

# The Hardening and Softening of Borders in Europe

LIMES Final Conference  
Maastricht, StayOkay Hostel  
Friday 27 October 2023



LIMES is a network of 13 PhD candidates from different disciplinary backgrounds, hosted at Maastricht University (NL). Over the past four years, the researchers have been looking into the softening and hardening of borders in Europe. The **Final Conference** of the network will present their research and will reach out to interested academic, political, and cultural audiences. We invite participants to engage with the findings of LIMES and to explore linkages with their own experiences. In doing so, we go beyond traditional conference formats. The conference will be a **playful, creative and interactive** exercise.

Discussions during the day are organized around four panels that approach the topic from different angles:

- **Panel A** focuses on **crossing borders in labour markets**, with a view to transnational mobility of workers, university-to-work transition, and workplace loneliness
- **Panel B** looks at how **cultural and linguistic borders** can be researched, with focus on **young adults and children**, and borders between participants and ethnographers
- **Panel C** discusses how **knowledge, cultures, traditions** and **artistic practices** travel and may both strengthen borders and challenge societies and businesses to adapt.
- **Panel D** focuses on the EU's **normative borders** and how the Union's '**crisis of values**' plays out both at the EU's external borders and internally. The 'Fortress Europe' idea and rule