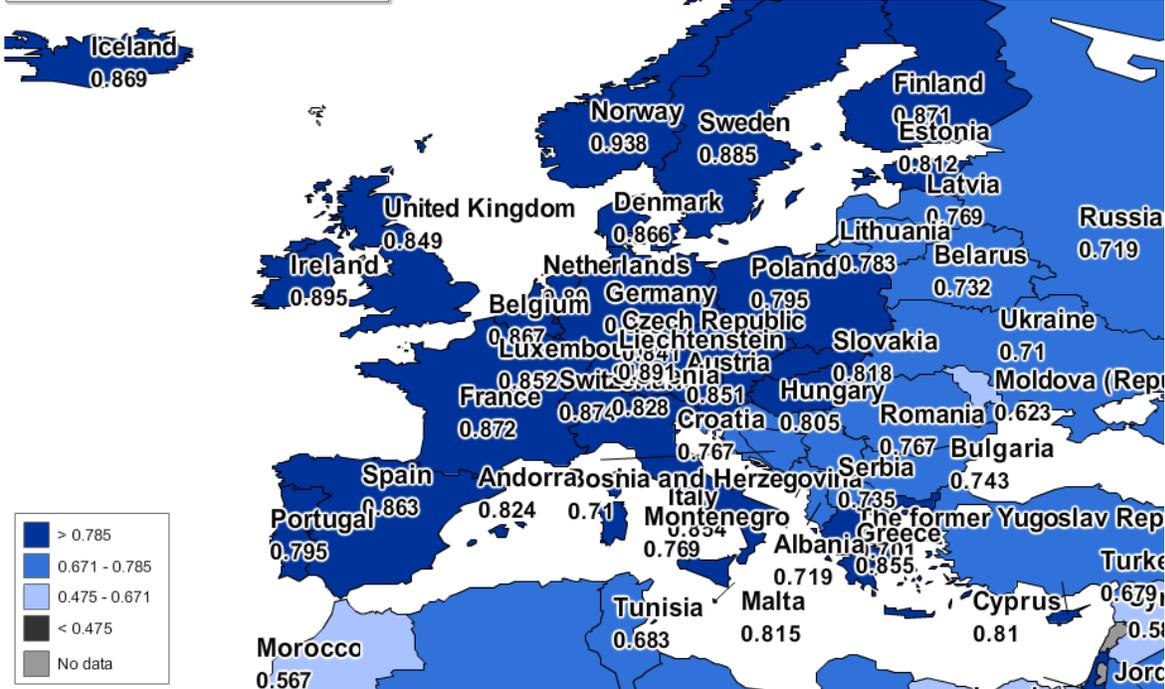
Land boundaries in km	Russia	Belarus	Ukraine	Moldova	Total
Finland	1340				1340
Estonia	294				294
Latvia	276	141			417
Lithuania	255	677			932
Poland	210	418	535		1163
Slovakia			98		98
Hungary			137		137
Romania			531	681	1212
Total	2375	1236	1301	681	5593

Figure 2.2: Land boundaries in km (various sources, 2011)

It is in my eyes surprising there is no consensus about the length of boundaries, being cartographic lines. The measuring of those boundaries causes apparently technological and/or practical problems, however the exact cause for these differences remains unclear to me. In the world many borders are yet not exactly demarcated. The EU is protecting its border and demarcating by landmarks. On the website of the EU however, there is no exact information findable about the length of the external border. The discrepancies between both figures contribute to the assumption the border is a complex phenomenon with no exact start or end. Moreover it makes representations of the border more questionable as this cartographic line is representing something without uniform length.

2.5 Representations of Europe (2)

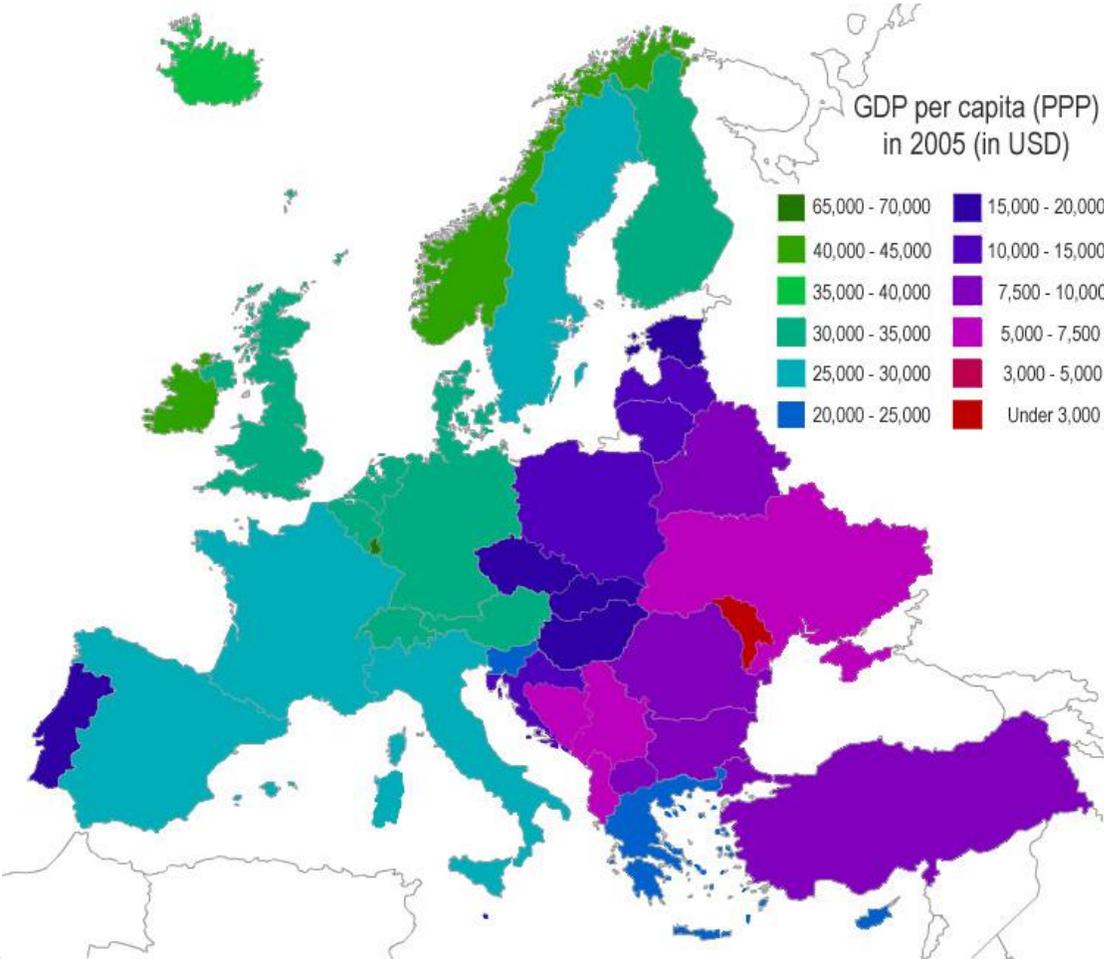
Earlier in this chapter I have showed a political map of Europe. This map contributes to the view of thinking in nation states and borders between those countries. Satellite images will show there are no borders on the European continent. Most maps make us think differently. The 19th century ideal of the nation-state has become rooted in our idea and visualisation of borders (Houtum van, 2010b: 123). This is why I will show several more examples of maps representing Europe and providing information on the current situation in Europe, sometimes ordered in nation states.



Map 2.3: Human Development Index 2010 (UN, 2010)

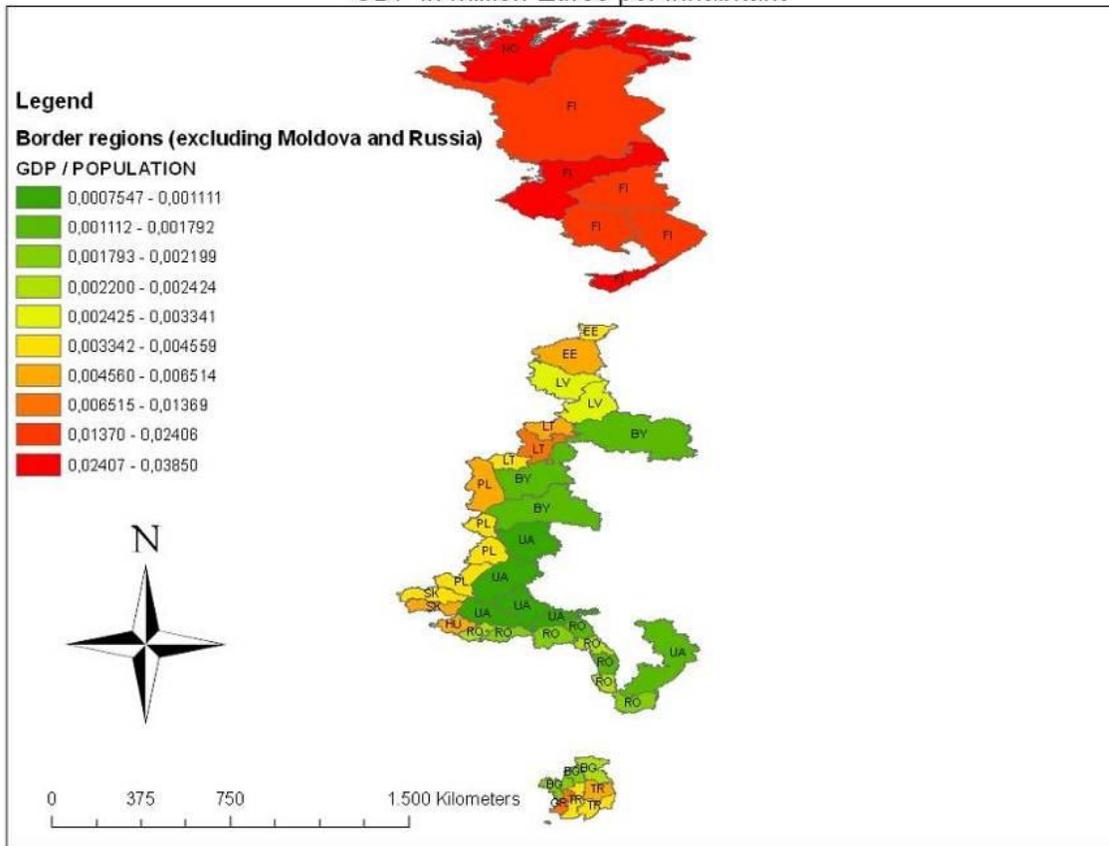
The human development index (HDI) is a yearly produced global index on the level of human development of each country, based on the level of education, life expectancy and income indices. Map 2.3 is representing the values of the HDI. The dark blue colour on the map represents “very high human development”, normal blue “high human development”, light blue corresponds with “normal human development” and black with “low human development”. Most of the EU countries

are ranked among the countries dark blue countries with a score above 0.785. Romania, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria are ranked as “high human development”. All of the eastern neighbours, except Moldova which has “medium human development”, are ranked in the same category. The difference between the oldest EU member states and former communistic countries is still visible; however the score of the former communistic states is increasing over the years much higher than the score of the non EU member states. On this map the eastern external border of the EU seems to be a border in the level of development, which could implicate there is a relation between EU membership and the level of development.



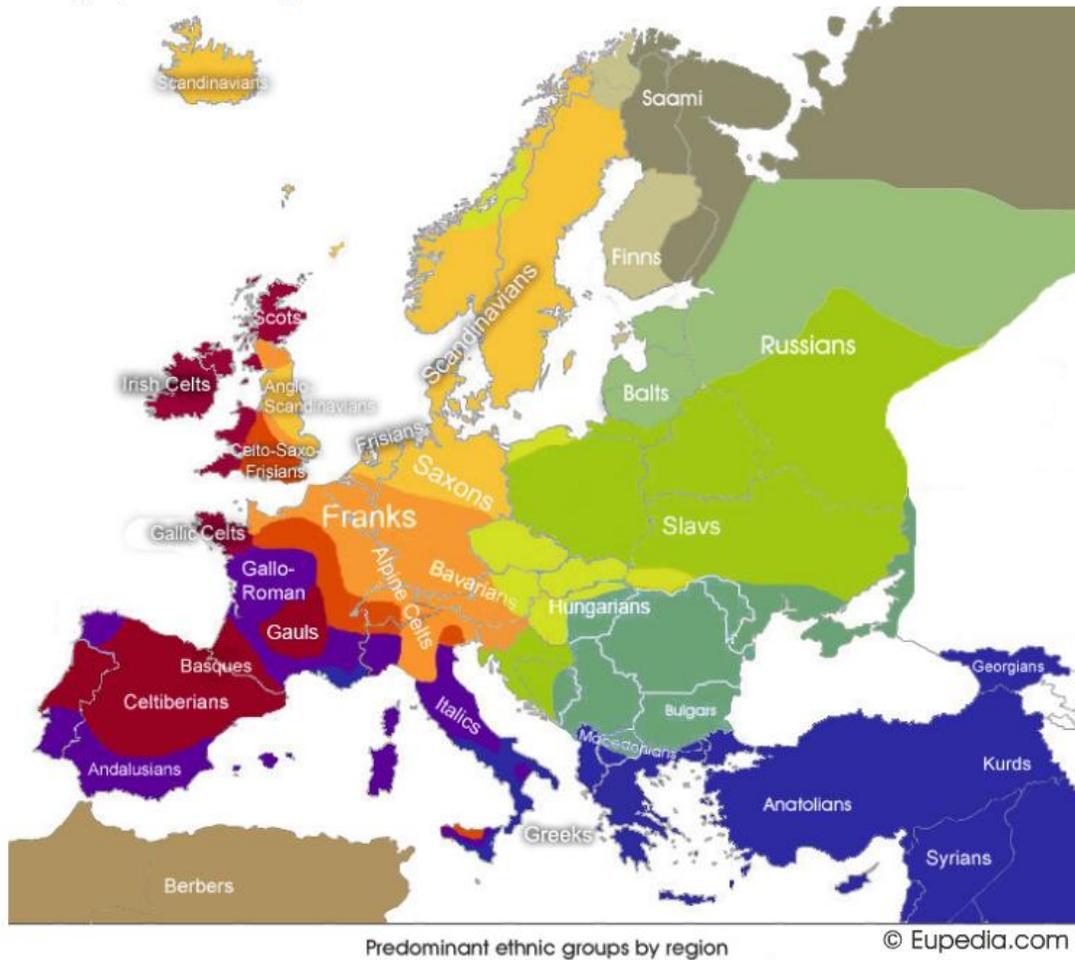
Map 2.4: GDP per capita in 2005 (Eupedia, 2011)

GDP in million Euros per inhabitant



Map 2.5: GDP in million Euros per inhabitant (author's map, 2011)

The GDP of each European country is visible on map 2.4. The oldest EU member states are located in the west of Europe and the GDP there is higher than EU's eastern member states. The GDP of non EU member states (Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia, Bosnia and Albania) are the lowest in Europe. The GDP of former communistic countries which entered the EU in 2004 have a GDP which is higher than the other former Soviet states, except Belarus. The GDP map corresponds largely with the map based on the human development index. The eastern external border of the EU is a barrier in forms of income. This is clearly visible on map 2.5 as well. The GDP of citizens in EU border regions are significantly higher than non-EU border regions, taking in account that those EU border regions are even among the least developed regions within the EU.



Map 2.6: Predominant ethnic groups by region (Eupedia, 2011)

Ethnicity is an interesting phenomenon to look at. Map 2.6 has been created based on Y-DNA data combined with physical and historical evidence. Judging individuals on ethnicity is racism. However this map shows that ethnicity is logically a transnational issue and cannot be bounded in nation states. The view on borders as social constructs emerged in the nineties. Ethnicity could be a historical reason to create borders. Taking map 2.6 into account this never happened and shows the subjectivity of borders. A perfect identity could be composed on class, gender, generation, ethnic background or religion (Paasi, 2001: 20). Globalization and migration caused changes in the composition of European society, preventing, if existing, an “ideal European identity”.

The various maps taken from Eupedia and the Human Development Index give an interesting view. Ethnicity and religion seem not to be influenced by EU’s borders. Indicators of welfare such as the HDI and GDP show a different phenomenon. The values of the EU are significantly higher than from their neighbours. This implicates the quality of life is higher within the EU. Religion and ethnicity, which are not connected to welfare, are not limited within EU’s boundaries. This questions the existence of a common European culture or hardens at least the creation of it.

Europe is a term being used in multiple meanings. I will not enter the discussion over where the physical borders of Europe are. Merely referring to the EU as Europe is incorrect because it is not covering all European soil. Countries as Switzerland and Norwegian are being neglected. What about neighbouring countries as Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine? Should they be seen as fellow European countries, neighbours or “others”?

2.6 Conclusion

The eastern external EU border is a cartographic line on the map, being at the geographical same place at correct map. However different maps make readers think differently about the area as each map serves a specific goal. A satellite image would show the correct representation of Europe. However therefore it is an “image” and not a “map”. Maps are political ways to show a certain view which innocent viewers “take for granted”. First of all the notion of the social construction of (EU) borders in general should be taken into account. The word “border” has a changing meaning as it is impossible that a word refers to reality according to Foucault (1983). The meaning of the word border is changing over the time and is being reproduced. The reproducing of the border is happening by the creation of narratives and common identities. Each narrative can create its own boundary, which makes all boundaries and territories social constructs. Politicians co-constitute and (ab)use those narratives to justify their territorial claims. The only basis where the EU can build its identity on seems to be the cruelties of the Second World War. However it remains problematic with a lack of common religion and culture. There is nothing “pure” EU or European when looking at the maps represented in this chapter. Economical and development indicators show a difference where the EU really differs from non – EU. However it cannot be possible to legitimize the EU by means of economic differentiation. In a cultural perspective the eastern external EU border does not exist, when taking maps 2.3 and 2.6 into account. However, it remains a barrier for people to exchange their cultures and disables the freedom to travel. The evolution of borders in Eastern Europe over the centuries in combination with the actual EU composition has resulted in the current external EU borders. This can have far going implications for people whose life are influenced in a specific way by this border.

3. Why does the external EU border looks like it does nowadays?

The attitude of the EU towards borders is very paradoxical. Borders and trade barriers have been removed within the EU in order to establish internal European flows of goods, services and capital. Peace, prosperity and welfare in the EU are high on a global scale and they are even more attractive attributes for individuals to live in even more. It should be no surprise that not just European citizens want to live in such a developed space. I can say I am lucky to be born here and enjoy these attributes which I did not contribute to or help establishing.

The EU wants to continue developing its space and therefore the EU has created a strong policy which describes which nationalities and people can enter the union to join us and who are left out based on their passport. Those people could be distinguished from us by seeing them as the “Other”. The boundary separates two different territorial entities. It indicates the distinction between “us” and “them”. Along with the development of classical geopolitics towards critical geopolitics a different insight has been given to the term border. The cartographic line “boundary” is opening up into larger spaces of activity. Borders are more than just a line and human practices lead to processes of “(b)ordering” and “Othering” of people (Houtum van & Naerssen van, 2002). Borders contribute to sociologic, economic and cultural differences. Perhaps borders even cause this differentiation? Nowadays borders are not just located at the edges of a country. Modern border zones are located at airports and train stations as well. The level of monitoring within the EU and at its border has been highly increased over the years. The distinction between who is “in” and who is “out” is becoming bigger than ever before in European history. The term “golden curtain” is emerging, comparing the present to the Iron Curtain which divided Europe during the Cold War. This new metaphor for the border has its own background. The perception of the border as golden curtain is the result of specific policy and political behaviour. In this chapter I will explain which powers are the motors towards the current materiality of the eastern external border. First of all a short introduction will be given on the geopolitical functions of the border (3.1). Taking these strategies into account I will focus on the specific case of the eastern external border and I will explain the role of the Schengen acquis towards this border (3.2). The physical conceptualization of the border and the Schengen acquis has been funded. A part of the material manifestations at the border has been financed by the EU. Is this funding of the border more connected to “confirming” or “transcending” the border (3.3)? The chapter ends with a description of the migration regime which is being practiced due to the development of Schengen and funding of the border (3.4).

3.1 The geopolitical border

The border is often the result of political manifestations (Ladis, 1969: 269). In this way the border is serving a specific aim, most likely connected to the welfare of the state. Through the centuries borders have been used in different geostrategical perspectives. The different function of each frontier is the result of what Walters (2004) recognizes as different “geostrategies”. Every strategy indicates a specific way organizing of space at the border. Walters recognizes four different border strategies; The Networked (Non)Border, March, The Colonial Frontier and *Limes*. These strategies

help to understand the function of the border. The external EU border can be recognized within several aspects of the following strategies.

First of all the **“Networked (non) border”** approach is a way to order a society (Walters, 2004: 681). There is no border control and this can be connected with the freedom of movement of goods, capital and services. The internal Schengen area is an example of such a space. Moreover countries are cooperating by means of information networks, which can have advantages in the field of security for example. New border control points such as airports gain importance within this approach as well.

The **March** is historically the piece of land between two different countries (Walters, 2004: 684). It is a zone of security and can be used as buffer between (turbulent) empires. The current March of the EU is located at the eastern external border where all border control place takes place in order to obtain “transnational security”. The streams of migrants are difficult to generalize and most migrants are innovative which creates difficulties for national governments of countries at the border of the EU. Especially “Western” EU member states are not willing to cooperate in this burden-sharing, even while the external border is the only point of control. The EU funding does not seem to be sufficient in order to create a perfect security utopia. The surface of the March has recently expanded from merely the physical border towards an institutional March. National and EU policy is more and more being regulated on a “distance”. The visa policy at consulates is an example to prevent unwanted migrants to arrive at the physical border, hereby enlarging the March towards embassies and consulates.

A third strategy being addressed by Walters (2004: 686) is the **Colonial Frontier**. This theory has been based on the work of Frederik Jackson Turner: *The Frontier in American History*. Walters refers to the westwards moving American frontier between East and West:

“Where the European border is ‘a fortified boundary line running through dense populations’, the American frontier is ‘the outer edge of the wave – the meeting point between savagery and civilisation’.”

(Walters, 2004: 687)

The EU is not spreading a certain “civilization” over the continent. However there are institutions and values the EU is spreading over its territory. There is one important aspect where the EU eastern border meets the colonial frontier. *“It represents a zone where an organized power meets its outside relationship of transformation and assimilation (Walters, 2004: 688).”* The border functions as a temporary need, until agreement is being reached by both sides of the border. The colonial frontier is applicable on the EU in a way that the border has been moving eastwards over the time as long as the new states were confirmed to certain indicators.

The last strategy has been derived from imperial history and has been named ***limes*** referring to the border of the Roman Empire. *Limes* is like an edge, fringe or limit located between power and its outside. The *limes* try to create a zone of stability and peace (Walters, 2004: 690). The “empire” is creating a relationship where unwelcome migrants are kept outside, active trade is being stimulated and a sustainable peaceful relationship with the outer is maintained. There is no urge for subsumption of the “Other” and the “Other” is being recognized. The *limes* contribute towards the drawing of a line and the separation of two different territories. Draw a line here and maintain what we have (Walters, 2004: 691). The *limes* are best applicable on the Southern maritime EU border

where unwanted migrants are being kept out. The concept tends to be negative and the accent is on the ignorance of the external territory. The “Other” is not being exploited for resources, but neglected and excluded. In this perspective *limes* represent the EU as a gated community.

Figure 3.3 represents a short summary of the different philosophies on geopolitical border use.

\Aspect	Border policy	Location border	Relation to neighbours	Example
Networked non Border	Open	None	Interaction	Schengenland
The March	Selective	Between empires	Buffer	Central European states between 1991-2004
Colonial frontier	One way	Flexible	Exploration	America's uncivilized West
Limes	One way	At the end of an empire	Profitable	EU's maritime southern border

Figure 3.3: Geopolitical border strategies (author's editing, 2011)

The EU border has aspects of several border strategies. Schengenland within Europe has an open border policy and here has been a removal of most of the border control mechanisms. However the external border is becoming a strategic instrument to execute national or multinational policy. The border is not merely fixed as it has been replaced due to the several EU expansions. This is complementary to the Colonial Frontier vision. There are still nations within Europe on the list to enter the EU within a certain time path. In the near future, it is highly unlikely that countries in the east will become part of the EU. Not all neighbouring countries are positive towards entering the EU anyway. It seems that national borders in the EU nowadays are static. However within Europe (not the EU) the republic of Kosovo became independent and changed the national borders of Serbia. The southern maritime EU border seems to be fixed for an unforeseen period of time. The strategy of *limes* is being practiced here. In the near future, the external eastern EU border could develop from a Colonial Frontier into the situation of *limes*. This can be the case when there will be no forecasts of accession to the EU for the neighbouring states.

It is difficult to find a uniform fitting strategy connected to the border of the EU; however in this paragraph is described what kind of relation the EU desires with its external borders and hinterland. This raises the question if it is possible to generalize a more than five thousand kilometres long border into one strategy. Further on in this thesis I will explore the border by visiting and I will discover, if there is uniformity at the border and if it can possibly be reformed to a strategy of Walters, or if the border is a heterogeneous space with differences at several spatial levels. Closely connected to this strategic border use of the EU is the Schengen area, which has almost the same borders as the external border of the EU. One could argue the Schengen acquis is the political strategically instrument of the EU behind their internal open border approach and the contradicting closed external border regime. That is why it is significant to investigate where Schengen stands for and how it affects the physical border and its borderlands. This will be done in the next paragraph.

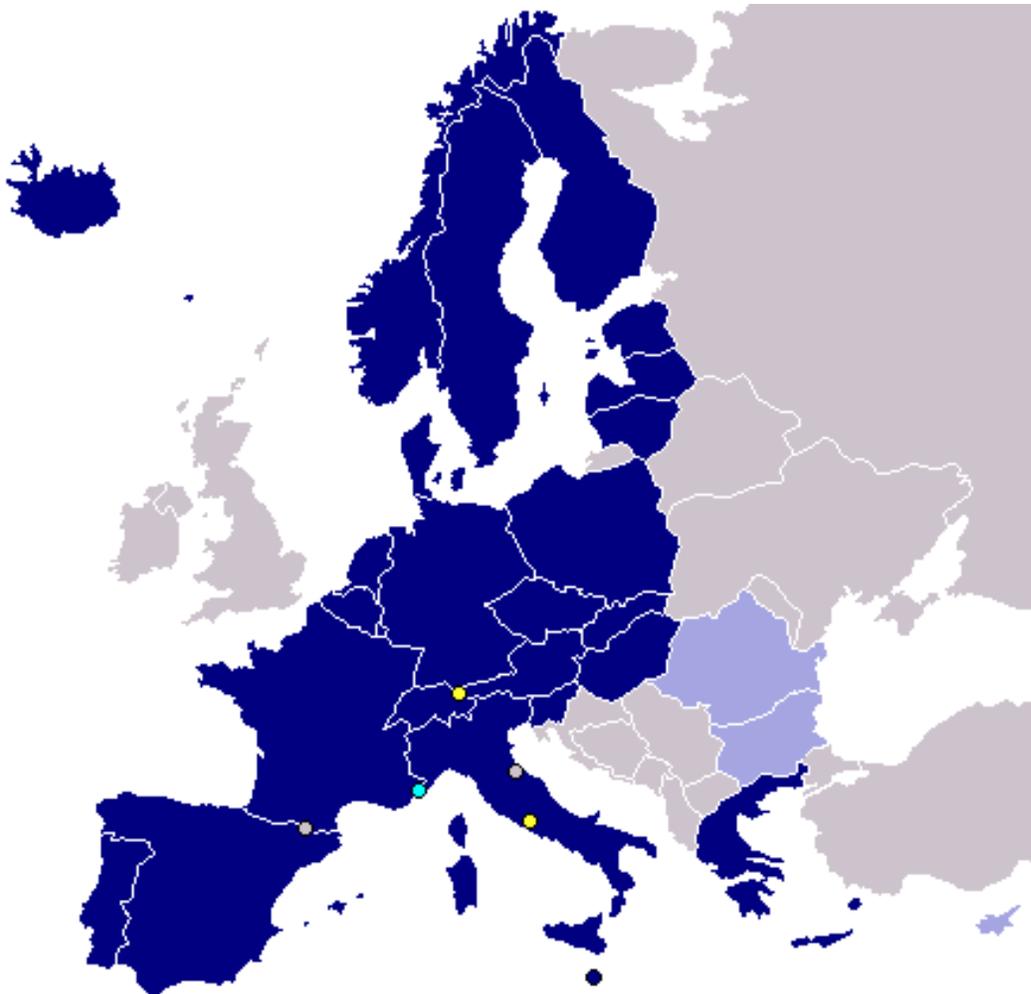
3.2 Schengen

To understand the contemporary EU borders it is important to understand the creation of Schengen. Schengen is the name of the Luxembourgian village where in 1985 a European agreement was signed for the enabling of free movement. Nowadays almost all EU member states are part of the internal free area, often referred to as “Schengenland”. The creation of this internal world without borders increases the importance of the external borders.

The Schengen area and cooperation are founded on the Schengen Agreement of 1985. The Schengen area represents a territory where the free movement of persons is guaranteed. The signatory states to the agreement have abolished all internal borders in lieu of a single external border. Here common rules and procedures are applied with regard to visas for short stays, asylum requests and border controls. Simultaneously, to guarantee security within the Schengen area, cooperation and coordination between police services and judicial authorities have been stepped up. Schengen cooperation has been incorporated into the European Union (EU) legal framework by the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997. However, all countries cooperating in Schengen are not parties to the Schengen area. This is either because they do not wish to eliminate border controls or because they do not yet fulfil the required conditions for the application of the Schengen acquis.

(EU, 2009)

The borders of the EU and the borders of the Schengen area are not exactly the same. Twenty-two of the current EU members fully apply the provisions of the Schengen acquis (EU, 2010). Cyprus, Romania and Bulgaria are implementing Schengen values at their borders in order to be a full part of Schengen in several years. Cyprus has been a member already since 2004, but their infrastructure is still not “ready”. The United Kingdom and Ireland have decided to maintain border control with other EU countries and are no Schengen member. Apart from the EU countries: Iceland, Switzerland and Norway are fully a part of the Schengen area. This means the current external EU border in the east is located west of Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. In the south Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus are connected to the Schengen border. The Commission of the European Communities (2008) states that the border management and border infrastructure at the borders of those countries are being improved in order to join as soon as possible. Recent political instability in Northern-Africa and the accompanying stream of migrants have put a lot of pressure on the possible expansion of Schengen.



Map 3.1: Members of the Schengen agreement

Legend: *Dark blue:* Members
Cyan: country applying the Schengen Agreement, through a partnership with a country-member of the Schengen zone (Monaco)
Light blue: Signatories (signed but implementation pending)
Yellow: Non-EU members interested in joining Schengen only

(Wikipedia, 2010)

The “improvement” of border infrastructure comes along with high financial costs and an uneven balance between the attention of security and rights for asylum seekers. The creation of the Schengen rules is a significant development in the “ordering” of human beings in Europe based on border which are social constructs (see chapter 2). Citizens of the Schengen area and citizens of several countries are free to travel from, to and within Schengen. There is a list of countries however, whose citizens need a visa to enter and travel within Schengen (see: Houtum van, 2010a: 13). The procedures in order to obtain a visa are not transparent, complicated and depending on the specific local embassy. The external Schengen border symbolizes the difficulty to enter the

Schengen area and EU as an outsider who needs a visa. The border is used as a mean to order people on biopolitical data such as gender, skills, religion or nationality. The development of new techniques is required in order to execute all Schengen policies. The physical external border in combination with all its different ways of control is very much connected to a “digital” border. The multinational system of border control is called “Integrated Border Management” (IBM). The concept comprises of procedures for EU countries and its neighbours, so border control itself is part of it as well. Another tool which is being used in combination with Schengen is the Schengen Information System (SIS). The border crosser will be checked in the SIS and in national databases to verify that they are not a threat to public policy, internal security, public health and to the International relations of the Schengen States (Commission of the European communities, 2008: 3). The Visa Information System (VIS) is being realized at this time. This system will be ready at first in 2012. This information system will consist of all visa information. Apart from several forms and photographs, visa applicants will also have to give fingerprint data at all visa issuing offices from now on. Everywhere in Schengen the visa of visitors can be checked by the relevant authorities based on their biometric information. The authenticity of the visa and the identity of the holder will be checked perfectly. This is one more step in the direction of biopolitics. All visa travellers are branded by their visa.

While this thesis focuses on the image of the border, frontiers controls are happening at more places than just the external border. Bigo and Guild (2005) refer to this as “Policing at a distance”, going along with the geostrategical border concept *March*. Citizens of countries put on the blacklist of the EU are regarded as potential security risks. The visa regime has led to a negative image of the EU in those neighbouring countries. The procedure to get a visa is regarded as difficult, not transparent and too expensive.

A close examination of the procedures for obtaining a visa, and the way of which the control policies are applied, reveals how far we actually are from the harmonization that is on the official declarations.

(Bigo, 2005: 257)

The EC also recognizes the difficulties of the visa regime.

Our existing visa policies and practices often impose real difficulties and obstacles to legitimate travel. Long queues in front of EU consulates are highly visible signs of the barriers to entry into the union.

(European Commission, 2006: 5)

The International Crisis Group (2005) argues the current visa regime has various negative effects for the regional stability. The EC expressed another reason why the current visa regime was questionable. It appeared irregular migration and organized crime cannot be managed through strict visa regulations. From here another instrument gained in importance as instrument to reduce irregular immigration. Introducing readmission agreements could have a common efficient return policy for the EU. The main objective of readmission agreements is:

To facilitate the readmission to their own country of persons residing without authorization in a Member State.

(EU, 2010)

The introduction of these agreements as a Community instrument has been heavily discussed on the supranational level. The EU believed in the urgency of those agreements with neighbouring countries. Domestic policies are less efficient if there are no contacts with countries of transit and origin of the illegal migrants. There are two different approaches of the EU migration policy. The externalization of migration control towards countries of transit and origin is the first approach. The EU tries to increase its level of control. Furthermore controlling tools are passed on towards neighbouring countries. This leads to a landscape of detention camps, control and barbed wire (Houtum van, 2010a). The other approach is focusing on the causes of migration. The signing of readmission agreements is a logic step in the first approach. The “reward” of proposed visa facilitation measurements is enough for most third countries to sign a readmission agreement. Third countries need to readmit all nationalities to their country of origin. In this way the EU is creating “circles of demarcation” outside its own territory by means of the outsourcing of responsibilities. Those circles of demarcation can be connected with the geopolitical view of a March. Policy is being regulated at a distance so in this way a buffer can be created around the EU its own territory.

3.3 The border financed

Apart from the policy connected to Schengen it is important as well to understand where the money is coming from which is creating the current landscape at the eastern external border. The EU has a significant budget for policies dealing with the external EU border. The creation of a ring of friends by means of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is together with economic regional development within the union one of the aims of the EU. The EU borderland should be a space of opportunities. The current process of “border confirming” is contradicting with the proposed “border transcending” (Dimitrova, 2010). The EU has several budgets for (non)-EU borderlands. There are a lot of different budgets involving these border spaces. By looking at the height of the budgets for several themes I will try to show the border confirming receives more priority than border transcending. This does not mean the border transcending is completely neglected. The amount of money the EU spends on the border transparency. There are different budgets and programmes concerning the border. This makes it difficult to clarify EU’s most important priorities in the particular policy fields. The most important programmes will be discussed here briefly and consist of the European Regional Development Fund, the ENP and the External Border Fund.

European Regional Development Fund

The first important programme is the European Regional Development Fund. This fund stimulates the economic weaker regions in the EU. All the EU eastern border regions (apart from the Finnish borderland) receive high priority in this field.

The aim of the Regulation is to strengthen economic and social cohesion in order to promote the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the Community for the period 2007-2013.

(European Union, 2008)

On my trip along the border several examples of ERDF projects were visible, such as the construction of interregional roads. The functioning of the EU Structural Funds is not a main issue

in my thesis; however it is significant to take Bachtler and McMaster (2008) into account. Their research is focused on the notion that Structural Funds regional structures creates and leads to “stronger regions”. They strongly doubt this and conclude *“there is no guarantee that Structural Funds necessarily promote regionalization in Central and Eastern Europe (Bachtler & McMaster, 2008: 398).”*

European Neighbourhood Policy

The second important programme is the ENP. All participants in the ENP are mostly interested in the opening up of labour markets and the liberation of the visa regime. The opening up of the labour market within the EU is contrasting with the increasing restrictions towards the people who are “out”. In order to protect the “precious” freedom of movement within the Schengen area the EU “needs” to protect the market by fighting illegal migration at the frontiers of the Schengen area. This is not in line with an ENP goal as “integration”. The height of migration quotas is not being raised for people living in EU’s neighbourhood. The current visa regime is a fundamental mean to control the cross border movement and the income of unwanted migrants into the EU. There is not much attention given to the negative effects related to the expected positive results in EU documentation. Possible effects as bigger economic segregation on both sides of the border, facilities for asylum seekers and the creation of mental and physical borders are not mentioned. The moral question, to what extent the control of the mentioned themes is defensible against these possible negative effects, is not being answered by the EU.

“Idealist values such as democracy, the rule of law or human security appear to clash with more realist values such as the EU’s aim to protect its borders and economies, and thus the security of its own citizens at the expense of the freedom, prosperity and security of the citizens in neighbour states.”

(Bosse, 2011)

External Border Fund and Frontex

The resources for the External Border Fund (EBF) are €1820 million for the period of 2007-2013. This money is divided for external land border (30%), external sea borders (35%), airport (20%) and consular offices (15%). The money of the EBF is 15% of the earlier mentioned ENP budget, which indicates the importance of the securing of the border. A special External Border Agency “Frontex” has been created to improve integrated border management at the Union’s external borders. Its budget is increasing year by year. Migrant deaths as a result of EU policy increase simultaneously with the amount of money being spend by the EU to protect its borders (United against racism, 2009). It is arguable that there is a relation between those two numbers. Most likely a higher budget of Frontex will lead to better protected border as this is the aim of Frontex. Irregular migrants will take more risks in order to reach their ultimate destination, the EU, and die on their way trying by using dangerous transportation means overseas or die of starvation in mountainous areas (see: BBCnews, 2007 and Houtum van & Boedeltje, 2009).

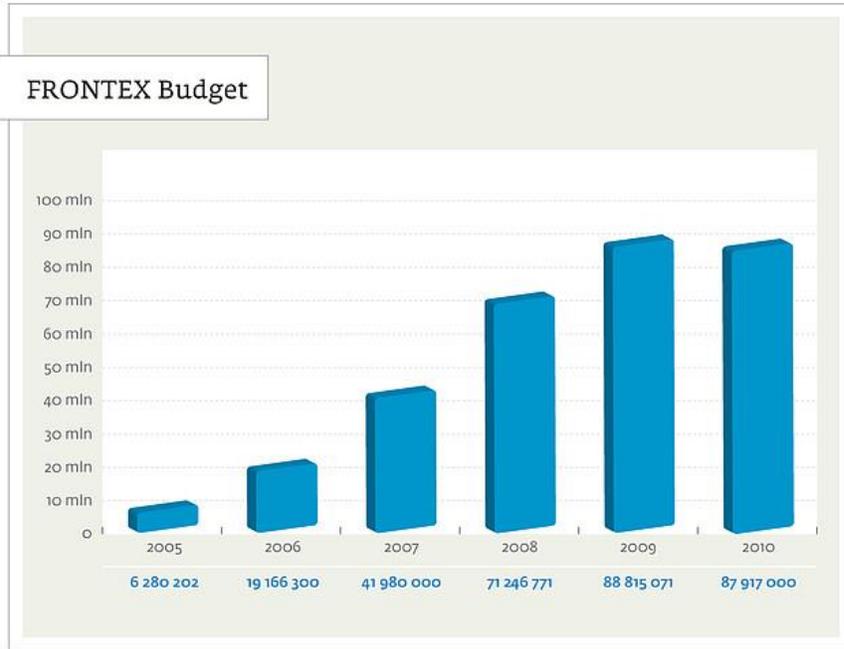


Figure 3.1: Frontex budget 2005 – 2010 (Frontex, 2010a)

Migrant deaths as a result of EU policy *



Figure 3.2: Migrants deaths as a result of EU policy until May 2009 (United against racism, 2009)

This small summary of expenses of the EU related to the external border shows the extreme importance of tight protection for the EU. On one hand the EU wants to stimulate regional development in the periphery of countries, on the other hand the expenses related to border protection are higher on the political agenda. Moral issues related to human rights such as the identification of irregular migrants receive less priority. The results of these large expenses are physically visible at the external border and will be shown in the next chapter.

3.4 Migration regime

Apart from financial resources is the migration regime which is being practiced influencing the physical image of the border as well. All the historical movements of Europe and the EU in the recent years have caused changes in the EU its border and migration policy. The current migration and border regime is mainly focusing on the protection and closure of its borders. However there is a certain openness of borders for labour migrants willing to work in a field of scarcity. This ambiguity is hardly to manage on a moral and practical base (Houtum van & Pijpers, 2007: 292). Protection and security have been and are still important issues for nation states. Protection should be created by the government by reacting to possible harmful effects. Open borders which intend to stimulate national economies can create national threats as negative external effects as well. European Commission officials still think border controls are necessary to maintain sovereign states (Dimitrova, 2010: 2).

The EU has institutionalized an internal market with free flow of capital, goods and services in 1988. This internal market implicates bigger barriers with the “external market”. This is contradicting with the principle of equality amongst individuals and freedom of movement. Moreover international migration control will not be very sustainable looking in the context of equal economic opportunity and global justice. Regulated movement of migrants would be a better option. Besides that, restricting migration will lead to new problems which would not be there with an open border regime. An example is the current number of African migrants dying on their way to enter the EU.

Migration regimes tend to become more restrictive over the last years. There is no existing state with complete liberty of movement. The integration of ethnical minorities is an important issue in EU member states. Voices against the unknown “Other” become stronger and people unite them in a political way. This is completely the opposite of the open intern border policy proposed. Nowadays migrants entering the EU are put on a scale to see whether they are “good” or “bad” and if they will “profit” or are “profitable”. After this selection procedure according to national rules they will be let in or left out. Terrorist attacks in the first decennium of the twenty-first century contributed towards a more security based political agenda as well. Fear is a great instrument for political leaders to unite their population. Along with the process of Europeanization various new terms are introduced into language. Politicians can generalize non -EU citizens as “fortune seekers” or “aliens”. In this way a part of the electorate will identify non-EU citizens as a fear and will probably vote for the particular politician, who just used a specific term without notifying the exact problem in a broad context. There is still a classic dogma of the correct “we” which are born in the EU. Our relationship with our neighbours should be a profitable one without affecting our welfare. One tries to recognize a uniform European culture opposing to “other” civilizations (Houtum van & Pijpers, 2007: 296). In the eyes of a significant group of people, the Muslim migrant is seen as a threat, a fear. When someone “Other” enters the EU, the person is subjected to immigration programs to integrate in their new country of living according to their standards. By exploiting this way of policy the EU is being protected from others. People have to fear to be invaded by the other. The fear of being invaded after the enlargement of the EU 2004 illustrates this issue. The fear exists that there would be a big flow of cheap labour towards the western part of the EU. Western

countries have created restrictions on the labour market in order to protect their own market and labour force of their own citizens. This policy is opposite to one of the basic principles of the EU which contains the principle of a free internal market. The will to keep migration issues based on a national level is strong. All of this resulted in a strong protectionistic border regime in the EU. A main spatial actor in this field is the external border of the EU, where the level of control raised enormously over the last years. The border literally means here: "Stop and don't cross the line". Despite the strong protection instruments migrants still try to cross the border illegally. A large number of illegal migrants died while crossing the border. Some of them lost their way in mountainous areas. Others died while being chased by border guards in their ultimate attempt to enter the EU (BBCnews, 2007 and figure 3.2).

Migration streams change rapidly. Over the last years most attention of Frontex has been given to migration streams from northern Africa trying to enter the EU through the Canary Islands. Frontex and southern EU member states put lots of effort to increase the level of control. Many people risked their lives by crossing the Mediterranean Sea using small boats. According to "United against racism" (2010) the number of documented refugee deaths because of fortress Europe is at 17/06/2010 13824.

Criticasters of EU policy question the lack of funding for the identification of (in) direct victims of EU policy. The EU does not publicize figures about death people and this is currently being done by NGO's. Spijkerboer (2009) argues the number of death refugees should be multiplied by two or three based on the limited research which is currently being derived from city council figures and local media.

As a reaction to the higher control on this migration route, the stream of migrants increased enormously on other routes (see map 3.2). This map, taken from Frontex, shows how is being looked at migrants. "*Migration is represented here as massive, unaffected, uni-directional and unstoppable flows towards imagined reactive and vulnerable states* (Houtum, van, 2010b: 124)." Nevertheless Frontex continues to "combat" these flows. However there is not one policy program of the EU comprising all border and migration issues. It is included in several funding programs. The absence of a general European migration policy leaves space for bilateral agreements between EU and non EU countries related to the issue of irregular migrants. This causes the sudden decrease of migrants on several routes. A bilateral agreement between Libya and Italy, neglecting different human rights, resulted in an increase on other routes. The biggest increase in the beginning of 2010 occurred at the Turkish and Greek border.

Frontex has created Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABITS). These teams can be deployed in “exceptional and urgent situations” along the external EU border. Increasing migration flows from Turkey to Greece led to the deployment of 175 border personal specialists on the Turkish – Greek border for a period of two months starting at 2 November 2010. This is the first RABIT operation in the existence of Frontex. The deployment of the RABIT 2010 indicates the EU is prioritizing security rather than the tackling the heart of the migration issue (Carrera & Guild, 2010). Furthermore it is questionable if human rights of asylum seekers will not be violated and access to asylum procedures will be maintained.

A person dying literally at the border of the EU contributes to the image of a classical fortress. The ones trying to enter without permit don’t pass the gates. In sharp contrast is the fact that it is a lot easier for migrants to enter who will have a significant contribution towards economic welfare according to national institutions. A lot of European countries have a lack of specific, mostly high skilled labour. The bureaucracy for those is less than for the “non-profitable” migrants. The EU is positive towards “replacement immigration”. This term refers to the replacement of aged workers by immigrants. Migrants are being rated by new national policies according to their economic value. This stimulates people to be “innovative” and find semi-legal and illegal ways to pass the law (Houtum van & Pijpers, 2007: 302). In this unofficial way the “closed” Fortress Europe is open towards more migrants than it was meant to. Firms are getting specialized in recruiting low-skilled transnational labour force. The erected wall results in creativity and innovation methods to import labourers. One could argue that theoretically erected wall of Fortress Europe is practically quite open for economic migrants through (semi) legal practices. This results in a change of the “Fortress Europe” image towards a “Gated Community”.

“A gated community is – very easily put – a community surrounded by a fence provided with a fence for entrance”.

(Aalbers, 2001: 2)

Mostly retired people live in the wide spreading gated communities. In this way they can protect their identity, security and welfare. Access for “Others” is physically restricted, but of course people can enter with the right permits. The entrance is controlled by security guards and cameras. This trend fits in the growing trend of increasing control over public spaces as described by Foucault (1975) in his book “Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison”. In the philosophy of a gated community people will behave well as well, because they know they are being watched theoretically. In this way wealth inequality is emphasized and social homogeneity will be maintained. By means of buying yourself into a gated community this will result that you are a member of the “club” which gives you a certain social status. The comparison of a gated community with the EU can be made. Membership gives you social status and indicates a bright future. The EU borders are being monitored by control guards. People are judged on background if they are allowed to enter. The EU uses a bio-political way to control their frontiers. The concrete picture of the fence will be explained and conceptualized in the next chapter of this thesis. National political discussions about the amount of migrants have resulted in a militarization of the borders at a transnational level. However it appears the crime level in gated communities is at the same height as in public living areas (Aalbers, 2001: 3). The exclusion of people raises suspiciousness and attracts the “Others” inside apparently. It is not possible (yet) to buy security or protection by living

in a gated community. It is arguably this is not possible at the higher EU scale as well. However this does not prevent EU politicians from trying.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown which powers are influencing the eastern external border of the EU and what kind of landscape is being created by those powers. The EU border policy is the most important, not the only, factor influencing the current situation at the eastern external border of the EU. The border is a mean to divide and order. This is currently being done at the external EU border by the EU as well. This is the main reason for the specific image the border and borderlands have nowadays. The border is physically separating two different entities. The physical external border is not the only point of control for people entering and leaving the union. The role of airports and train stations in this field is increasing as well. Walters (2004) would refer to this as policing at a distance and the creation of “zones d’attente”. These spaces are much easier to control than the thousands kilometre long land border in the east. The importance of strict border for the EU control can be derived from the several budgets and policies affecting the external border. The border control agency “Frontex” has been created to coordinate and control the functioning of the control at EU’s borders. Before the expansion of the EU in 2004 and 2007 there were various “buffer states” or a “March” between the EU west and the non EU east which was accompanied by “threats” such as economical migrants and refugees. No matter the practical difficulties the entire border needs to be “secured”. The geostrategical concept of *limes* is being practiced by the EU in this way. Based on information in the passport people are welcomed into the EU or not. The bureaucracy and difficulty to enter the EU depends on the nationality and other characteristics written in ones passport.

The Schengen acquis is a geopolitical instrument of the EU to execute its policy. Almost all EU countries are part of the Schengen area, which enables free trade and travel within the EU. However, a diminishing control within the Schengenland went simultaneously with stricter border control at the external border. Different budgets are related to the border and in this way modern programmes and technical innovative control mechanisms are being developed. EU’s neighbours are readmitting individuals, with a simplified visa regime as a support to act in this way. This is an example of the “friendship” the EU is trying to accomplish with its neighbours. A large share of the money going to EU’s neighbours is reserved for border security. Fundamental issues of social, political and economic inequality receive less priority. Apparently this is the division of money for the border “we wanted”, as the EU is a democratic institution. The input of the residents of the relatively low populated borderlands will be marginal in the creation of those policies. Citizens of neighbouring countries experience practical difficulties when trying to enter the union. These issues together have lead to the current power influences at the external border of the EU. To find out what these powers have created at the border I observed the border in June 2009. This will show if it is possible to generalize the eastern external border in multinational European policy fields or if the situation is much more complex and needs a different approach with more attention to the specific materiality of each particular place. I will see if it is possible to denaturalize, delineate and destruct the border.

4: The eastern external EU border: just a line?

The earlier chapters explained the meaning(s) of the term border. This could implicate there is a certain uniformity of what a border is. To find this out I want to explore the border more closely than merely referring to theoretical assumptions of what a border is and how a border is being policy wise conceptualized. That is why I travelled along the border myself, in June 2009.

I took photos of the border and spoke to people whose life is somehow connected to the existence of the border. This chapter will be a journey through EU's eastern external frontier and its borderlands. It is a series of journeys and walks through border landscapes and different sections of the EU boundaries. Own stories will be connected to literature, photos and characteristics of the specific regions. I will try to disentangle and present the materiality of the border in its different representations. Sidaway (2007: 162) defines this way of conducting research as semiotic analysis in a part. Semiotics has been defined (Elam, 1980: 1) as science dedicated to the production and meaning of society. The "method" of this chapter is a series of journeys and walks through border landscapes and the exploration of micro places and cultural resonances, and network of social and material relations (Sidaway, 2007: 162). Even on low scale levels it is hard to generalize the different representations of materiality, because individuals have a different relation and/or perception of the border. Megoran (2006: 625) criticizes Berg (2000) in his research along the Estonian – Russian boundary for making statements such as "local borderland population" and "borderlanders and their border experience", hereby stimulating ethnography as a method which can signify differences within the borderland and which can address new research directions. Observation could enrich the thinking on international boundaries. This is one of the reasons why I decided to travel the border. However one should be aware of a level of subjectivity as I visited several places and ignored other places. Next to my own stories I summarized aspects of the places visited at the border into a scheme at the end of the chapter.

I categorized different characteristics of the border by the creation of the various indicators which are relevant for all places visited. Those indicators could be used as an overview of my trip and contribute to an insight of the place. The indicators are mostly quantitative data which provide a number or categorization of a certain value. Several indicators can be found from secondary sources on the internet, while the others are purely based on my own observations. Moreover I have used an indicator to give an insight on the level of development of the places visited, in order to show its prosperity. Those indicators will be described one by one.

Indicator 1: Physical type of border: river or land

Each border has a different physical outlook. Parts of the external border consist of land, other of water. The introduction of each paragraph will describe how each borderline has been demarcated. In case of a border on land, there are still many different possibilities of how the border has been demarcated. Several examples are: High metal fences, towers with camera or barriers. Values are taken from own observations at the border and can be supported by photos taken from Panoramio. This is the material conceptualization of the border in its purest sense as it is the conceptualization from the line on the map. However a fence remains always a fence and can never be a synonym for border, while it can be a fence

at the border. This indicator can be related to the location of the border while taking the elements of Agnew's (2003) perception of place into account. All values are different to summarize, that is why I will refer in the table at the end of each paragraph merely to the physical type of border at the specific place visited.

Indicator 2: Relations:

The relation of the borderland with the other side of the border will be taken into account as well. Does the land "end" here or is it profiting or suffering from the presence of the border? This has to deal with the "sense of place" and "locale" in the view of Agnew (2003). Are elements connected to other spaces across the border?

Indicator 2.1: Interaction with the other side of the border

The borders of European countries have changed over the years. In several places local communities are being separated by the border. This indicator will look at the level of interaction with the other side of the border most likely based on cultural ties. The value of this indicator is being based on own experience and relevant literature. The quantification (low, medium and high) has been based on the amount of interaction in comparison with other places visited during my trip.

Indicator 2.2: Small cross border trade

The price level of products can differ in each country. Taxes on products as alcohol, petrol and cigarettes are relatively high within the EU. These price differences could lead to trade based on these price differences. This cross border trade is dominant at one place and absent at the other. The quantification (low, medium and high) has been based on the amount of interaction in comparison with other places visited during my trip.

Indicator 2.3: Visa policy to visit neighbours for citizens of this place

The rules to visit the other side of the border differ from place to place. Citizens of the EU have different rights to visit their neighbours just like the other way around. For example several countries have special bilateral agreements or an eased visa regime.

Indicator 3: Transport:

Transport and mobility is different in each place. Within nations, transport connections are not influenced by internal borders. The external EU border is a barrier for mobility when looking merely at the map to the number of border crossings which should enable and regulate mobility. This can be connected to the settings in which social relations are being constituted. The following indicators will characterize each specific case visited.

Indicator 3.1: Conditions of roads in the border region

Most borderlands are not the economic strongest regions of the country. During my visit I experienced the condition of the roads by myself. Moreover, on both sides of the border could exist very different conditions. The variables "low", "medium" and "high" are based on own experience scaled by the average level of infrastructure in all the visited borderlands.

Indicator 3.2: Transit function of border crossing

Border crossings can be used for local traffic or for larger traffic streams. This indicator will inform whether the border crossing is being used for transit traffic or more for local traffic.

Indicator 3.3: Waiting time for border crossing

The control at the border points is very strict. This means it takes a substantial amount of time for each vehicle or individual to cross the customs and border police. This leads in various places to huge queues and long waiting times to cross the border. There is a limited amount of sources available on waiting time for border crossings. Those sources I have combined with own observations when visiting the corresponding crossing points. I define less than one hour of waiting as “short”, one up to three hours as “medium” and longer than three hours as “long”.

Indicator 3.4: Local public transport connections across the border per day

The amount of daily local public transport possibilities is an indication of the level of transport between local communities. Public transport often seems to “stop” at the border.

Indicator 3.5: Interlocal public transport connections across the border per day

The amount of interlocal public transport connections will indicate the transit function of the specific border crossing.

Indicator 4: Development:

The level of development is an important aspect of an institutional space. Therefore, I will look at the level of development at the places visited in the borderlands compared to the rest of the country of the places visited. This brings information about the position of the place on the “social ladder” within a country.

Indicator 4.1: Level of GDP compared to the rest of the country

The GDP is an economic variable. The values for this indicator are taken from EU figures and Eurostat and for the non EU countries national sources are being used. Map 2.5 shows already a representation of this indicator.

Indicator 4.2: Level of English

This is the most subjective indicator in my research. During my trip I spoke to several people in different settings. However, I tried to take into account whether I spoke to someone with higher or lower education. Piller (2008) argues that the absence of multilingualism has a strong relation with social exclusion, referred to by Piller as the absence of material well being.

The following abbreviations will be used in the table:

Physique	Type of physical border
Interact.	Interaction with the other side of the border
Trade	Small cross border trade
Visa	Visa policy to visit neighbours for citizens of this place
Infrastr.	Conditions of roads in the border region
Transit	Transit function of border crossing
Waiting	Waiting time for border crossing
Local	Local public transport connections across the border per day
Interl.	Interlocal public transport connections across the border per day
GDP	GDP per capita in percentage of the national average
English	Observed level of English

All indicators will be summarized at the end of each specific visited case. Several values have statistical proof and those relevant sources will be added below each table. Other values have been based on own experience and the differentiation on categories has been explained in the introduction. This will lead to an insight of this specific case. All values together will be summed up and summarized at the end of the chapter (4.8). This table will be a guideline for answering the question over the presence of the border and its visible materiality at the places visited.

From here I will start my journey through the borderlands of the EU.

4.1 The Polish – Belarusian border

Polish Belarusian Border



Map 4.1: The Polish – Belarusian border (author's editing, 2011)

4.1.1 Profile: The Polish – Belarusian border

Border length:	605 km
Capital:	Warsaw (Poland) Minsk (Belarus)
Border:	Mostly forest (national park)
Border history:	Borderline since the Second World War (Polish – Soviet Union border) Since 1991 the border between Poland and Belarus

Short introduction

The Polish Belarusian border has been demarcated for the first time in 1946-47, being at that time the border of the Soviet Union. Belarus declared independence in 1992. Poland was the first country to recognize Belarus, and bilateral Polish – Belarusian relations started to grow. A large part of the borderline stretches through the Białowieża Forest. This UNESCO world heritage site and Biosphere Reserve became recently divided in two parts, when the Polish Belarusian border was demarcated again and a fence was created, disabling animals to cross the border. Polish minorities, 4% of the Belarusian population, are living mostly in the Belarusian borderlands, who feel discriminated by the Belarusian government. A group of 50.000 Belarusian Diaspora lives in Poland.

Cross border cooperation

Poland and Belarus have a common history for several centuries. The different positions of the borderline resulted in a multinational past for large cities such as Brest and Hrodno. The relation between the EU and Belarus is tense, due to the controversial ruling of Belarusian president Lukashenko from an EU perspective. However Poland and Belarus are important trade partners. Before the Polish route to EU accession started, it was much easier for both nationalities to cross the border. The current border regime disables small cross border trade largely and hardens the maintenance of cultural ties.

Border demarcation

The largest share of the border is running through the forest. A metal fence has been built several years ago. The border stones which are present each kilometre used to conceptualize the border and are still visible. Satellite images reveal a border zone of around 700 metres with different terrain than its surroundings (see picture 4.1.1). Paths are visible along the borderline on this stretch, enabling easy access for police forces to patrol. The Polish border police is implementing new techniques and uses modern terrain vehicles, whereas in Belarus a lot of man force is being used in combination with watchtowers. Barbed wire is being used on several places such as in the Białowieża Forest (see picture 4.1.2). The three kilometres long railway line from the Polish border station Terespol towards the border river Bug has been completely separated by new good looking painted fences and several police men from the Polish country side (see picture 4.1.3). Since EU accession the borderline has been “upgraded” from the border as a signal towards a border as a mean an ordering instrument.



Picture 4.3.1: The Polish Belarusian border (Google earth, 2011)



Picture 4.1.2: Fences with barbed wire in the Białowieża Forest – disabling animals to cross the border (Panoramio, 2009)



Picture 4.1.3: Leaving Poland by train (author's photo, 2009)

4.1.2 All quiet on the eastern front?

Note from my logbook:

Terespol in Poland and Brest in Belarus are the first places visited during my trip along the external border. The village of Terespol is a quiet place in the east of Poland. In the village itself there are a small amount of links to the close presence of EU's border. There is a large training centre of the Straż Graniczna (Polish border guards) and at the Terespol train station there are a limited number of signs written in Russian language.



Picture 4.1.4: An indication of the presence of the border at train station Terespol (author's photo, 2009)

The only hotel of the village is being used by just Polish construction workers. There does not seem to be much interaction between Terespol, the border and its neighbours at the other side. The small amount of public transport connections between the two places is a good indication of this. The largest share of the cross border traffic is transiting the region. Terespol is one of the places which flourished with "Russian bazaars" and small cross border trade before Poland's accession to the EU. Belarusian and Russian merchants sold their goods on open air markets in many Polish cities (Artun, 2005: 2).



Picture 4.1.5: Empty former "Russian bazaars" in Przemysl (author's photo, 2009)

When entering the EU, the possibilities for local trade were reduced in Poland, which moreover had a large impact on cultural and social ties between communities on both sides of the border. Most of the bazaars are hardly used nowadays. At the border crossing of Terespol a local fruit salesman is standing with his van. He sells around five to ten times more a day before Poland's EU accession. Next to him a brand new small shopping centre has been built. It is very quiet inside and looks clinically clean.



Picture 4.1.6: Fruit salesman at the Terespol - Brest border crossing point (author's photo, 2009)

The river “Bug” is the border between Poland and Belarus. The banks of the river are full of trees, so the borderline is not good visible. A boundary marker is found around ten meters from the river. The marker is the only indication of the presence of the border line. About a kilometre away is a border crossing point for cars. At the moment of writing a new border crossing point is being built. A lot of money is being invested to “secure” the border. The countries Norway and Iceland financed the creation of this border crossing in combination with other resources. This has been written at a sign on the building site. Both countries contribute apart from the EU money to stimulate “modernization of the Schengen acquis” (EEA and Norway Grants, 2009). This indicates the importance of a good controlling mechanism at the external borders for highly developed European non-EU countries.



Picture 4.1.7: Creation of new border point Terespol (Poland) (author’s photo, 2009)

Brest is located in Belarus and on the “other” side of the EU border. The busiest highway and railroad between Berlin, Warsaw, Minsk and Moscow passes through the city. The relation between the EU and Belarus is very marginal. The most important reason is that the Belarusian leader Lukashenko is still in power due to “fraudulent presidential elections” and “subsequent violent crackdown on democratic opposition” according to the EU (BNN, 2011). A Schengen visa has been refused to Lukashenko in February 2011. The amount of bilateral agreements between the EU and Belarus is very limited compared to other neighbours. One of the few agreements that have been signed has been done with Frontex. Moral judgements to cooperate with Belarus are apparently not valid in the “fight” against illegal migration.

Note from my logbook:

When entering Belarus by train, armed border guards are controlling the Belarusian frontier. The entrance is impressive with the men standing in small watch towers along the railroad. Whereas the European side of the border more and more is being controlled by modern technical means, in Belarus manpower is still the dominant control mechanism. This appears to be the same when walking around the Brest fortress. The fortress has been made as remembrance of the Second World War and located at the frontiers of the country. A small road through the forest leads to the border river. A large group of border police is walking around in the area. Three local students I spoke to had never been in Terespol or anywhere in

Poland in general. Their only real chance to enter the EU is as part of student exchanges or NGO projects. Visa regulations restrict movement across the border.



Picture 4.1.8: Belarusian border guards (author's Photo, 2009)

Picture 4.1.9: Border river between Poland and Belarus (author's photo, 2009)

The “Transborder Information Centre Brest – Biala Podlaska – contacts without borders” is largely financed by the ENP and located in Brest. During a visit to the centre, the manager of the centre tells me lots of opportunities exist for companies to cooperate across the border. The man is very friendly in his office full with glossy magazines. The aim of the centre is to inform local companies and consumers about business possibilities in Poland and vice versa. The external EU border is by no means a new iron curtain or wall of restriction. For the rest he refuses to speak about politics; it is better to speak about the centre which is a great success.

The external EU border is rather regarded as “a new wall” than “a new bridge” in the mind of the Belarusians. Democracy and a free market were some of the “dreams” in post-Soviet Europe after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Belarusian citizens still want to have the same rights and benefits as EU citizens. However, there is a practical gap between the humanitarian EU goals for non EU neighbours and the realization of these goals (Titarenko: 2010: 5). People living in Belarusian borderlands are highly dependent on the border. The creation of the border caused a discord in communities, such as the village Tokary, which is divided in a Polish and Belarusian part. The Polish EU accession made a problem out of this as it became more difficult than ever before to visit friends and relatives (Woszniacka, 2004). The border divides the society in two groups: the ones with the right documents to enter the EU and the ones with strong limitations to cross the Polish EU border. The creation of a visa free travel zone, up to 30 kilometres across the border, is still not being established causing frustration to Polish authorities (Reuters, 2011). The difference in rail gauge between Poland and Belarus is a good example of the materiality of the border. Trains between the West and East have to change gauges when entering and leaving Belarus for 1.5-2 hours. This process takes 1.5-2 hours, and extends the travel time, which makes the crossing of the border less attractive.

4.1.3 Conclusion

The visiting of Terespol and Brest was a very interesting start of my journey as both places, which were closely connected are turning their faces away from each other nowadays. Cross border trade flourished according to literature until Poland started its way to EU accession. There is a process with a lot of contradiction going on, with first of all the creation of travel restrictions for residents of the border area. On other side the EU is financing initiatives to stimulate cross border cooperation within this difficult framework. The close presence of the border is especially in Brest hard to notify. The place has a more eastwards orientation. The border has more importance through its strategic location on the main railroad Berlin – Warsaw – Minsk – Moscow and Warsaw – Moscow highway. This infrastructure is being improved partly by EU money. A unique natural reserve is being divided by the border. The extra employment due to the border in forms of police is one of the few positive external effects of the border. The EU contributes to cross border governance by the stimulation of the cross border info centre. Is this a signal the EU does not only want to exclude the other? Or is it because this kind of cross border movement which is relatively “safe” does not have a connection with irregular migration?

					Relational		
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Interact.	Trade	Visa
Terespol	Poland	6002	Brest (Belarus)	River	Low	Low	Belarusian
Brest	Belarus	290000	Terespol (Poland)	River	Low	Low	Schengen

				Transport					Development	
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Terespol	Poland	6002	Brest (Belarus)	Medium	High	Medium	3	4	58	Low
Brest	Belarus	290000	Terespol (Poland)	Medium	High	Medium	3	4	94	Medium

(Bahn.de, 2011)(All-transport.info, 2011) (European Commission, 2011)(Google earth, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

Brest is the start of an 18 hour train journey northwards in the direction of Saint-Petersburg. After an evening of playing Russian card games with other passengers, I cross the Belarusian – Russian border in the middle of the night. Those countries belong together to a customs union, so there is no border control. The metro in Saint-Petersburg brings me to a dirty bus station in the north of the city. From there it is still a three and half hour bus drive to Svetogorsk at the Russian – Finnish border.

4.2 The Finnish - Russian border



Map 4.2: The Finnish - Russian border (author's editing, 2011)

4.2.1 Profile: The Finnish – Russian border

Border length:	1313 km
Capital:	Helsinki (Finland) Moscow (Russia)
Border:	Mostly forest and sparsely populated areas
Border history:	Opened from 1991 First border between EU and the Russian Federation (since 1995)

Short introduction

The population density is the highest in the southern part of the border close to the two largest cities nearby: Helsinki and St. Petersburg. Most of the economical activity along the border takes place here as well. Eastern Finland is a good example of a region which suffered from its location next to the border during the existence of the Soviet Union. The region was geographically isolated. Nowadays there is still relatively a lot heavy industry in the southern part and more employment in the primary sector in the north. The opening of the border in the 1990s resulted in less economic growth than expected.

(University of Joensuu, 2011)

Cross border cooperation

The opening up of the border in 1991 meant a start for both nations to improve their relationship. The Finnish entry to the EU in 1995 caused a double way of cooperation between both nations: on a national and European level. New border crossing points were created to regulate the rapidly increasing stream of traffic. Around 75% of these crossings occur in the southern stretch of the border. Cross border cooperation on a local scale is being stimulated and contributing to a slow process of decreasing the value of the border. However, Finnish citizens have a fear that social and economic Russian problems will cross the border as well. The economic differences in the borderlands are still huge.

Border demarcation

The Finnish side of the border has a three kilometres zone which is forbidden to enter. Big signs warn people you are entering the border zone (see picture 4.2.1) Cameras have been placed at the border itself as well. The Russian side of the border, which I saw in Svetogorsk, has been demarcated by a two meter high fence of wire. Photos of the fence I had to delete after being seen by the Russian border police while taking photographs. Moreover on the Russian side watchtowers can be noticed. The border is less visible on satellite images than the Polish Belarusian border. However there is still a small stripe of approximately ten meter visible where all vegetation has been removed. This small stripe has been cultivated in a zone of sand which traces all footprints (picture 4.2.2).



Picture 4.2.1: Finnish frontier zone



Picture 4.2.2: No man's land made out of well kept sand (Panoramio, 2009)

4.2.2 Alcohol at Monday morning and the border as forbidden space

Note from my logbook:

The journey along the border continues towards the north. The EU border between Finland and Russia is the most northern part of the borderline. The Finnish Russian border, measuring more than 1200 kilometre, is the longest border between an EU member state and non – EU member state. The border is largely located within forest without human settlements (Karelian institute, 2003: 1). Those two factors harden the process of control at the border. The Finnish border guard created a “border zone” of three kilometres from the border, which is only to enter with a special permit receivable by the Finnish border authority. Simple calculations lead to a 3600km² “no go area” at EU’s ends.



Picture 4.2.3: Restrictions to enter the Finnish “border zone” (Panoramio, 2009)

There is not such a border area on the Russian side. However, the border is a military object and in this way I become involuntary in contact with Russian border guards. I am taking pictures of the border from a hundred meter distance expecting not to being noticed by someone. After the use of several fallacies, half an hour of questioning in a jeep at the border point, the promise I will leave the border town as soon as possible and a thorough check of my passport, I am “released” from the jeep. The photos I had to delete unfortunately. The border is still a space of military interest and a shine of exclusiveness on it as it is forbidden to take photos from the fence. On the photos taken, border guards were fixing some parts of the around two meter high metal fence.

The Russian and Finnish borderlands were almost completely dependent on their national governments and economical centres as there was hardly any cross border interaction until 1990. Both borderlands became gradually more intertwined after 1990. Own economies are slowly developing and both different national cultures are meeting more and more as there are mixed marriages and an increasing amount of people speaking each other's language. However there is still a long way to go as the EU border is still an important barrier between the countries. The purchasing power is significantly lower on the Russian side. This is a phenomenon occurring along nearly the whole eastern external border. This inequality will prevent most likely complete integration between the two countries. Like in many other places at the border one could speak here about the "ambiguity between cooperation and control" (Laine, 2007: 49). Within the EU cross border cooperation is targeting cohesion and the removal of divide. At the external border one has to find a balance between the opportunities and the controlling mechanism as the border is being used nowadays by the EU.

Note from my logbook:

I am on a visit to see the border in Svetogorsk, Russia. The village has got around fifteen thousand inhabitants and is located about 100 kilometre north of the line Helsinki – Saint Petersburg, having the Finnish city of Imatra as twin city. In my life I have seen few places looking more depressing than Svetogorsk. A woman, smelling of alcohol is buying huge amounts of alcohol in the shop where I was buying breakfast at the same time, at Monday morning 9 am. It is my first acquaintance with the village (see picture 4.2.4).



Picture 4.2.4: Flats in Svetogorsk less than a kilometre from the border and a local resident on her way to buy alcohol (author's photo, 2009)



Picture 4.2.5: International paper factory in Svetogorsk (authors photo, 2009)

Note from my logbook:

The 200 hectare large paper factory of “International Paper” dominates the image of Svetogorsk. Around 3000 employees are working in the factory. The only not Cyrillic sign in Svetogorsk is a traffic sign with the direction of the factory written on it. My perception of the village is not positive. An old Finnish couple visiting the border area perceived it as a dirty place and “use” Svetogorsk for cheaper products as alcohol and cigarettes. They told me that there are some holiday houses from Finnish people in the Russian border area. This happens on a small scale (Zashev, 2008: 48). Those personal views differ largely from the bright impression of Svetogorsk in the “Imatra – Svetogorsk City Twins by the River Vuoski” folder, financed by the EU.

Today the close co-operation can be seen in the daily lives of Svetogorsk and Imatra residents, in their work and recreation, in their schools and hobbies.

(City of Imatra and City of Svetogorsk, unknown year: 2)

This “propaganda” does not match with the findings of Kaisto (2009). According to this survey only 8% of the Finnish and 15% of the interviewees had taken part in cooperation between the cities. Estonia joined the EU in 2004, where alcohol and cigarettes prices are lower than in Finland and higher compared to Russia. Finnish (EU) citizens can transport unlimited amounts of alcohol from Estonia to Finland. There are restrictions in the amounts one can take across the border from Russia, therefore being less attractive. The border used to be practically closed during Soviet times.

Looking from this perspective, the border is gradually opening up. A closed border for a large amount of time remains in the minds of individuals. This does not change from one on the other day, especially if there are still bureaucratic restrictions towards the other side of the border. In order to find out the “level of the barrier” Laine (2007: 54) took a survey from 81 residents of the Finnish and Russian borderlands. The following results were presented dealing with the relation between several issues and the border as barrier.

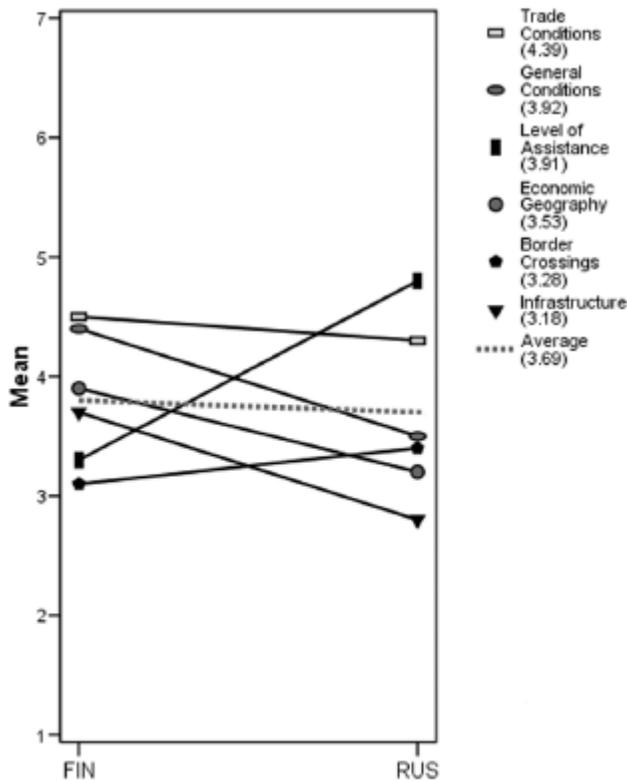


Fig. 2. The comparative assessment of the height of the barrier effect (1 = no barrier, 7 = insurmountable barrier).

Figure 4.1: The comparative assessment of the height of the barrier effect (1=no barrier, 7=insurmountable barrier) (Laine, 2007: 54)

The average score of 3.69 on a 1-7 scale conceptualizes the border as a “barrier of medium level”. Corruption and changing rules in business are the largest obstacles for Finnish respondents to have trading business in Russia. The Russian respondents feel a lack of assistance given by the Finnish authorities to act across the border. There is a consensus from all respondents that cross border cooperation should have a positive influence on the future and the development of the borderlands. Large investments are being made by the EU and the Finnish government to improve safety at the border. The main road between Svetogorsk and the rest of Russia is in poor condition and improvement has been promised already several years ago. Around 500 inhabitants of Svetogorsk protested against the lack of acting of the local and national government and blocked the Finnish Russian border crossing in April 2008. The border itself received more priority than the borderlands unfortunately for the citizens living there. Picture 4.2.4 and picture 4.2.6 are a clear

example of differences in the borderlands. The pictures have been taken geographically not more than ten kilometres away from each other, but show a very different style of housing.



Picture 4.2.6: Apartments in Imatra (Google street view, 2011)

4.2.3 Conclusion

The Finnish Russian border is a very interesting space. The border is very long with areas of low population density and huge economic differences between both sides of the border. The border is a military object which is there, visible, but not recordable legally. The Svetogorsk city administration tries to cooperate with their Finnish neighbours, however I have the feeling most of the ordinary city residents are not benefiting from this. A limited number of Finnish people and number plates were visible in Svetogorsk. However, most of the cross border traffic consisted however of cargo traffic. It is arguable the close presence of the border resulted in the presence of the International Paper Factory, giving employment opportunities to the city. There are no public transport connections across the border in Svetogorsk. Narratives on the negative image of the Russian neighbour are still in the mind of Finnish citizens, in this way enlarging the barrier for interaction. Svetogorsk and Imatra are separated by merely a line. However this mere line has enormous influence on the life and the materiality of people living in the borderlands.

					Relational		
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Interact.	Trade	Visa
Svetogorsk	Russia	15500	Imatra (Finland)	Land	Low	Medium	Schengen

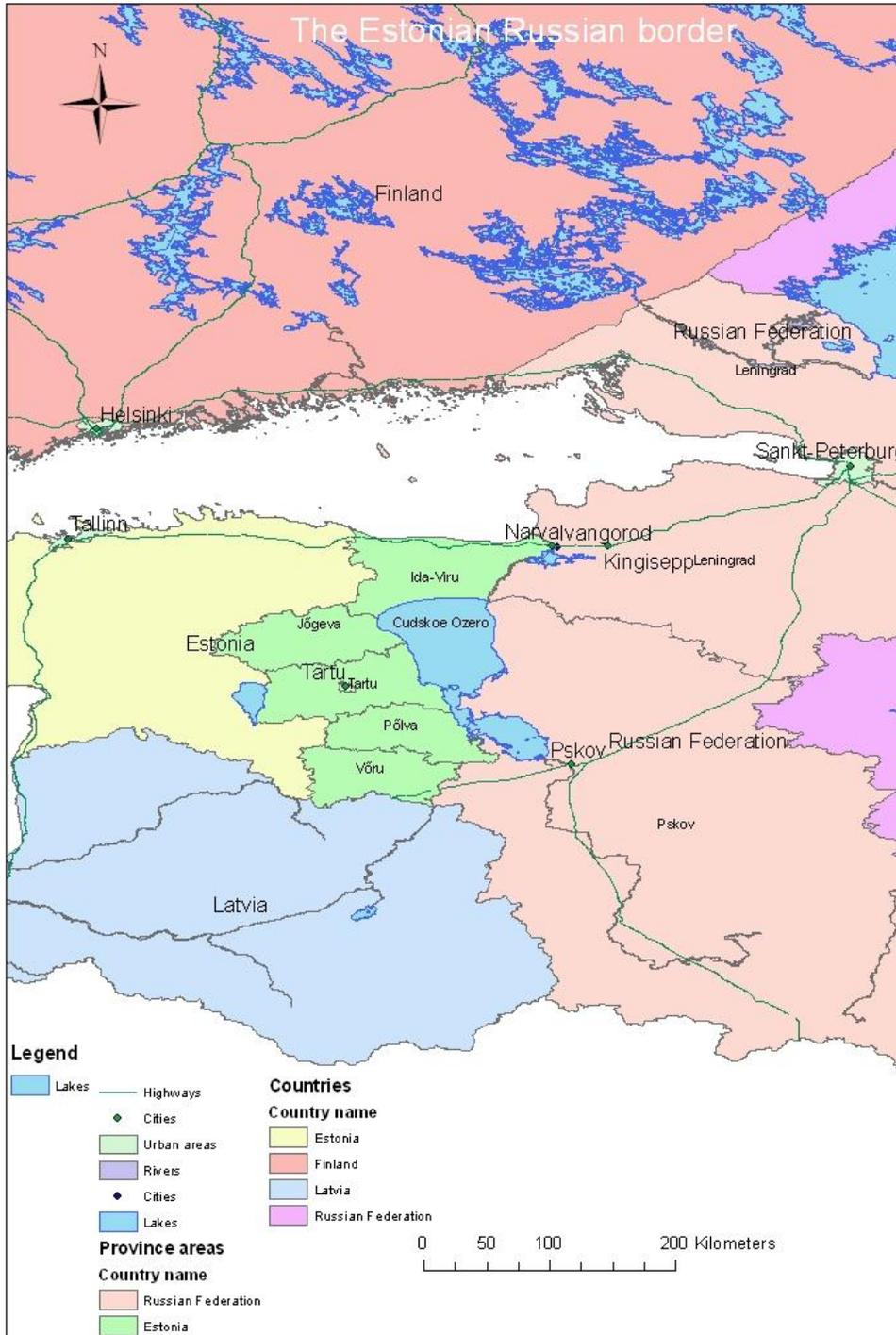
				Transport					Development	
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Svetogorsk	Russia	15500	Imatra (Finland)	Low	Medium	Short	0	0	55	Low

(All-transport.info, 2011)(Google earth, 2011)(Federal State Statistics Service – Russian Federation, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

After a day and night visit to Svetogorsk I am happy I can leave the depressing place. On the other hand I feel intrigued by this negativity as well. The bus takes me the same way back to Saint – Petersburg. After a short stop in this beautiful city, I board a bus to Ivangorod at the Estonian border. Already kilometers before I reached Ivangorod there are trucks standing next to the road, waiting to cross the border.

4.3 The Estonian – Russian border



Map 4.3: The Estonian – Russian border (author’s editing, 2011)

4.3.1 Profile: The Estonian – Russian border

Border length:	290 km
Capital:	Tallinn (Estonia) Moscow (Russia)
Border:	Largest share of the border formed by Lake Peipsi (Cudskoe Ozero)
Border history:	Border created after the breakup of the Soviet Union EU external border since 2004

Short introduction

The border between Russia and Estonia has been formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union as the Estonian republic declared independence in 1991. The Estonian border regions (Põlva and Võru) are the least wealthy regions of the country. These regions are largely rural opposed to the more industrialised and urbanised north east. The Russian Leningrad Oblast is one of the most developed regions of the periphery in Russia with the focus on the second largest Russian city St. Petersburg. The Pskov oblast is just like their Estonian neighbours among the poorest Russian provinces (University of Tartu, 2011). There is still a large Russian minority in, especially in the borderlands, Estonia living. Integration with the rest of the Estonian society is progressing slowly in these places, as most ethnical Russians have in general a relative small knowledge of the Estonian language.

Cross border cooperation

The political relationship between both countries is on a sensitive level due to the tensions of the ethnical composition of the Estonian society and related issues. Moreover the outlook of the border regions does not encourage cross border cooperation very much. The Russian part of the border is mostly focused on St. Petersburg. Estonia is more competitive in trade for the rest of the EU due to tariff barriers. The development of economic agreements with the EU led to an increase of the bilateral trade between Estonia and Russia. The security at the Estonian side of the border has been very strict since 1991 in order to combat the possible threat of Russian crime. This has prevented large scale smuggling and human trafficking at this border over the years. The creation of bilateral agreements between the EU and Russia since 2004 contributed to a rapid increase of cooperation between both countries. The Estonian side of the border is more and more over being controlled by new techniques instead of manpower.

Border demarcation

The longest part of the Estonian Russian consists of water, by means of the River Narva and the Peipsi Lake. Many patrolling boats are visible on this water (see picture 4.3.1). Within the Russian border city Ivangorod the access to the waterside on several places has been covered by iron fences. On other places however it is very easy to enter the water (picture 4.3.2). The waterside in Narva (Estonia) is intensively being controlled by border guards patrolling along the water. The small land part of the border is being controlled by cameras on the Estonian side (picture 4.3.3). The Russian side is being “protected” by a two meter high fence of barbed wire.



Picture 4.3.1: Russian patrolling boat and a watchtower in the background (Panoramio, 2009)



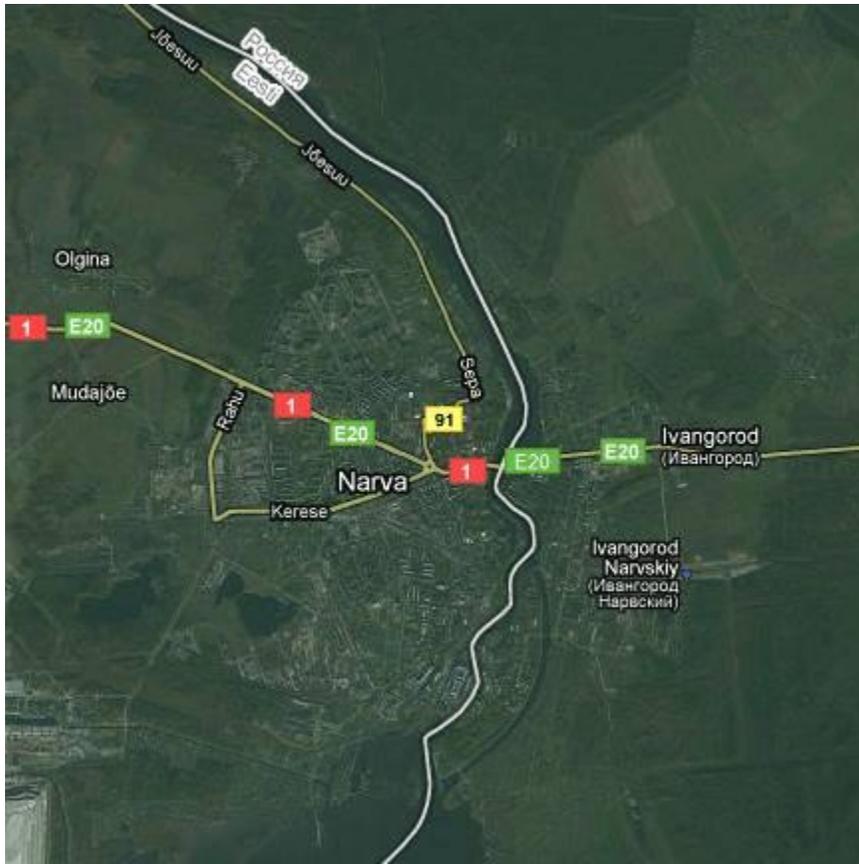
Picture 4.3.2: People close to the border river Narva in Ivangorod, Russia (author's photo, 2009)



Picture 4.3.3: Estonian Russian border guarded by cameras (author's photo, 2009)

4.3.2 Cities divided by the EU border in the Estonian Russian borderland

The impact of the border is striking in the following places visited on my trip. The Estonian city Narva (60.000 inhabitants) and Russian village Ivangorod (11.000 inhabitants) used to be one city in Soviet times. Both settlements are separated by the river "Narva". Nowadays this river is the external border of the EU. A majority of the population of Narva is ethnic Russian. Moreover there is a large share of ethnic Russians living in Estonia, without an Estonian passport or speaking the Estonian language. This is still a field of tension within Estonia. The Estonian/Russian border in Narva is a "de facto" state border. This border corresponds with the former border in 1945 between the ESSR (Estonian Soviet Republic) and the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Republic). The last three centuries Narva and Ivangorod were part of the same administrative unit. An Estonian-Russian border treaty is waiting to be ratified since 1996. Russia does not wish to recognize the illegal annexation of Estonia by the USSR in 1940. Estonia between the First and Second World war, as decided in the Tartu peace treaty of 1920, contained several areas being part of Russia before and afterwards. Estonia dropped "symbolic" its claim on these territories in 1996. However Russia still does not want to sign the ratification. The reason of this is the alleged infringement of the rights of "Russian-speakers" living in Estonia (Smith, 2002).



Map 4.4: Narva and Ivangorod (Google maps, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

Twenty years after the independence of Estonia the difference between both sides of the border is poignant. The roads in Ivangorod are full of gaps and badly damaged. The tarmac on the Estonian side is in much better condition. It is hard to see the reality of the outcome of a divided community and shocking to see the difference in development between both sides.



Picture 4.3.4: Road conditions in Ivangorod (author's photo, 2009)

Many of the bridges across the river are poorly maintained and closed for border crossers. There is one main bridge where all the traffic has to cross the border. This includes the (freight) traffic between Tallinn and Saint Petersburg. One bridge is opened during the day for pedestrians and only in use for people with a special permit. The bridge is not shown on the big touristic map on the central square of Narva. There is still a small amount of bridges visible which are still there and not being used anymore.



Picture 4.3.5: Bridges across the river Narva and the EU border (Panoramio, 2009)



Picture 4.3.6: Queue of trucks on the road to Narva (Wikimedia, 2007)

The first material aspect from the border is already present when approaching Ivangorod from the Russian side. A queue of trucks of several kilometres is observable next to the road. The queue ends where Ivangorod begins as the trucks are not allowed to wait within the city. This means they are waiting in an environment without sanitary facilities or eating opportunities. On the other side of the border when leaving Narva there is the same phenomenon visible along the road. Trucks are waiting outside Narva to enter Russia. There is a centre in Narva where truck-drivers can park their truck and sleep while waiting to cross the border. However the capacity of the centre is too small to offer place for everyone waiting. This queue has been a virtual queue since July 2010. At an office in Narva one can get a number. On the internet the progress of the queue is visible. Forty-five minutes before the possible time of border crossing a text message is being sent to the corresponding telephone number. This decreases problems for people living in Narva. Unemployed residents cross the border to buy petrol in Russia and to sell it later on in Estonia for around €33-€46 per full tank. The amount of cigarettes to take across the border is limited to two packages. This used to be a form of lucrative “cross border trade”. Truck drivers do not have a place to stay. Along with the introduction of the virtual queuing system a toll price of €2 has been introduced for cars and €14 for trucks. This problem cannot be solved by expanding the number of lanes if the custom control or/and capacities on the other side will not improve.



Figure 4.2: Estimated waiting time based on admission of trucks by Russian customs for the last 72h in Narva (EMTA, 2011)

The population of Ivangorod is suffering due to the presence of the border close to the village. Prices are about 60-100% higher than in the city Kingisepp around 20 kilometre eastwards as a result of the Estonian visitors. The city is almost bankrupt, partly because of administrative

reforms. Citizens of Ivangorod have sent a symbolic petition to Moscow to become part of Estonia in April 2010. Their feelings have been published in the Baltic Business News (2010):

The arbitrariness of our bureaucrats and the complete indifference of the regional government towards our problems have forced us to this.

4.3.3 Conclusion

The border creates opportunities for the residents of Narva and hardens the life of the Ivangorod population. Theoretically, the travel possibilities towards the rest of the EU are unlimited for the Estonian citizens. A significant part of the Russian speaking inhabitants living in Estonia does not have an Estonian passport. Thereby these possibilities are disabled. Entrance to Russia has become more difficult as well. The many bridges of the “old days” are out of use and long queues of trucks are eye catchers in the borderland. Russian language is heard everywhere on the streets in Narva and indicates the close presence of the border. The difference in the quality of roads is a good example in the difference of welfare. In the morning people are waiting in the centre of Narva to go to Ivangorod. In the afternoon those people are waiting at the Russian side of the border to return. The arbitrary decision to categorize Narva and Ivangorod in two different institutional regions after the Second World War has left its marks now more than ever before. The border is a new line where a relatively young process of bordering is occurring.

					Relational		
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Interact.	Trade	Visa
Ivangorod	Russia	11206	Narva (Estonia)	River	Medium	High	Schengen
Narva	Estonia	67144	Ivangorod (Russia)	River	High	High	Russian

				Transport					Development	
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Ivangorod	Russia	11206	Narva (Estonia)	Low	High	Long	0	7	55	Low
Narva	Estonia	67144	Ivangorod (Russia)	High	High	Long	0	7	60	High

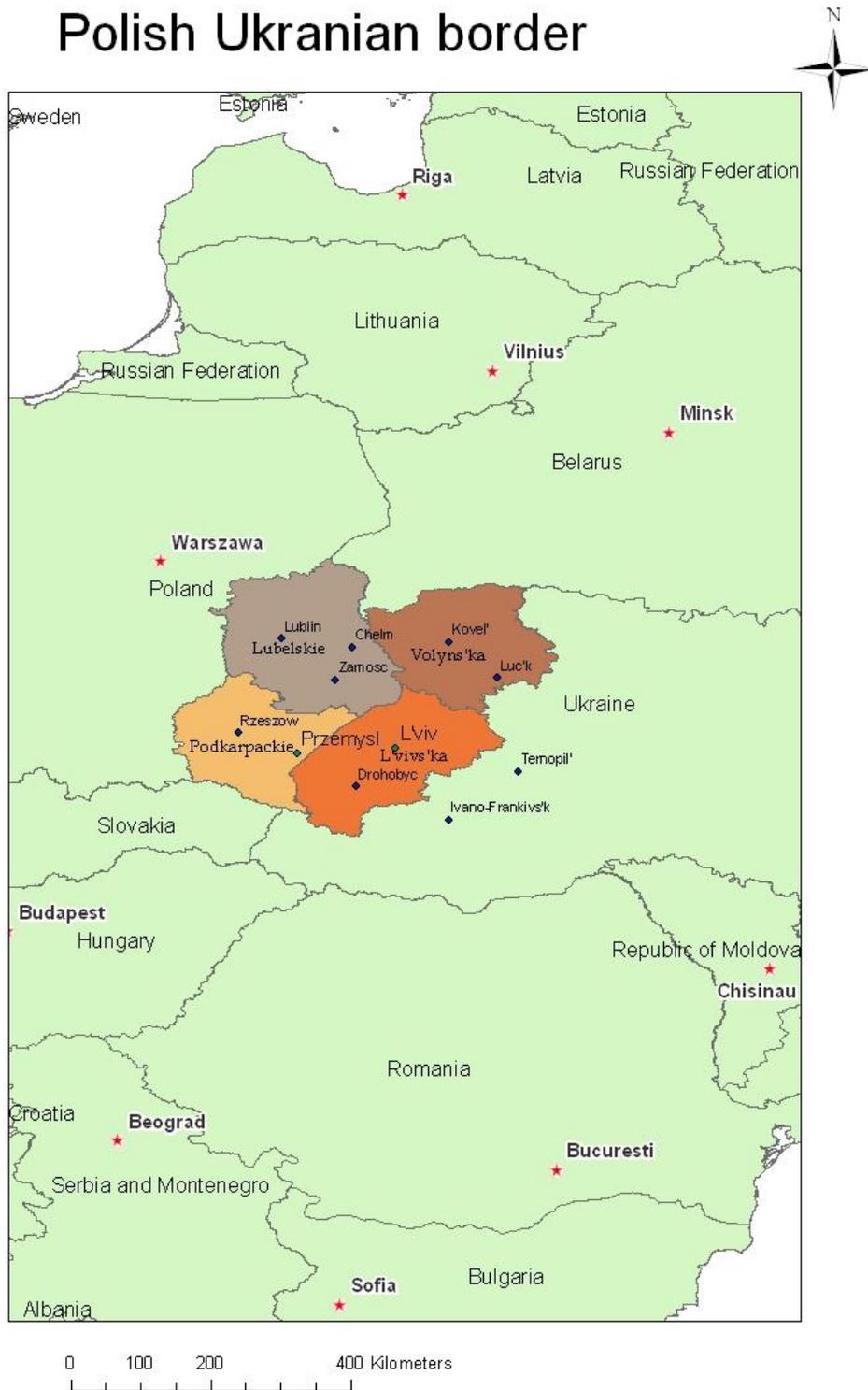
(All-transport.info, 2011) (European Commission, 2011)(Google earth, 2011)

Note from logbook:

After having spent a day in Narva with fellow border student Karin, I travel southwards to Tartu I am surprised there are internet facilities in the bus, just like at many other public Estonian places. The Eurolines bus from Tartu to Riga is full with young “travellers” who are speaking about the bars they will visit in Riga. My stay in Riga lasts for less than an hour, because my connecting bus to Warsaw is waiting. The bus is quiet and I arrive in Warsaw in the early morning. From there I board on a direct train to Przemysl in the southeast of Poland. Two carriages of the train are going to Kiev and Chisinau. The amount of passengers on these carriages is very limited, but the amount of luggage they are taking is huge. After a ride through rural eastern Poland I arrive in Przemysl in the late afternoon.

4.4 The Polish - Ukrainian border

Polish Ukrainian border



Map 4.5: The Polish - Ukrainian border (author's editing, 2011)

4.4.1 Profile: The Polish – Ukrainian border

Border length:	428 km
Capital:	Warsaw (Poland) Kiev (Ukraine)
Border:	Green border in an agricultural region
Border history:	EU external border since 2004 Most border crossing points at the external EU border

Short introduction

The Polish Ukrainian border has been created after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Interaction until that time between both sides of the border was very limited. Poland has been the first country to recognise Ukrainian independence in 1991 which was a good starting point for further mutual relationships. The four border provinces, largely economically based on agriculture, are among the weakest economic regions in both countries. The GDP per inhabitant in Poland is several times higher than in Ukraine. Cross border cooperation on a national level had always mainly been focused on border security and the regulation of the large scale cross border trade. The development of the Polish Ukrainian border as a transit route for irregular (labour) migrants from Asia requested a response of both countries as well. The introduction of the visa regime for all eastern neighbours of Poland in 2003 made the Polish government create a more flexible visa regime for Ukrainian citizens. The current twelve border crossing points are not sufficient for the handling of the large transport flows across the border.

Cross border cooperation

The opening of the border in 1991 meant a starting point for increasing cooperation on a governmental level. This cooperation occurred in a lot of different areas: border infrastructure, spatial planning, transport, municipal governance, industry, trade, agriculture, nature and natural environment protection, education and profession education, Polish and Ukrainian language education as a second language in schools (especially in cross-border areas), culture and art, health care, tourism, sport, information in the case of disaster prevention and other areas. On a European level cross border cooperation is being stimulated as a signal to improve the peripheral border regions. However, critics argue that organizations such as the two Polish Ukrainian Euroregions put more emphasis on obtaining funds than on the political support of mutual cooperation. Cross border cooperation is hard because institutional structures in Poland and Ukraine are different. Besides this, Ukrainian partners are very dependent on central authorities unlike their Polish partners which have more autonomous ways of functioning. The ENPI program focuses more on border security and economical development than on social integration and the civil society. Last of all, the mental barrier at this border is slowly disappearing (University of Gdansk, 2011).

Border demarcation

The Polish Ukrainian border is partly formed by the small river Bug, partly by agricultural land and the last part of the line is running through the Carpathian Mountains. The Ukrainian border infrastructure is similar to the Russian and Belarusian border infrastructure, located at the former edges of the Soviet Union. Most of the watchtowers and gates are still dating from this era and are still in function. Recently, the EU has invested in training of Ukrainian border guards as well. Still

many human traffickers try to find their way through the Carpathian Mountains. Satellite images show a similar border stretch as at the Finnish Russian border of around ten meters without vegetation. In this way the border has been demarcated differently than the Polish Belarusian border where this stretch is much wider.



Picture 4.4.1: Old Soviet watch towers in the Ukrainian borderland (Panoramio, 2009)



Picture 4.4.2: Border stretch between Poland and Ukraine (Panoramio, 2009)

4.4.2 Long queues and new control techniques at the Polish border

Note from my logbook:

The Polish Ukrainian border has the highest density of border crossing on the eastern external EU border. There are twelve checkpoints at the 530 kilometre long border stretch. Several of them can be crossed by foot as well. I was planning to do this and therefore I went first to the city Przemysl (67000 inhabitants) in south-eastern part of Poland. Like many other places in the region Przemysl has been part of different nation states such as Austria – Hungary and the Soviet Union. Just as many other cities, the city flourished due to cross border trade on the so called “Russian bazaars”. The closest border point is located in the village of Medyka. Around 4200 individuals pass the border here daily.

The situation on the Medyka border point is very different in summer 2009 than in summer 2006 when I first visited Ukraine. At that time, the border crossing point felt like a wild-west area for me. Between the Ukrainian and Polish check point for pedestrians was a zone (this zone still exists) of several hundred meters of no-man’s land. The two lanes going in to the two different directions were separated by a fence. This fence was about two meters high with a lot of small wholes inside. In this zone people were trading cigarettes and vodka. After the “trade” people climbed across the fence and returned back to their corresponding country of origin. Border guards monitored the situation without acting or taking a stance. Three years later the situation is very different. Climbing the fence in no-man’s-land is not possible anymore and there it is neither possible to trade goods. Limitations in the amount of cigarettes to take across the border make it less profitable to cross the border as well. However, still a lot of people make their living by crossing the border and selling goods. It is not a happy sight to see old ladies begging people to buy a bottle.



Picture 4.4.3: Women selling goods at the border in Medyka (Poland)(author’s photo, 2009)

In Medyka I have an appointment with two representatives of the Straż Graniczna (Polish border guard). A lot has been changed at the Polish border in order to be part of the Schengen area. The EU invested a lot of money to improve the border points and to protect the “green border”. New vehicles (two and four wheels) have been bought which make it easier to drive around and control the border area. All the buildings at the border point itself look new. Several stickers can be found with the sign “financed by the EU”. One of the newest assets is a large “garage” where vehicles can be scanned on possible illegal load as human beings or illegal material completely without human intervention. Generally, almost nothing is found in the scan, because truck drivers know the scan is almost perfect. There is a small new prison at the border point as well. Illegal border crossings can be detained for a short amount of time. Afterwards they are being sent towards their country of origin on costs of the EU. During the time I am there, no one is being detained. The capacity of the border crossing is being improved due to the European football championship being held in Poland and Ukraine in 2012.

It is relatively quiet at the border point on the sunny Sunday afternoon, much calmer than the chaotic place I saw in 2006. When I leave Poland there is no one waiting in the “EU queue”. The other operation desk is much busier with around fifty people waiting in the “non-EU queue”. The Ukrainian side of the border point looks still the same as three years ago.



Picture 4.4.4: Cars in Ukraine waiting to enter Poland on the road Kovel - Chelm (author's photo, 2010)

I experienced myself that the crossing of the Polish Ukrainian border can consume a lot of time. While passing this border from Ukraine to Poland by bus service, it took around seven hours in August 2010. On the way to the border a queue of waiting cars with a length of several kilometres was passed which means things can be even worse. Not only car traffic crossing the border suffers from this. The waiting time has a big influence on TIR traffic as well. The International Road Union

estimates the lost value for TIR traffic thanks to waiting time at external EU borders from 1999-2005 at USD 7.0 billion (Krausz, 2009). It is difficult to estimate what the waiting time would be if there would not be any visa restrictions to enter Poland.

After the Schengen accession of Poland, a significant decrease of 2.6 times fewer trips of Ukrainian citizens to EU member states are counted (CPCFPU, 2008: 64). It is difficult to obtain a visa as a regular citizen. There are many requirements (salary statements, invitations etc.) to receive a Schengen visa. This makes it especially difficult for the ordinary Ukrainian population. The expansion of the Schengen zone is in this way deepening the gap between the Ukrainian elite and the rest of the society.

The amount of pedestrian border crossers will most likely increase after the introduction of a bilateral agreement between Poland and Ukraine from July 2010. Residents of Ukraine living within 30 kilometres from the border can buy for the sum of €25 a permit to travel without restriction the neighbouring borderland up to 30 kilometres. Ukraine has these agreements with Hungary and Slovakia as well. Polish citizens do not need a visa to enter Ukraine. Is this a way back to the open border policy after the breakup of the Soviet Union?

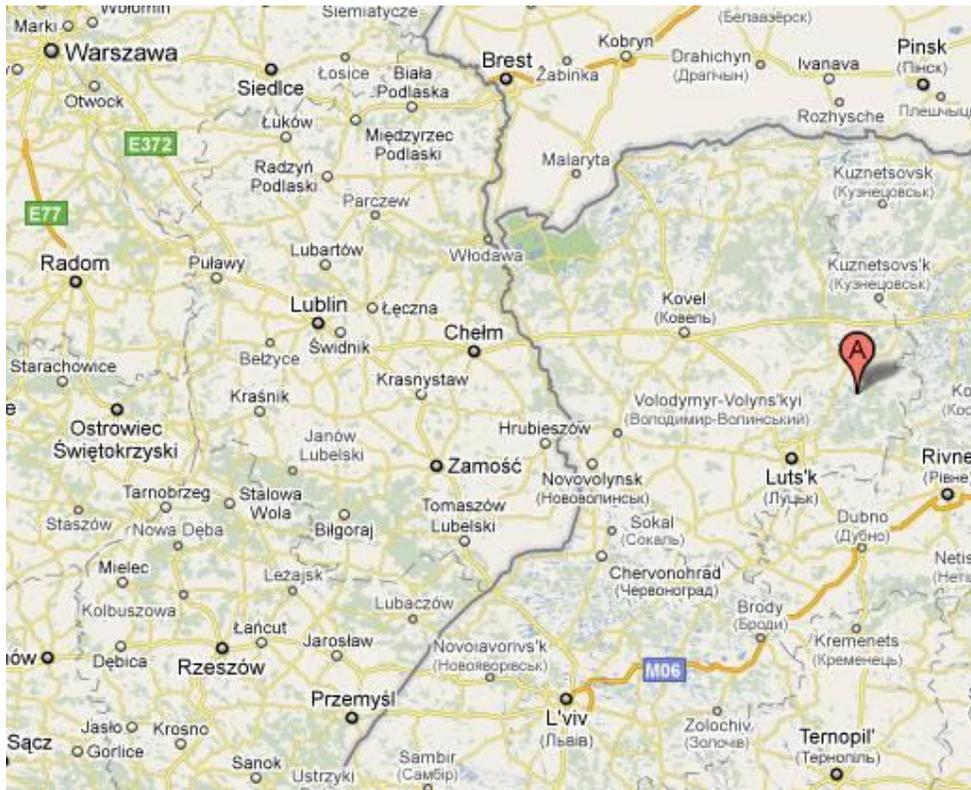
4.4.3 Detention centres in the Ukrainian forest

Note from my logbook:

Walking out of Poland, I leave the EU and enter Ukraine. The first important notable difference is the Cyrillic script which is being used. The first building visible in Ukraine after the border crossing is a big supermarket where just alcohol is being sold. The first sign of recent development in Ukraine is the creation of a small bus station several hundred meters from the border. The road leading to the nearest big city (Lviv) remains however in a terrible condition. It feels like entering a different world, Ukraine, EU neighbour.

Ukraine means literally “borderland”, as the country always has been a place of transit in between the East and West. Nowadays the Ukraine is an important gateway to the EU. From many countries in the world Ukraine is relatively easy to reach, as many nationalities do not need a visa for Ukraine. Around 70% of the migrants which use Ukraine as transit country enter Ukraine legally (Bordermonitoring EU, 2009) People, being legally in Ukraine, try to enter the EU, where they can request asylum. By means of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) this legal arrival is being criminalized. Subsequently the IOM is fighting these “criminal activities”. The external EU border is being heavily guarded to prevent unwanted migrants to enter. The level of control at the Ukrainian side of the border is being raised as the EU is financing the Ukrainian customs as well. The money for customs is coming from the ENP (see 3.3), with a budget of €494 million for Ukraine from 2007 to 2010, which was created to form a ring of friends around the EU. Thirty million euro of this money has been used to build five detention centres in the non EU borderlands. In these centres people are caught who are suspected of illegal entry, unauthorized arrival or visa violations. Individuals have to wait here before a decision is being made whether a visa will be granted or one will be repatriated to the country of origin. The EU has currently a readmission agreement with Ukraine, so asylum seekers can be sent back to Ukraine as “safe third country”. However Ukraine should not be considered as a “safe third country” according to the Ukrainian refugee council based on the UN committee against torturing (Ukrainian refugee council, 2010). The global detention

project (2009) defines the standards in the detention centres as: “very poor, pointing to severe overcrowding, insufficient medical care, and prolonged detention, among other problems.”



Map 4.6: Polish Belarusian Ukrainian borderlands - A is the location of detention centre Zhuravichi (Google maps, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

Detainees have the right to receive visitors. I try to find contact information from the detention centre in Zhuravichi (see map 4.6). The only information available is the name of the village where the camp is located. Off chance I go to the camp.



Picture 4.4.5: The access to the Zhuravichi detention centre (author's photo, 2009)

The camp is badly accessible by public transport. Three times per day a bus is passing by. Only with the help from the bus driver I manage to get out at the right place. From the main road one has to walk for several kilometres through the forest to find the centre. When I try to enter the camp two guards of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine welcome me in their small surveillance office. Communication is difficult as both parties did not speak any languages in common. I am told I should have made an appointment before with the director. The director is not here at the moment and I am not able to receive an email address or telephone number. In general there is hardly any information to find on the internet about this centre, so making an appointment seemed nearly impossible. There is no opportunity for me to see the camp. The guards assured me the camp “is not a museum”. A detained Somalian boy translates everything from Russian to English and vice versa. I am not allowed to ask him any questions and I am the person to be questioned for half an hour. After this time I am “released” while hearing jokes I can stay in the camp for some days as well if I wanted too. The detention centre remains a secret to me, hidden in the Ukrainian forest. This place contributes to the view of the new landscape at the EU border, made out of detention camps, control and barbed wire as referred to by van Houtum (2010a) in paragraph 3.2.

The frequent reorganization of Ukrainian government ministries and their responsibilities are contributing to a lack of understanding from the “outside” concerning detention issues. The Ukrainian border guards service and militia are allowed to detain persons caught within 50-km from the border in order to initiate an interview of up to three hours in “specially-equipped premises”. There are eleven of them located on Ukrainian territory. In this premises detention up to three days is possible. If the person does not have any sufficient papers, the stay can be extended up to seven days. This total theoretical maximum of ten days was in many cases exceeded and in some cases it lasted even up to three months (CPT, 2009: 11).



Seredina Buda



Stanichno Luganske

Picture 4.4.6: Facilities in Ukrainian Screening centers (General Director’s Immigration Services Conference (GDISC), 2009)

Furthermore eight “screening centres” have been erected to have “initial interviews” with migrants. In these interviews can be decided if migrants are in need of protection or can be considered as illegal migrants. These centres are not located close to the EU border, but at the Ukrainian – Russian

border. The EU is externalizing here its border policy beyond its own borders. The conditions in such screening centres in the Ukrainian Russian borderlands are visible at picture 4.4.6. Money for the improvement of “security” at the border could be used to improve living conditions for detained persons as well. The priority of the improvement of these standards is much lower according to the distribution of the European budget.

4.4.4 Conclusion

The border is a large barrier for people travelling to the other side of the border in the Polish Ukrainian borderlands. The current amount of border crossing points has difficulties to handle the amount of transport. Positive side effects of the presence of the border such as small cross border trade became very difficult after the Polish EU accession. Prices and levels of income are very different across the border. The amount of alcohol and cigarettes to take across the border has been very limited from December 2008, making it less profitable to trade across the border. The people living in the borderlands could make their living over the last years with trade and should try to find new ways of living in areas where job opportunities are relatively low. A lot of money is being invested to secure the border in the tightest way as possible. It is intriguing to see the “perfect” border infrastructure and to drive on the little comfortable Ukrainian roads later. Moreover the handling of the traffic at the border is happening at such a slow pace that people have to wait for hours or sometimes, especially cargo traffic, even days.

The presence of Ukrainian detention centres is a very interesting phenomenon. It represents the externalization of the EU’s border policy. There are even screening centres created at the Russian Ukrainian border to prevent migrants from arriving at the EU border. The borderline is more and more guarded. The modern facilities at the border contradict with the poor condition of many facilities in Ukraine such as infrastructure. A lot of improvement within the country has been promised along with the European Football championship which will be held in Poland and Ukraine in summer 2012.

					Relational		
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Interact.	Trade	Visa
Przemysl	Poland	67847	Lviv (Ukraine)	Land	High	High	Free
Lviv	Ukraine	732818	Przemysl (Poland)	Land	High	High	Local regime

				Transport					Development	
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Przemysl	Poland	67847	Lviv (Ukraine)	Medium	High	Medium	7	5	58	Medium
Lviv	Ukraine	732818	Przemysl (Poland)	Low	High	Long	5	7	71	Medium

(Bahn.de, 2011)(All-transport.info, 2011) (European Commission, 2011)(Google earth, 2011)

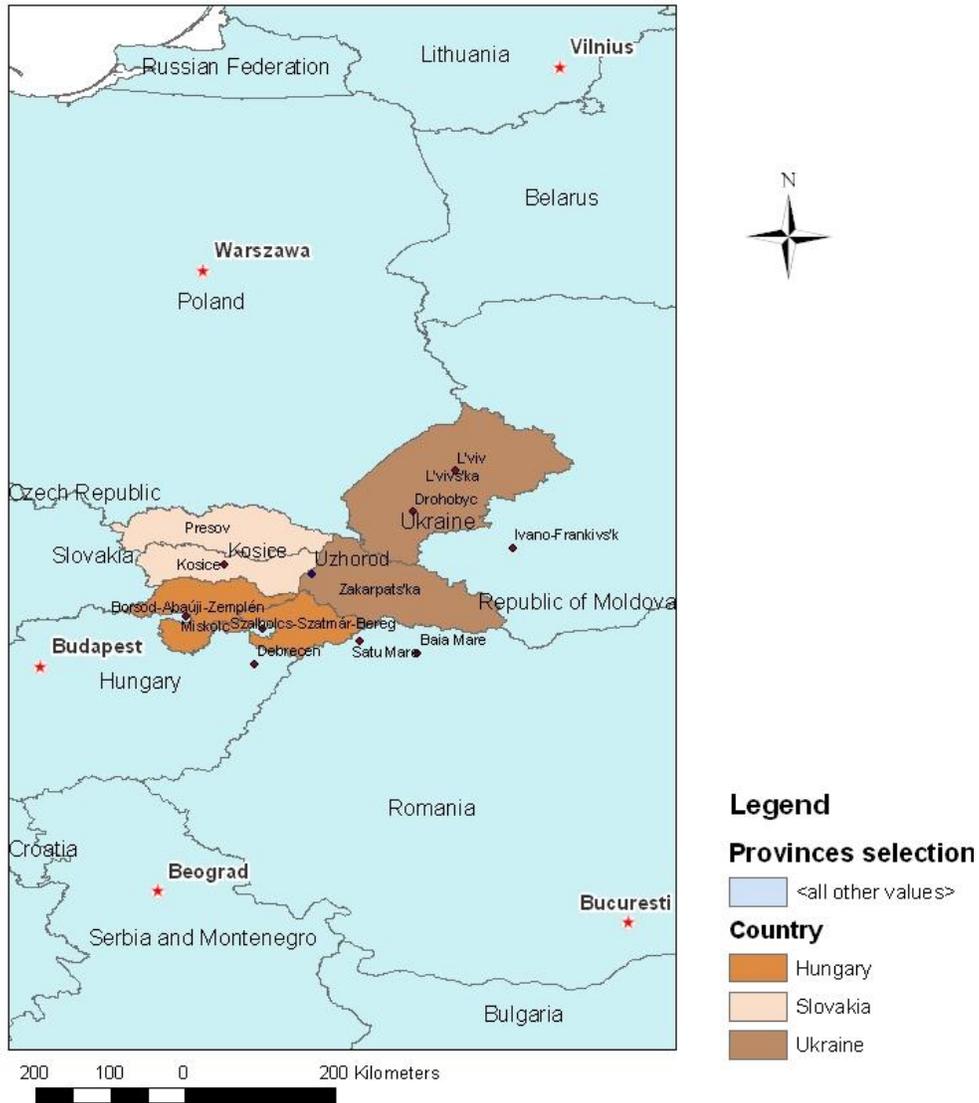
Note from my logbook:

After several interesting days in the Polish Ukrainian borderland I continue southwards to explore the materiality of the border in Uzhgorod, where Ukraine is bordering Slovakia and Hungary. A short nightly train ride from Lviv across the Carpathian Mountains brings me to

the former Intourist hotel "Zakarpattia". From here on I am going discover the Transcarpathian borderlands.

4.5 The Slovakian / Hungarian – Ukrainian border

Slovakian / Hungarian - Ukrainian border



Map 4.7: The Slovakian/Hungarian – Ukrainian border (author's editing, 2011)

4.5.1 Profile: The Hungarian / Slovakian – Ukrainian border

Border length:	90 kilometre (Slovakia – Ukraine) and 137 kilometre (Hungary – Ukraine)
Capital:	Budapest (Hungary) Bratislava (Slovakia) Kiev (Ukraine)
Border:	Mountainous (Slovakia) and by the river “Tisza” and land (Hungary) Relative short border stretches

Short introduction:

I will summarize the Slovakian and Hungarian border here both, as the length of their border stretches with Ukraine are relatively limited. The border between those countries was institutionalized after the Second World War II. Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia and Ukraine part of the Soviet – Union in those times. The Slovakian border became after their EU accession an important route for human smugglers as the mountainous area was difficult to control. The EU reacted to this with technical innovations. The border between Ukraine and Hungary runs through various local communities which saw their villages being separated by the presence of the EU external border.

Cross border cooperation

The countries on both EU sides of the border are very different in geographical size and their political systems differ. The 12% ethnic Hungary minority of the population of the Ukrainian borderland has a lot of influence on the foreign relations between Hungary and Ukraine. Hungary is for example supporting the theoretical Ukrainian accession to the EU. The amount of trade between Hungary and Ukraine is mostly limited to “shadow economy” (Centre for Regional Studies in Pécs, 2011). The border regions in the three countries are largely rural. The biggest cities in the neighbourhood of the border are Kosice (Slovakia), Nyiregyhaza (Hungary) and Uzhgorod (Ukraine).

Border demarcation

The Slovakian and Hungarian – Ukrainian border are relatively short borders. The mountainous terrain made the Slovakian Ukrainian border stretch attractive for irregular migrants. Nowadays the southern border Slovakian Ukrainian border stretch is carefully demarcated by two meter high fences with barbed wire on top of it and cameras controlling this fence. The bright green fence is the most shining part of the entire infrastructure in the borderlands. The northern part of the border stretch has merely border stones to signal the border, however thermo sensors control the border. The borderline itself is easy reachable (see picture 4.5.1). The Hungarian Ukrainian border is for approximately half way out of the river Tisza. The infamous sand stretch is visible at this border as well (see picture 4.5.2).



Picture 4.5.1: Border stones at the Slovakian Ukrainian border (Panoramio, 2009)



Picture 4.5.2: Sand stretch at the Hungarian Ukrainian border (Panoramio, 2009)

4.5.2 The recorded border

The journey is going south through the Carpathian Mountains towards Uzhgorod and Kosice at the Slovakian Ukrainian border. The population of both regions living at the only 98 kilometre long border has a largely heterogeneous ethnic and religious structure. There are still a lot of cultural ties between both sides of the border. The regions are economically the weakest of their countries as well. The adaption of EU legislation and visa regime by Slovakia had an enormous impact on the Slovakian Ukrainian bilateral relations. The biggest impact it had on Ukrainian people travelling to Slovakia. The other way around the impact was much less. However it has to be said the amount of cross border traffic has been since 2007 on the same level as before the visa introduction (Buzalka and Benč, 2007: 2).

This short border stretch used to become a more and more popular route for irregular migrants. There were 947 people intercepted at the border in the year 2003. This number climbed up to 2274 and 4486 in 2004 and 2005 (Sunjic and Prokopchuk, 2006). The level of control is being raised here at all costs like at many other places at the eastern border. The green border is strictly controlled by surveillance towers. Those towers are located around three kilometres from the border and contain “thermo” sensors. In this way people can be located in the forest more easily and can be differentiated from animals. Another system is controlling all traffic on rail. All wagons are counted and controlled whether they contain human beings or not. The controlling system along the Slovakian Ukrainian border is developed by Sony Ericsson: “Centralized Information system for the border control management” (EBAS). The system, containing a chain of 300 cameras has been in use since 2007. The southern half of the border stretch (southern of Vysné Nemecké) is completely controlled by the system, while the northern mountainous stretch by the so-called thermo-vision apparatus (Schmidt, 2009). Every single camera can be controlled by the control room 24 hours a day. Each unexpected movement creates an alarm signal. The control room contacts the closest patrolling team to check the situation.

Note from my logbook:

The Slovakian Ukrainian border I cross myself as well. This is the only border crossing, where everyone who is crossing the border has his or her amount of restricted goods such as alcohol and cigarettes registered in a database.



Picture 4.5.3: Slovakian Ukrainian border fence with cameras (author's photo, 2009)

More new control techniques are being used at the Slovakian border. For instance big vehicles are being scanned in a big scanner. The scan takes about twenty minutes. A sensor can recognize the “human bio field” (this is quantum-level information or energy field (McCardell, 2010)) and guarantees a detection result of 100%. Since the introduction of the system not a single person has been found. Marek Papac from the Slovakian border police claims people know about the system and the systems works preventive. When changing the settings horses can be found as well. It seems the Slovakian Ukrainian border is controlled hermetically. Just like in other places at the border are the financial costs for this security enormously and contradict with the conditions in centres of temporary residence. Moreover the access to legal procedures is minimal. Formally migrants have the right to request for asylum. However their chance of getting approved is very low. Migrants entering the EU via a “safe third-country” (such as Ukraine) have to go back to this country. By means of the ENP the EU is completely surrounded by safe third countries. Those migrants will be sent back to Ukraine waiting for their deportation. This can explain why the EU is particularly interested in creating detention facilities in their neighbourhood. One could argue the sphere of influence of the EU is getting beyond its own borders. The slogan of the EU border and migration policy is: *Europe as a space of freedom, security and justice*. For who is Europe a space of freedom, security and justice? Apparently people who are not able to enter the EU are not included in this space.

Next to migrants, the border has a significance impact on people living in this border region as well. First of all the border is a barrier in the land as the waiting times to cross the border are varying from two up to seven-eight hours on peak hours, lorries excluded. This waiting at the border is being seen by the inhabitants of the borderlands as the biggest discomfort. The difference in price level is an important issue for people to profit from. The introduction of the border regime had a negative impact on the local economy. The average turnover went down, especially after the closure of the border for pedestrians. There are no local taxes collected from people travelling in the borderland. Moreover the large amount of border traffic increases the costs for example cleaning the streets and controlling criminality. The introduction of a monitoring system in the villages to combat cross border crime is suggested by the local municipalities. Illegal migrants and border police cause also damages in the environment such as crop damages. There is no sufficient cooperation between local and border crossing authorities. The infrastructure in the border area is not sufficient as there are no public toilets and a lack of shops and restaurants. Border villages are expected to benefit from ENP activities, but do not. Religious travellers such as priests are treated with more respect at the border. Religion could form a bridge between both sides of the border. A share of the group "business travellers" still seem to bribe border officers with small amounts of money in order to cross the border faster. Bribing does not occur at a large scale as it used too according to Buzalka and Benč (2007, p. 13).

Note from my logbook:

After having the Slovakian border crossed I continue my way to Kosice. Kosice is the second largest city of Slovakia. It is located around 90 kilometres from the border. The most important reason to visit Kosice is a contact (the Carpathian Foundation) I have there. The Carpathian Foundation is a network functioning in five border regions, supporting the development of multi ethnic communities and the encouraging of local partnerships. I visit the Slovakian branch in Kosice and the Ukrainian branch in Uzhgorod of the project. Both local representatives share there is almost no cross border cooperation at all. The Ukrainian representative tells that the bureaucracy to visit Slovakia is enormously. There is no clear information from the Slovakian consulate in Uzhgorod about which documents are needed in order to obtain a visa. It is common people have to come back several times to the consulate to hand over the right documents which are not listed anywhere. There is a more flexible visa policy up to 50 km across the border. However on the Slovakian side of the border there are no big cities located within 50 kilometres from the border. The large city Kosice is for instance located around 90 kilometres from the border. The functionality of this opportunity is questionable. Furthermore the Slovakian Carpathian Foundation department receives financial EU support where the Ukrainian does not. Another surprising issue is the denial of problems with the Roma minority in eastern Slovakia by the Slovakian Carpathian Foundation representative. There are no projects being initiated concerning this item.

The number of public transport connections between Slovakia and Ukraine is another indication for the barrier which the EU border is in this region. Only three times a day, a one wagon long train is driving from Slovak border village Cierna nad Tisou to Ukrainian border village Chop and vice versa. Within both border regions itself the number of transport

connections is much higher. Almost all of the transport “stops” at the border and there are only a few possibilities a day to cross the border. There is a lack of demand of cross border transport in this region, the external EU border and its travel restrictions being debit to this. The lack of cross border transport could be applicable to all of the EU border regions.

4.5.3 Cultures separated at the Hungarian Ukrainian border

The Hungarian Ukrainian border region can be called “Transcarpathia” historically. During the last century, the location of this border changed many times. Some citizens, who lived in the same place, belonged to the territory of Austria-Hungary (until 1920), Czechoslovakia (1920-1939), Hungary (1939-1944), USSR (1944-1991) and now Ukraine. As a result of this, a big minority lives in Transcarpathian Ukraine with a Hungarian nationality. In the Transcarpathian capital Uzhgorod many street names and signs are mentioned in Hungarian as well. The EU accession had a great impact on the travel possibilities for Hungarian Diaspora living in Ukraine, who wants to visit Hungary. In 2004 the number of Ukrainians entering Hungary declined from 255.000 to 117.000, which is 54% less (Dimitrovova, 2007: 113). This visa rules are based on fear and in order to prevent illegal migration and other forms of cross border criminality. The result of this fear is a decline of mobility and freedom in the Hungarian Ukrainian borderland.



Picture 4.5.4: Hungarian language in Uzhgorod (Ukraine)

Besides the difference in travel possibilities, the difference in price level is substantial between the two countries. This causes cigarette, petrol and alcohol trade on a small scale. This happens mostly on a semi legal base. Both border regions can be defined as both two underdeveloped areas. There is poor infrastructure, negative demographic processes, high unemployment rates, lack of foreign capital etc. (Balcsok, et al. 2005: 51). After 1989, the amount of cross border traffic was largely dependent on national policies related to taxes. There was a high peak of personal traffic in 1995 when it was very profitable to export used Soviet cars to Ukraine as they could be brought to Ukraine tax-free. From there on they were used “temporarily” in Hungary. After the reintroduction of taxes the amount of border traffic shrunk with 70% until 1998. Nowadays, fuel prices in Hungary are two times higher than in Hungary. After accession to the EU the amount of border crossings increased but the restrictions remained the same or became even stricter. Because of the EU visa regime it is difficult for Ukrainians to enter Hungary. Most of the fuel “traders” are Hungarians. The

effects of (multi) national policies are clearly visible as the amount of cross border traffic is relatively low.

Apart from the current difficult situation, it has never been attractive to live in the Ukrainian part of this borderland. During the USSR the region was located at the outer edges. The location of the region gained importance after Ukrainian independence. Hungary became a source of income for the Ukrainian people as illustrated by the car trade around 1995. However, for the Hungarian people it can be seen as a disadvantage. The high amount of traffic, poor accessibility and too few investors with a strong financial base do not contribute to an attractive region (Balcsok, et al. 2005: 57). In a 2002 survey 60% of the Hungarian respondents did not see any benefit of living in this border area. The Ukrainian population is more positive and only 25% of them do not see any benefit of living close to Hungary. The creation of a Carpathian Euroregion (Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania) was not very successful, as local communities are less interested in cross border cooperation than politicians, which suffer under the high bureaucratic character of cross border cooperation. The EU is strongly stimulating cross border governance with the forecast that economical and social development of these disadvantaged border regions will spill over to other sectors and will reduce the significance of the existing borders. Remarkable here is the contradiction within EU thinking: on the one hand travel restrictions are imposed and a border is being erected, on the other hand the EU wants cross border cooperation.

4.5.4 Conclusion

The Slovakian Ukrainian part of the external EU border is completely monitored and controlled. The EU is willing to control the border completely at all costs. The impacts of the border are mostly negative in the borderlands. Local communities have to deal with the negative effects of the presence of the border and do merely profit from it. Waiting times at the border harden the border crossing procedure apart from the visa regulations.

The Ukrainian Hungarian border is a good example of the arbitrary of the presence of the EU external border. The location of the boundary changed a lot over the centuries in this region and so did the nationality of the people who lived here. Hungarian Diaspora in Ukraine experience practical difficulties when they want to visit relatives in Hungary. The border separates people. The creation of a Euroregion did not lead to the desired result of positive spill over effects across the border.

					Relational		
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Interact.	Trade	Visa
Uzhgorod	Ukraine	117600	-	Land	High	Medium	Local regime
Kosice	Slovakia	234969	-	Land	High	Medium	Local regime

				Transport					Development	
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Uzhgorod	Ukraine	117600	-	Low	Medium	Short	2	1	51	Low
Kosice	Slovakia	234969	-	High	Medium	Short	2	1	81	High

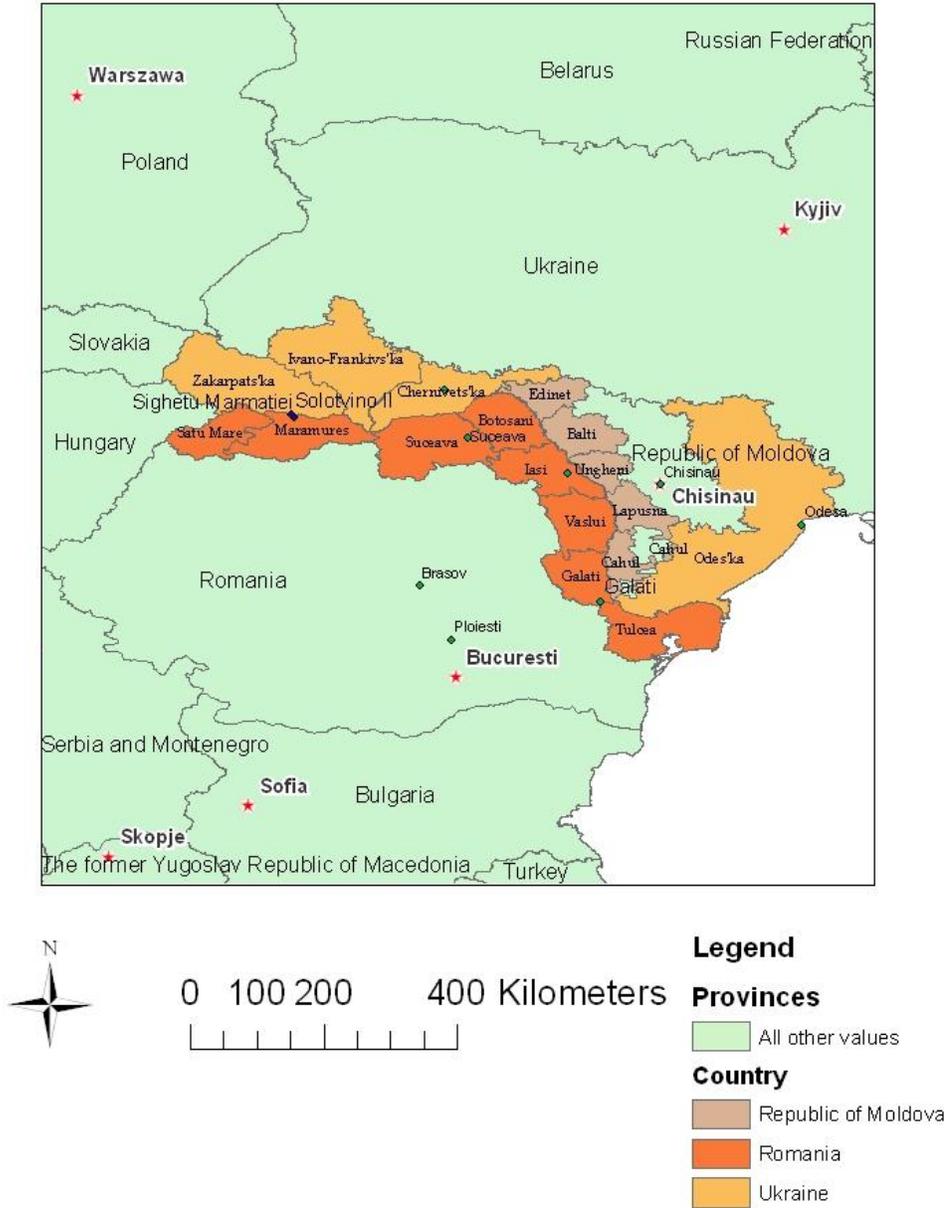
(Bahn.de, 2011)(All-transport.info, 2011) (European Commission, 2011)(Google earth, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

When I leave Uzhgorod I am on the road for two and a half week. For the first time since I reached the EU border, I am going to travel straight eastwards. A Volkswagen sprinter transports me along the rough Ukrainian roads and small bus stations towards the village Solotvino close to the Romanian border.

4.6 The Romanian – Ukrainian border

Romanian - Ukrainian - Moldovan border



Map 4.8: The Romanian – Ukrainian / Moldovan border (author’s editing, 2011)

4.6.1 Profile: The Romanian Ukrainian border:

Border length:	538 km
Capital:	Bucharest (Romania) Kiev (Ukraine)
Border:	River "Tisza", a mountainous area and a "flat" green border
Border history:	Newest external EU border since 2007

Short summary

Romania is bordering Ukraine for 538 kilometres in the north and in the east. This border used to be the distinction between the USSR and Romania. The borders of the current Moldovan, Romanian and Ukrainian nation states have been established after World War II. Most of the EU attention in 1990s was paid to the integration of Polish and Czech borderlands. At the end of this decade the accession of Romania towards the EU was in progress. The attention for the borderlands in this region grew simultaneously (Popescu, 2008: 425). As a result of the complex history in the area there are still a lot of ethnic minorities living in the borderlands. The Soviet census of 1989 counted 134 825 ethnic Romanians and 324 525 Moldovans in Ukraine (Marcu, 2009: 416). Most of this people are living relatively close to the Romanian border. Between the two world wars the historical regions northern Bukovina and southern Bessarabia were part of the Romanian kingdom. Nowadays they are part of Ukraine. In Romania there is a small Ukrainian minority as well (1% of the population). However, the contested history of the borderland never led to violent conflicts or international confrontation.

Cross border cooperation

The EU is executing several cross border programs in the ENP framework in the borderlands, such as Euroregions. The creation of such a region implicated new challenges for the national governments which had limited influence. Secondly, it implicated the aim to lose a minimum of sovereignty in the borderlands. The absence of national influence within the Euroregions, resulted in limited practicing for power that need national support for significant projects such as bridges and ferry terminals (Popescu, 2008: 431). The existence of corruption and crime still prevents Romania to enter the Schengen zone. Smugglers use the border river in combination with innovative techniques to transport cigarettes quickly across the border. At border points small scale bribing commonly exist for the local population.

Border demarcation

The Romanian Ukrainian border consists of two parts, separated by the borderline of the republic Moldova. The western part of the border is largely formed by the river Tisza. The central part of the borderline is running through the forests. On the Romanian side, the river border is being heavily guarded by man force and there are no fences which protect the water side.



Picture 4.6.1: A fence on the Ukrainian side of the border with Romania (Panoramio, 2009)



Picture 4.6.2: Border river Tisza in Romania and border officer mr. McAnoo (author's photo, 2009)

4.6.2 Holes in the ground and cigarettes in the River Tisza

Note from my logbook:

On my trip along the border I make a stop in the small Ukrainian touristic place Solotvino. Similar to other places in this region, Solotvino has been part of many different countries. The settlement has its origin in the Hungarian state which later ended up in the Austro-Hungarian double monarchy. For twelve months from 1919 on, the village belonged to Romania, however the Saint Germaine peace treaty decided on Czechoslovakian control in Solotvino in 1920. Carpatho-Ukraine declared its independence in 1938 and Solotvino was part of this state for a year, until the area was annexed by Hungary in 1939. At the end of the Second World War the Soviet army liberated the area and formatted the Ukrainian SSR. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the place is part of country Ukraine. In Solotvino large salt mines dominate the image of the village. Two of the salt mines are still in use.

The place is famous for two reasons. First of all there are several small lakes with a 30.3% salt concentration in the water. Sinking in the water is impossible. The city advertises as: "Solotvino, salt pearl". The mineral content is the same as the content of the Dead Sea in Israel. When I visited the place, the temperature is high and the holiday season has just started. It is busy in the tiny holiday resorts built around the lakes.



Picture 4.6.3: Salt lake in Solotvino (Dialog Kyiv, 2008)

Another striking issue where Solotvino is “famous” for are the large holes in soil. The two largest have a diameter of around 100 meter, a depth of 20-25 meter, covering about twenty thousand square meters. Several houses have already been “eaten” by the holes, as they become bigger and bigger. The cause of this phenomenon is not clear during the ongoing research of the responsible Ukrainian ministry. At the moment of visiting the terrain was easy accessible and it seemed no precaution measurements were taken.



Picture 4.6.4: Holes in the Ukrainian soil (author's photo, 2009)

Another reason to visit this place is the close presence of the “geographical centre of Europe”. The location is around 30 kilometres to the north, eastwards from Solotvino. The road is located along the border river Tisza. At some places the river looks small and easy to cross. Different warning signs and border markers are positioned along the road. The centre of Europe seems a small touristic stopover. Tour busses and cars stop on their way to visit the small memorial, with folk restaurant and circle of around 25 European flags, the Dutch one missing. Austro-Hungarian scientists have decided on this particular location: “Permanent, precise, eternal place. Very precisely, using a special device made in Austria and Hungary, with the scale of meridians and parallels, the Centre of Europe was determined (information taken from the memorial). A short look on the internet informs about at least ten other places which pretend to be the centre of Europe. Apparently there is within Ukraine and those other place a certain feeling of pride to be in the centre of a space, referred to as Europe.



Picture 4.6.5: The centre of Europe (author's photo, 2009)

Next to physical phenomena there is more interesting to witness in the Ukrainian Romanian borderland. Cigarette smuggling is one of the main concerns of the Romanian border police. Duties on cigarettes were raised in Romania in 2009. Previously Romania was a country of transit in cigarette smuggling. Nowadays it has become a destination in cigarette smuggling. In the first months of 2010 21 million illegal cigarettes have been caught by the Romanian border police (EUbusiness, 2010). This amount had never been reached before. The Romanian border police are implementing all of the Schengen acquis to become a full member in the middle of 2011. This date has been postponed again recently. However, smugglers are innovative. The green border between Ukraine and Romania is used a lot for cigarette smuggling. People from the local population act as guides and earn around 35-50 euro with a successful crossing (EUbusiness, 2010).



Picture 4.6.6: Border crossing Solotvino - Sighetu Marmatiei (author's photo, 2009)

Note from my logbook:

When crossing the border from Solotvino to Sighetu Marmatiei as a pedestrian, an old woman is standing in front of me in the short row to leave Ukraine. The woman puts two Romanian Lei (47 euro cents) in her passports before handing over her passport to the responsible Ukrainian border guard. The purpose of the money is not clear to me. I just hand over my passport. In Sighetu Marmatiei (Romania) I have an appointment with Eugene McAnoo of the Romanian border police. Mister McAnoo denies the presence of any corruption at the Romanian border police. After an introducing presentation by McAnoo we visit several places along the border. While standing together with my guide at an "illegal" spot close to the border, we are discovered within two minutes. In policy it is stated that it should be possible that every point of the border can be reached within five minutes by a border guard. In mountainous area the distance to patrol for a border guard team could be less than a kilometre. Control cannot be tight enough here. A large part of the border is covered by the river Tisza. Eugene McAnoo, border officer, states that smugglers use ropes and boxes on both sides of the river to transport cigarettes within a minute across the river as quick and efficient as on a military manoeuvre. Sometimes there are big catches of the border police. These catches are mostly based on luck, as the criminal networks work very carefully. McAnoo explains more about border control in Romania. In the 1980s he had to measure phenomena on the border river Tisza. If their boat was too close to the Soviet side warning shots were fired. After Ukrainian independence things tend to be more relaxed at the border. Nowadays the control is being increased again; confirming the standards which are requested to become a Schengen member. Nowadays illegal migrants are the main problem for the Romanian border police. Nevertheless, the date

of accession for Romania (and Bulgaria) is being postponed time after time. The rate of crime and corruption is still at an unacceptable level. The last request has been turned down in June 2011 and there is no new date for possible accession. “Ordinary” Romanian citizens I spoke revealed it is a public secret that people are still bribing border officers to take larger amounts of goods across the border or pass the border queue. The latter I noticed on the border crossing between Chernovcy (Ukraine) and Suceava (Romania).



Picture 4.6.7: Romanian and EU flag and man with bicycle in Dutch football shirt in Sighetu Marmatiei (author’s photo, 2009)

4.6.3 Conclusion

The Romanian Ukrainian border has a contested history. This resulted in a large group of Romanian Diaspora living on the other side of the border. There seems to be not much interaction between both sides of the border looking at the little amount of border crossings and peace at the visited border crossing points on the western stretch of the Romanian Ukrainian border. The creation of an EU identity “narrative” is strange when taking this complex history into account and still this is happening. Which cultural reason could justify the inclusion of the one and the exclusion of the other? Almost only tourists come to the Ukrainian place Solotvino to celebrate their holidays. However Romanians are building large villas in the borderland as well. There are at least as much European flags in each village as Romanian flags. The colours of the flags are not very bright

anymore. It seems they have been hanging since the Romanian EU accession in 2007. Within Ukraine just Ukrainian flags can be found, hanging proudly at each governmental building.

					Relational		
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Interact.	Trade	Visa
Solotvino	Ukraine	9700	Sighetu M. (Romania)	River	Low	Medium	Romanian
Sighetu Marmatiei	Romania	44185	Solotvino (Romania)	River	Low	Medium	Free

				Transport					Development	
Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Solotvino	Ukraine	9700	Sighetu M.(Romania)	Low	Low	Short	0	0	51	Low
Sighetu Marmatiei	Romania	44185	Solotvino (Romania)	Medium	Low	Short	0	0	65	High

(Bahn.de, 2011)(All-transport.info, 2011) (European Commission, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

The next part of the trip I continue from Sighetu Marmatei by train again. The first twenty kilometres of the railway line is walking parallel to the border. I can see the other side of the border where I drove in the direction of “the Centre of Europe”. It seems close as just the river Tisza is in between. However the visit to the Romanian border police informed me on how good the border is being controlled and the impossibility of reaching the other side unnoticed. The first hours of the train trip are beautiful through the valleys of Maramures. Geography student Lucian is waiting for me at the train station of Iasi, the second city of Romania, at 6am the next morning.

4.7: The Romanian – Moldovan border

For a map see map 4.8.

4.7.1 Profile: The Romanian – Moldovan border

Border length:	450 km
Capital:	Bucharest (Romania) Chisinau (Moldova)
Border:	Largely formed by river “Prut”
Border history:	EU external border since 2007 Romania will join Schengen when the border infrastructure is “sufficient”

Short introduction

Romania and Moldova are two countries which are highly interconnected. Moldova used to be part of Romania until the border changed several times in the intensive first half of the twentieth century. The river “Prut” is nowadays the border between both states and thus the external border of the EU. The second largest city of Romania, Iasi, is located close to the border and is the biggest city in the north eastern part of Romania, often referred to as “Moldova”. The border regions on both sides of the border belong to the economically weakest of their country. The eastern stripe of Moldova, called “Transnistria” declared itself independent after a short war in 1992. This internationally not recognized nation forms still the biggest political problem of Moldova, a frozen conflict.

Cross border cooperation

Romania only recently joined the EU from 2007, so this is a relatively new EU border and not a full part of Schengen yet. Moldova is being considered by the EU as a good partner in terms of international relations, as the government can be considered as “pro-EU”. Talks are going on for a visa free travel regime between Moldova and the EU. Many Moldovan students graduate from Romanian universities due to bilateral agreements and common language.

The economical situation in Moldova is the worst one in Europe. This is one of the main causes for the exodus of young people out of the country. Remittances are an important income for the country, stimulating the Moldovan Leu as one of the strongest worldwide currencies over the last five years (University of Iasi, 2011).

Border demarcation

The Romanian Moldovan border consists completely out of the River Prut. According to documentation of this borderline, the waterside is freely accessible. However the access to the waterside has been cut off by fences with barbed wire at some places (see picture 4.7.1). Most likely the amount of those fences will increase in order to fulfil the wish to become part of the Schengen area.



Picture 4.7.1: Barbed wire along the river Prut (Panoramio, 2009)

4.7.2 EU citizens living at the other side of the border

The Romanian Moldovan border is around 450 km long and completely demarcated by the river “Prut”. The Moldovan Romanian border was established after the collapse of the USSR in 1989. The historically strong border between Romania and the USSR was “relaxed” after 1991 (Marcu, 2009: 412). However a strong border regime has been reinforced with the accession of Romania to the EU. For the moment Romania and Bulgaria are the last two countries which joined the EU. As mentioned before Romania is still “changing” their border standards towards an EU level. Because the cultural and historical interconnectedness between Moldova and Romania, various issues took place between Romania and Moldova, as for example many Moldovans are applying for Romanian (EU) passport. This combination has already led to various issues between Romania and Moldova, as for example many Moldovans are applying for a Romanian (EU) passport.

Another important issue within Moldova is the eastern stripe of Moldovan soil. The “country” is called Transnistria and only recognized by non UN-member states South-Ossetia and Abkhazia. The government in the capital Chisinau does not recognize the strip of land as an independent state either. However the region has got its own currency and functioning border police. The European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) was launched to help in the demarcation and control of the Ukrainian Moldovan border where the Transnistrian border is located. This border stretch is the most “criminalized” border in Eastern Europe. The Moldovan,

partly Transnistrian - Ukrainian border is a land border and hard to demarcate. By means of the EU the “level” of the border should be upgraded from post-Soviet towards European standards. The border should be completely “instituted”. The process of border demarcation has been postponed several times as the Transnistrian government wanted to participate in the process. Recognizing this party in the process would practically mean recognizing the Transnistrian republic. Demarcation has been started since March 2010, on the Ukrainian side of the border with a neutral stance from the Transnistrian side. If the EUBAM will be completed this will be the first post Soviet border which will be demarcated and instituted towards a higher level of control. However several sources are still sceptical about the level of border demarcation.

Despite the EU's EUBAM monitoring mission, Moldova remains extremely vulnerable to illegal trafficking beyond official border crossing points, from commodities like cognac to high-end cars, and even to human beings.

(Getmanchuk, 2010)

Actual talks over a visa free travel regime between Moldova and the EU can explain why the EU already several years ago started to “help” at the Moldovan Ukrainian border. A porous border in the east of Moldova would mean a whole in the strictly controlled eastern EU border. Concerning EU – Moldova relations, scholars are surprised on the little impact the ENP has in Moldova and the relatively small amount of progress which is being made in the adopting of “EU’s norms and standards” (Bosse, 2010: 1292).

The EU accession of Romania has led to visa restrictions for Moldovan people to visit Romania. Many Moldovan citizens have familiar ties with Romanian people or are ethnically Romanian. This resulted in long queues for the Romanian embassy in Chisinau. Around 300.000 – 500.000 of the 4.4 million Moldovan citizens have a Romanian passport (Soitu and Soitu, 2010: 492). Moldovan citizens do not need a visa in this way to enter the neighbouring country and the rest of the EU. As a reaction to this the Moldovan government issued a visa policy for Romanian people visiting Moldova as well. By doing this they were protesting against the “*fomenting violence and undermining the state by sponsoring anti-government riots in Moldova in early April 2009*” (Joshi, 2009). However other EU nationalities do not need a visa. The Romanian government did not appreciate this measurement as they always have been supporting Moldova.



Map 4.9: Transnistria (Ired, 2006)

Note from my logbook:

Iasi is the second largest city of Romania with around 320.000 inhabitants and located around 30 kilometres from the Moldovan border. In this place I have a meeting with Mr. Laurentiu Burlacu at the office of "Romanian – Ukrainian – Republic of Moldova – cross border cooperation". The budget for the period of 2007 – 2013 is €138 million euro, for 91% financed by the EU. Burlacu tells me there are lot of projects in Romania and being bilaterally financed by this institution. All projects have to be monitored at least once in three months. At the moment of visiting Romanian citizens needed a visa to enter Moldova, creating increasing difficulties to visit the projects on the Moldovan side on the border and vice versa. Ironically enough I did not need a visa and could enter Moldova several days later without any problem. The possibilities for cross border cooperation in the Romanian Ukrainian Moldovan borderlands are great, but legal restrictions harden the practice of it.

Later that day I meet with Contiu Soitu and Daniela Soitu, both specialized on the Romanian Moldovan border, at the University of Iasi. They state the Romanian Moldovan border situation is a very interesting and actual issue. The temporary visa issue made Soitu state it is "easier to go to Afghanistan than to the 30 kilometres away nation of Moldova as a Romanian citizen". On the other way around there are long queues in front of the Romanian consulate in Chisinau. Permission to build new Romanian consulates is being denied by the Moldovan authorities. This goes together with the present Moldovan government. The ruling party seems to swift each four years from "Communitistic and pro-Russian" to "Democratic and pro-EU". According to Soitu the disappointment after each four years make people choose another political direction. On a micro level, however, there are Moldovan people working and studying in Romania. Moldovan and Romanian universities have agreements with each other and furthermore a Romanian certificate has more value in the rest of Europe. Later that day someone working in Belgium, tells me the difference between Brussels and Bucharest is smaller than between Bucharest and Chisinau. The borderland is a "fractured" region (Soitu and Soitu, 2010: 491).

I am happy I do not need a Moldovan visa, however not everyone at the local bus station is aware of that, while trying to buy a ticket. First of all my plan was to visit two places at the border in Moldova. The combination of some contact persons in the Moldovan capital Chisinau and my physical condition made me decide to visit the capital instead of two short visits to the smaller cities Ungheni and Cahul. The crossing of the border goes quickly at the quiet border point. The rest of the 100 kilometres are driven on one of the worst roads I had ever witnessed. Signs of directions hardly exist in Moldova, unlike the police which are controlling everywhere. In Chisinau I met a young man who was a trainee for half a year at the EUBAM. He claims the idea behind the EUBAM is good, but the efficiency is very low. He has a sense of feeling the EU wants to make a statement with its presence in the Moldovan borderland, but a lot of money is being wasted in the bureaucracy of the project. Employees work for example relatively short (0.5 – 2 years) on the project, expensive vehicles are being used and the results are not as high as desired. For the mission Transnistria remains a "no go area".

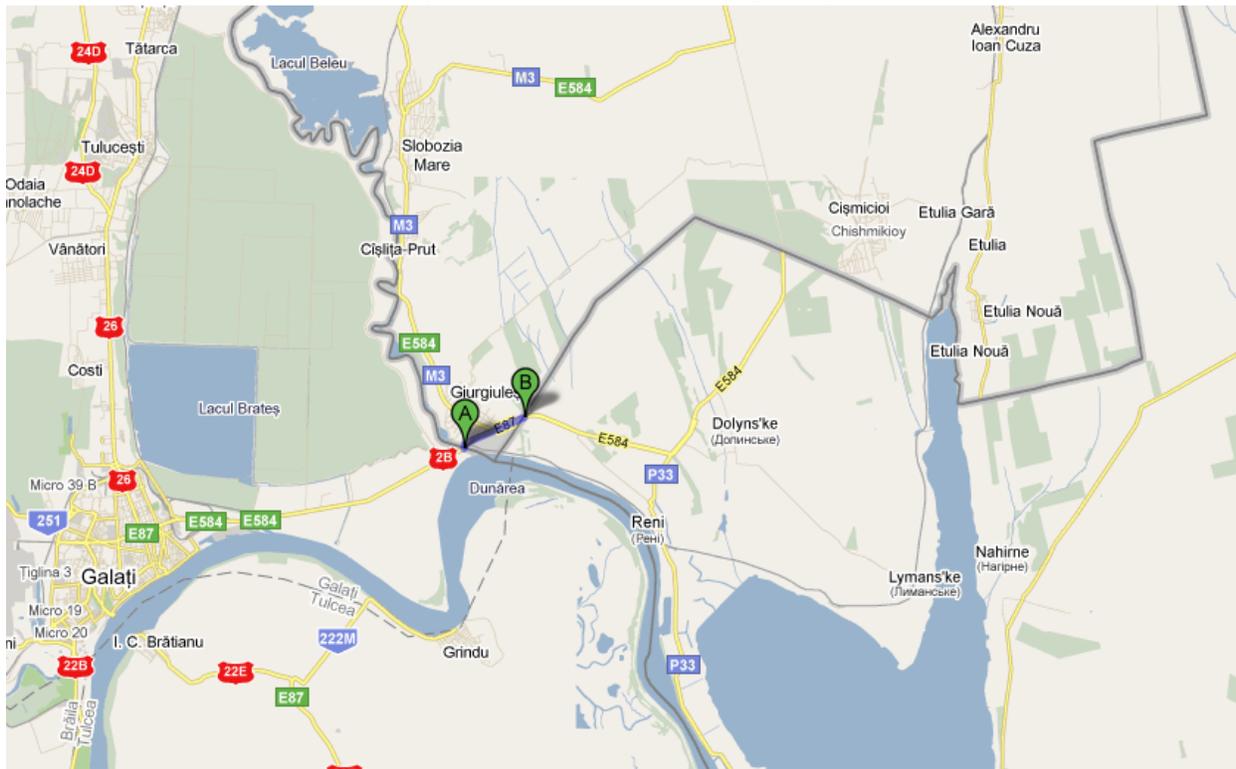


Picture 4.7.2: Moldovan government in Chisinau (author's photo, 2009)

My next appointment in Moldova is at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with Octovian Mohorea which is associate legal officer. The UN is hesitating about closing this branch as the amount of refugees is relatively low in Moldova. The last year there were 131 people of their concern which arrived in Moldova, mostly coming from Chechnya. They end up in Moldova because it is increasingly difficult to end up in Romania, through strict border control. Moldova is considered by the EU as a safe country for asylum seekers and several centres for temporary stay have been created in Moldova by EU money. Mohorea sees the close EU external border emerging into a new wall. Before I leave the building I am allowed to speak for a moment as well with the Dutch Mr. Petrus Wijninga, UNHCR Representative in the Republic of Moldova. He claims to have worked in many places in the world, but never witnessed a country which had less ability to “create” something. Mental differences and ways of working are from a different world in Moldova compared to “Western Europe”. This was the last meeting I had in Chisinau.

From Chisinau I travel back to Galati in Romania which will be the last crossing of the EU border. I easily crossed the border on point A on map 4.4. Romania and Ukraine border each other for a small part southern of Moldova as well. The only way to travel from Romania to Ukraine is through several kilometres on Moldovan ground (stretch A-B on the map). Visa restrictions in July 2009, made the trip from Galati to the southern neighbouring part of

Ukraine much longer. There is no other possibility to cross the Romanian Ukrainian border south of Moldova which implies an 800 kilometres longer trip around Moldova.



Map 4.10: Romanian, Moldovan and Ukrainian border crossing (Google maps, 2011)

Galati has around 300.000 inhabitants and is located close to Ukraine and Moldova. Here I meet with Aljina, who is studying here. She is originally from Okniza in the northern part of Moldova. She explains me you can choose to study in Romania as a Moldovan citizen. However one cannot have any influence on the location where to be placed. That is why she ended up in Galati, a place she does not like too much. However it is important to study and a Romanian certificate is worth more in the rest of the world, compared to a Moldovan one.



Picture 4.7.3: Harbor with patrolling boats at the Danube in Galati (author's photo, 2009)

4.7.3 Conclusion

The Romanian Moldovan borderland is a place where two countries with a partly common history become increasingly separated by the border. There are possibilities for cross border cooperation enabled by the EU, but the practising of it remains difficult. Moldovans cross the border towards Romania on their way to more prosperity. The level of English in Moldova was the highest among all EU neighbours I visited in my opinion. My impression was that, Romanian people who do not have any personal relations with Moldova, look with disregard to Moldova as a country. Moldova is the least developed European country according to the Human Development Index and possesses with the Transnistrian case a frozen conflict of huge size. In Romania old outdoor markets are closing down and new huge malls are becoming more and more dominant in cities with more than 100.000 citizens as Galati, Iasi and Suceava. Romania seems to develop on a much faster pace than their Moldovan neighbours, partly because of EU accession. Bad infrastructure and difference in welfare are two important material factors of the Romanian Moldovan border.

Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Relational		
					Interact.	Trade	Visa
Iasi	Romania	315649	Ungheni (Moldova)	Land	Medium	Low	Free
Chisinau	Moldova	664204	-	-	-	-	Romanian
Galati	Romania	290733	Giurgulesti (Moldova)	River	Medium	Low	Free

Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Transport					Development	
				Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Iasi	Romania	315649	Ungheni (Moldova)	Medium	Low	Short	8	1	77	High
Chisinau	Moldova	664204	-	Low	-	-	-	-	138	High
Galati	Romania	290733	Giurgiuilesti (Moldova)	Low	Low	Short	0	1	73	High

(Bahn.de, 2011)(All-transport.info, 2011) (European Commission, 2011)(Google earth, 2011)

Note from my logbook:

After a very interesting trip for a month I have to go home again. The two different queues, one for EU citizens and one for non EU citizens, at the airport of Bucharest remind on the current situation we are living in. The separating effect of the EU border is visible within EU space as well. After the usage of the “fast” queue I can enter my plane and end my one month trip along the eastern external border of the EU. The conclusions of my trip and the characteristics of the places visited will be described in the final paragraph of this chapter.

4.8 Conclusion

Borders are spaces of interaction and are more than just lines of demarcation. This paragraph will connect my journey through borderlands to the earlier chapters and will review the values of each of the different indicators.

The journey though the borderlands of the EU and non EU gave me a good insight in the materiality of the border. Several kilometres of geographical difference can implicate a different life and different institutional possibilities. First of all it is important to reflect on the second chapter where the construction of the border has been explained. The border has nothing natural from itself and this is the starting point from where the phenomenon “border” can be denaturalized. The border is present in the borderland as a result of human behaviour. The creation of “soft borders” in people’s minds has been described in paragraph 2.3. In this chapter I have explored the “hard border”.

This borderline has been created in space. The way the border **physically** has been **demarcated** differs along the whole eastern external border. Almost everywhere, the borderline is visible on satellite images as a certain amount of meters around the land border where the vegetation has been removed. This no-man’s-land is often protected off by fences and those fences are being guarded by the respective national border authorities. Between those fences there is often a stripe of well kept sand where footprints can be easily recognized. The former Soviet countries seem to lean on old, however functional border infrastructure such as watchtowers. The presence of watchtowers is not depending on the physical type of border. For example, I found photo material of a Russian watchtower near the Peipsi Lake on the Estonian Russian border (picture 4.3.1), as at the Ukrainian land border (picture 4.4.1). Towers are less visible on the EU side where new control techniques are being used increasingly such as thermo sensors at the Slovakian border. These thermo sensors can record all human movement which makes the border stretch completely controlled. Border police in the close environment reacts to signals from a control room and catches the persons earlier caught digitally. This makes the southern 50 kilometres stretch of the Slovakian – Ukrainian border the most innovative controlled border. It would not surprise me if within a limited amount of time more stretches of the EU border will be controlled in this way.

Nowadays, the resources and political will within the EU is enormous to optimize control at the external borders. The fence at the EU side of this small zone of no-man's-land is freshly painted, around two meters high, often green and mostly decorated with cameras. This fence gives glance to the mostly barren infrastructure in the geographical ends of the EU. The railway line from the Polish border towards the first Polish train station has completely been demarcated by this infamous good looking fence as well. In this way the borderline is being expanded into land, practically enlarging the length of the border in this way.

The places which I have visited showed a certain amount of uniformity of border demarcation. However the physical characteristics of the place where the line has been drawn influence this image as well. The watersides of several "border rivers" are not accessible and cut off by fences with barbed wire. At other places border stones which demarcate each kilometre can be found at the water side but the entering of the water is very easy. The crossing of the river often looks easy as well; however cameras are increasingly taking over the patrolling function of the border police. The physical type of border has been summarized together with other aspects of the places visited in figure 4.3.

Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Physique	Relational		
					Interact.	Trade	Visa
Terespol	Poland	6002	Brest (Belarus)	River	Low	Low	Belarusian
Brest	Belarus	290000	Terespol (Poland)	River	Low	Low	Schengen
Svetogorsk	Russia	15500	Imatra (Finland)	Land	Low	Medium	Schengen
Ivangorod	Russia	11206	Narva (Estonia)	River	Medium	High	Schengen
Narva	Estonia	67144	Ivangorod (Russia)	River	High	High	Russian
Przemysl	Poland	67847	Lviv (Ukraine)	Land	High	High	Free
Lviv	Ukraine	732818	Przemysl (Poland)	Land	High	High	Local regime
Uzhgorod	Ukraine	117600	-	Land	High	Medium	Local regime
Kosice	Slovakia	234969	-	Land	High	Medium	Local regime
Solotvino	Ukraine	9700	Sighetu M. (Romania)	River	Low	Medium	Romanian
Sighetu Marmatiei	Romania	44185	Solotvino (Romania)	River	Low	Medium	Free
Iasi	Romania	315649	Ungheni (Moldova)	Land	Medium	Low	Free
Chisinau	Moldova	664204	-	-	-	-	Romanian
Galati	Romania	290733	Giurgulesti (Moldova)	River	Medium	Low	Free

Place visited	Country	Population	Direct neighbour	Transport					Development	
				Infrastr.	Transit	Waiting	Local	Interl.	GDP	English
Terespól	Poland	6002	Brest (Belarus)	Medium	High	Medium	3	4	58	Low
Brest	Belarus	290000	Terespól (Poland)	Medium	High	Medium	3	4	94	Medium
Svetogorsk	Russia	15500	Imatra (Finland)	Low	Medium	Short	0	0	55	Low
Ivangorod	Russia	11206	Narva (Estonia)	Low	High	Long	0	7	55	Low
Narva	Estonia	67144	Ivangorod (Russia)	High	High	Long	0	7	60	High
Przemysl	Poland	67847	Lviv (Ukraine)	Medium	High	Medium	7	5	58	Medium
Lviv	Ukraine	732818	Przemysl (Poland)	Low	High	Long	5	7	71	Medium
Uzhgorod	Ukraine	117600	-	Low	Medium	Short	2	1	51	Low
Kosice	Slovakia	234969	-	High	Medium	Short	2	1	81	High
Solotvino	Ukraine	9700	Sighetu M.(Romania)	Low	Low	Short	0	0	51	Low
Sighetu Marmatiei	Romania	44185	Solotvino (Romania)	Medium	Low	Short	0	0	65	High
Iasi	Romania	315649	Ungheni (Moldova)	Medium	Low	Short	8	1	77	High
Chisinau	Moldova	664204	-	Low	-	-	-	-	138	High
Galati	Romania	290733	Giurgiulesti (Moldova)	Low	Low	Short	0	1	73	High

- Physique Type of physical border
Interact. Interaction with the other side of the border
Trade Small cross border trade
Visa Visa policy to visit neighbours for citizens of this place
Infrastr. Conditions of roads in the border region
Transit Transit function of border crossing
Waiting Waiting time for border crossing
Local Local public transport connections across the border per day
Interl. Interlocal public transport connections across the border per day
GDP GDP per capita in percentage of the national average
English Observed level of English

Figure 4.3: Characteristics of the border (author's editing, 2011)

Several of the values are the result of my subjective observations. Nevertheless figure 4.3 shows that the situation at the different border places is different everywhere. Each place visited has its unique (non)relationship with the border and the other side of the border.

The **relation** of one side of the border with its neighbouring side is different everywhere. The level of interaction between both sides of the border is mostly connected to the historical ties between both sides of the border. The relation between Svetogorsk and Imatra is being stimulated by creating projects as “city twins”. The connection between Narva and Ivangorod for example, is much stronger as this used to be one city up to twenty years ago, implying a higher number of ties between both sides of the border, however it is wise to notice that as time is passing by ethnical minorities living on the other side of the border are starting to feel little by little less connected to their motherland. The presence of the specific visa policy seems to influence the relation with the other side of the border. For example there are many people coming from Narva in Estonia to profit from cheaper prices as most of them have a Russian passport or double citizenship. This increases the prices in the Russian border village, affecting the local inhabitants. On other places the interaction seemed relatively low. This has lead for example to frustration for employees of a Ukrainian NGO who find large bureaucratic barriers on their way in obtaining a visa when trying to visit their partner branch 100 kilometres away. A large industrial complex with employment options has been created in the Russian borderland (Svetogorsk). This is the only clear example I noticed where a company felt attracted to the relative low salary costs for employees in an EU

neighbouring country. People want to cross to the border if there are cheaper products on the other side of the border. The EU has restricted the amounts of goods to take across the border; nevertheless the economical situation in the border region is such that people are still motivated to wait hours at the border crossings point to buy products which are cheaper on the other side of the border. The relation between both sides of the border can be very much connected to the possible difference in level of development.

The GDP indicator for the **level of development** shows that most of the places at the border are less developed than the average of the country. The only exception above the average is the Moldovan capital Chisinau. This location is however geographically not close to the border. In general, the level of English is the highest in the larger cities. This could be connected with the presence of universities in heavier populated areas. Another argument for the differences in the level of English is that the Cyrillic alphabet is being used in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. Already before my journey the language difference became clear. I tried to make as many appointments with respondents who would speak English. Especially in the smaller places it was hard to find them. The level of development is especially good visible while comparing a certain space to their neighbours. Material aspects (housing quality for example) have different values which indicate the difference in level of development. The quality of infrastructure is another issue which contributes to a possible difference in development and can be connected to transport and the border.

Transport across the external EU border has a lot of impact on local cross border traffic. Control techniques are being intensified which leads to long procedures while crossing the border. Huge traffic queues are visible in the Russian (Ivangorod), Estonian (Narva) and Ukrainian borderland. The border becomes a funnel: The number of places to cross the border is limited which makes each border crossing attract high amounts of traffic which causes congestion in combination with the slow pace of the border checks. This issue has lower priority on the political agenda than the efficient use of the border as an ordering mechanism. Local administrations in the border area do not receive extra taxes from people using infrastructure at border crossing points, but have higher costs due to higher crime rates and cleaning costs (Buzalka and Benc, 2007: 12). It appears the border infrastructure improved in a way of quality of control rather than in the speed of controls. Pääbo and Pihlak (2008) monitored several land border crossing points on the eastern external EU border. They found the majority of border crossers are citizens of both countries on the border (2008: 13). The main reasons to cross the border are trade, work abroad or other business activities. A small share travels to the other side for family visits, shopping or touristic reasons. Especially those last reasons point out that the strong regional links are based on historical ties and economic interdependence between neighbouring countries (Pääbo and Pihlak, 2008: 14). The main conclusion of their research is that: "*with regard to the external EU border, attention should be paid not only to security, but also to quality of services and conditions at border-crossing points.*" The following main problems are occurring on EU's border crossing points:

- *Infrastructure of border-crossing points*
- *Communication: access to information about border-crossing procedures and communication between travellers and border staff*
- *Cooperation between border authorities, local municipalities and state authorities (also with the non-EU side)*

These problems result in problems in the following areas:

- *The formation of queues.*
- *Insufficient application of non-discrimination rules*
- *Corruption practices*

(Pääbo and Pihlak, 2008: 14)

The information given by Pääbo and Pihlak (2008) is emphasizing the issue of corruption at EU's external borders differently than the EU. The EU notes that the level of corruption should be decreased over the years as the EU has developed several programs to fight corruption. Nevertheless these corruption practices are still happening at the border according to people interviewed in several studies and my own experiences.

Public transport across the border is a marginal phenomenon. Along the whole stretch of the EU border the number of trains and busses crossing the border is very limited. The Terespol and Brest border crossing has relatively a lot of traffic from the Berlin – Warsaw – Minsk – Moscow transport corridor. A mechanical operation of 1.5-2 hours is necessary for railroad traffic on this corridor to let the train use the other gauge size on the other side of the border. The difference in gauge is between all former Soviet states and the rest of Europe, which means that Lithuania and Poland also have to deal with this. It is an interesting phenomenon as well that the amount of border crossings is scarce in a way that local cross border traffic and international traffic have to use the same border crossing facilities while having very different priorities.

The amount of border crossings inside the EU is significantly higher than between the EU and its neighbours. Still it is impossible to generalize all national external borders because the characteristics of each place are very different as has been shown in figure 4.3.

An understanding of borderlands as dynamic social processes (both active and passive) has policy relevance, for human organisations and power centres alike will have to deal with the moving phenomenon and need to have full appreciation of it to participate in it and react to it appropriately. The prime lesson for policy is to appreciate the changing nature of borderlands rather than trying to conceive of them or impose on them a fixed reality. Sharp impressions create their own reactions, making positions even more difficult and starting new dynamics.

(Zartman, 2010: 245)

The materiality visible at the border is different everywhere and this is an ever changing phenomenon. The complex history of all EU border regions has lead to situations which are hard to generalize. Figure 4.3 shows little uniformity on the several fields of interest in my research. The low level of development compared to the centre of the countries is one of the little aspects where I can generalize my cases. This low level of development could receive an impulse of the close presence of the border. However, most of the positive side effects of the border have been marginalized by imposing restrictions on cross border trade. According to sources I spoke to, large scale smuggling has always been happening and is still occurring, however one is fighting those phenomena as well. The imposing of restrictions however, affects mostly the relatively small amount of people who traded across the eastern external EU border on a local scale. Forms and levels of interaction are just like transport issues different everywhere. The border is a space which is being produced and reproduced. The eastern external border of the EU is in many fields as different as there are similarities and differences between institutional regions within the EU. An important difference between the both is the presence of the external EU border which imposes a

materiality on the borderlands. This present materiality has as much different forms as there are places at the border. One of the few things to generalize is that there is little to generalize concerning materiality at the eastern external border of the EU.

5. Conclusion

I have explored the materiality of the border. In this way I obtained my central goal to explore the characteristics of the eastern external border of the EU by looking at representations and actual presence at the border and its close surroundings from own experience and relevant literature. The materiality of the border differs along the whole stretch of the border and cannot be generalized.

Each place along the border is unique and has its own special relationship with the border. The fact that this relationship exists is already indicating the importance of the border. The materiality of the border, which is a manually produced phenomenon, is visible in different shapes and forms. Some of those shapes and forms are present at many places; others are exclusive at a single place. These differences have their roots in history. The borders, most of them defined after the Second World War, are the external border of the EU nowadays. These borders are based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The breakup of the Soviet Union after 1989 has been the start for the improvement of relations in the borderlands of the actual external EU border. From that moment, cross border trade and interaction grew in importance during the nineties of the previous century. However, the approaching EU membership disabled this openness and it resulted in the contradicting phase in which the borderlands are now. On the one hand, the EU fears streams of migrants and closes down its borders, but on the other hand it is stimulating cross border governance on a local scale. The residents of the border area have to deal with the EU policy the European citizens have chosen for. However, also small advantages of the presence of the border do exist. Price differences across the border are still beneficial in several fields, however not as much as it used to be.

In this thesis I focused on one specific level: The materiality of the eastern external border of the EU. The external borders of the EU became the only point of control in the EU, as internal border control has been removed in order to create an area with the freedom of movement for people, goods and money. All this resulted in an increased importance of the external borders of the EU. It is relevant to examine this border, as the border is the technical instrument of EU border policies. Political instability in other parts of the world causes streams of migrants towards the EU, which puts pressure on the functioning of the EU border mechanism. The policies concerning the eastern external border affect residents of the EU and non-EU borderlands, as the influence of the EU is becoming more and more dominant in those borderlands. This shows an important difference between being part of EU and “merely” being part of the European continent.

The term Europe is often being mixed up with the term EU, being something different, leaving the question aside where the exact borders of Europe are. There are numerous representations of Europe on maps. Each map can have its own “truth” and are heavily based on the (political) aim of the map. The geographical location of the eastern external border of the EU however is clear. This does not leave aside the question of the existence of borders.

Borders, boundaries and frontiers are the results of political manifestations. Whereas a boundary merely is a cartographic line of demarcation, a frontier is “more”. A frontier indicates the beginning

of a state and could be the separation between different empires and/or societies. Borders are social constructs which are being produced and reproduced in social practices and discourses. The last decades borders are becoming more than just a line of demarcation and are being interpreted within the light of bordering, debordering and rebordering. A border is becoming a verb or a process as it does not have an own nature. However borders are being perceived according to the maps illustrated in newspapers and atlases. A border is not a border. The line on the map is something different than the materiality of a border in space. The word "border" is replacing the reality, being a discourse on the form of how a border is being represented. This means that "the reality of a border then is created by the meaning that is attached to it" (Houtum van, 2010b: 127). Borders are being reproduced by our own language discourses and become in this way a manifestation of a copy, a series without end. Moreover those discourses are being justified by narratives. Identities are being created in order to create a difference between "us" and "them" and the legitimating to keep "them" out. On one hand the EU is trying to release the importance of national identity while on the other hand several initiatives stimulate the creation of an EU identity. There is no pure European identity as there is a lack of common culture and history. The "best" narrative in order to create an EU identity is the cruel past of the Second World War and the prevention of future wars. Along with the creation of the narratives on who "we" are, the "Others" are becoming more and more excluded. Borders and identities are historically connected and are being reproduced over the time. Economic and developing differences are easy to observe within the different nation states of Europe. The least developed European countries are not a part of the EU, not answering the question whether this is a cause or result. The current composition of the EU cannot be justified by cultural reasons as religion and ethnicity for example are crossing EU's and Europe's borders. The external EU border has no cultural base. It symbolizes the distinction between differences levels of development: the EU and non EU. The creation of the border, which is a result of human intervention, is important to take into account while looking at the materiality of the border. Identity discourses are being used for the creation of borders, the legitimating of the distinction between "us" of and "them" which causes material effects in the borderlands. The identity argument is implemented in different policy fields, some of them influencing the materiality of the eastern external border of the EU.

The current image of the border is a result of different developments and policy over the years. The border can have different geostrategical functions (Walters, 2004) where a specific image is being derived from. Within the EU a space without internal border control has been created. This is contradicting with the strict external border policy of the EU. Apart from external borders, passport control takes place at airports as well, making the physical border not the only place of entrance of the EU. The new EU member states (since 2004 and 2007) could be seen in the period between 1989 and their accession as "buffer states" or "March". These states used to form a zone between the "empires" Western Europe and Russia. Nowadays, the March is the borderline itself. The best example of this can be found at the Finnish Russian border. It is forbidden to be within three kilometres from the border with Russia, which means a March is being created in this way. It is a piece of land between two countries. The eastern external border of the EU moved eastwards over the years. This could be compared with the view of a colonial frontier. The empire (EU) is

incorporating new territories as long as they are meeting the (security) standards of the empire. However, I would argue that the external border of the EU cannot be derived to a uniform way of geopolitical border use. Therefore the local aspect of the border which I am focusing on would be neglected; however it indicates the ambiguity and complexity of the border. Whereas the border is a line where institutional regions begin and end, people are living in this space where this line has been produced and are being subjected to the presence of this constructed line. The most important example of this geopolitical function of the border is the Schengen acquis, which has significant influence on the construction of the border.

The creation of the Schengen area is interwoven with the development of the EU. The Schengen acquis is one of the most important "European projects". Internal border control between the Schengen states has been removed which created an area with freedom of movement of goods, labour and people. The internal openness raises the importance of the external EU border. The eastern external EU border has been at its current location since 1995 (Finland), 2004 (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary) and 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria). New control techniques and a special multinational border control office (Frontex) should take care of the control of EU's external borders. This strong control leads to desperate tries of migrants to enter the EU. The increasing budget of Frontex is rising along with the migrant deaths as a result of EU policy. Large shares of different budgets are connected to border management, which makes it difficult to summarize the exact costs of border control resulting in the contemporary border landscape. The control of the border has more importance for the EU than ethical issues in the borderlands of the EU and its neighbours. The EU has common policies for all its member states. This causes difficulties in several cases for people living in the border area, such as farmers using old traditions. The EU is disabling the continuation of the production in these traditional ways. Many objects, such as train stations, churches or roads which are being renovated are financed with EU money. These signs are lacking on the non-EU side of the border. However, the EU is trying to develop peripheral regions; scholars argue that it is not leading to the expected effect (e.g. Bachtler & McMaster, 2008). Moreover the difference with the other side of the border, being non-EU is already huge and will increase in this way.

The location of the border is the result of the line which gradually has been developed by human intervention. From here on, an institutional space has been created, comprising the ones who are on the map within the border and excluding the ones who are out. Relationships with the border and the other side of the border are different along the whole border and it will be a time consuming operation to describe all the relations of each specific place along the borderlines. Multinational decision making has developed the EU into what it is nowadays. Residents of the borderlands have become somehow the "victim" of processes which receive more political priority. If Russia, Belarus, Ukraine or Moldova would join the EU, the situation would change rapidly again. The green painted fence would not be as flourishing anymore as it is nowadays. A new fence will have to be painted somewhere more to the east. EU flags will appear in new EU space in such a way as they have been visible in Romania since 2007. Several years later the bright flags lost their colours but are still permanently visible everywhere in the country.



Picture 5.1: Flags at train station Sighetu Marmatiei (author's photo, 2009)

In my research I have produced an insight in the materiality of the border. I have summarized different values and compared in this way the places visited by me at the border. By travelling through the borderlands of the EU and the EU neighbours, it is possible to see and experience the different material representations of the border intensively. All places are unique and have their own history. The close border presence is a factor which is the same for all places visited. Another common fact is that the border regions are not the economic strongest of their country.

The image of the fence at the border has common features, but differs everywhere. The EU side of the border has been “branded” by the often returning freshly painted fence. This fence is visible at more places than the borderline itself. Railroads which cross the border have been demarcated as well. In this way the length of the border is being enlarged. The non-EU side of the border is partly still leaning on “old-Soviet infrastructure”. Watchtowers and man force dominate the borderline. The borderline itself is often recognizable on satellite images. Vegetation at the geographical place of the line has been removed and replaced with a no-man’s-land of sand surrounded by fences which eases the control process. Each side of this no-man’s-land is being controlled by the responsible national authority. Cameras have been connected to a lot of places at the EU side of the border. New control techniques will be added to or even replace the function of the border police. However there are differences remaining on the image of the fence which has been shown on pictures in chapter four. Besides these differences, there are also differences between controlling a flat land border and controlling a mountainous or river border. Also the amount of budget of Frontex will influence the image of the fence at the border. It has increased over the years and I expect this will be conceptualized in the image of the fence. A lot of money is being invested in the fence. On the contrary, the rest of the infrastructure in most of the border regions is not as modern. This is because mostly little developed regions can be found along the eastern external EU border.

When travelling from one place to another the contrast between the centre of a country and the periphery, border regions, are first of all recognizable in the level and amount of infrastructure and industry. The border regions are located generally in low populated agricultural regions. Local populations used to profit from the border presence in the nineties as small cross border trade was lucrative at that time. Nowadays, restrictions on the amount of goods to take across the border are becoming stricter and crossing the border takes more time. I am not stimulating semi legal professions, however I would argue this was one of the few positive side effects of the presence of the border for local populations. Today the external EU border has become a place of selection, easy to pass for the ones with the right passport or permits and a death end for the ones without the correct passport or resources to obtain the right documents. Cultural ties across the external border of the EU become less over the years due to the practical difficulties to visit the other side. Diaspora living on the other side of the border contributes more to a feeling “together” than the EU cross border initiative of the Euroregion on a cultural basis. The use of Hungarian language at signs in public Ukrainian places is a good material example of the presence and separating function of the border. Visa policy influences the opportunities to travel to the other side of the border. Local communities face negative effects such as extra cleaning costs and higher crime rates. There are no extra tax incomes to catch up for this.

Maps of (rail) roads will show most of the infrastructure “stops” at the border. The eastern external EU border is in this way an end or a start of the EU space and non EU space. The limited amount of border crossing often goes hand in hand with the material aspect of long queues in the borderland. I observed those queues on the EU side of the border (Estonia for example) as in non EU space (Ukraine for example). The EU finances institutions to cross the border as well. The “Transborder Information Centre Brest – Biala Podlaska – contacts without borders” is an interesting organization. The possibilities to cross and trade across the border between Poland and Belarus have been reduced significantly when Poland was on its route to EU accession. After this closing down of the border the EU is stimulating cross border entrepreneurship by means of this centre. The EU deployed a mission (EUBAM) towards the Moldovan Ukrainian border as well. These are two examples where the EU is showing its political interest across the border; however the closing down of the border cannot be made up with those kinds of initiatives. Moreover a former employee of the EUBAM criticizes the lack of efficiency of the mission and agrees to the assumption the EU is merely showing its political will.

I can conclude from my trip that the eastern external EU border is a heterogeneous space which is alive, being lived and full of material examples of the border. Detention centres, multi ethnic communities, border guards, relative little economic development are just a few examples of the materiality of the eastern external border of the EU. It is impossible to summarize or generalize this materiality as it is different everywhere and the borderlands are nowhere the same. The relation between materiality and the border is a complex and dynamic process which is being produced and reproduced at the same time. The eastern external border of the EU is often represented as a cartographic line on the map between the respective countries. I have tried to denaturalize this line. The line has no natural existence and is the result of human behaviour and discourses. Policy decisions on a multinational level have large consequences on the materiality of this concrete

external EU border space, making this a border place. The border demarcation has been upgraded from “old” border stones towards “new” fences with modern control techniques. This border infrastructure looks often as the most innovative part of the entire infrastructure at border places. Policy initiatives such as the ENPI show the concern of the EU in their neighbourhood, but are mostly contributing to the field of “border management”, indirectly profitable for the EU itself as well. I would argue that the high political and communal interest in the eastern external border of the EU as policy tool is too dominant compared to the attention the EU has on the material, mostly being negative effects, of the eastern external border of the EU.

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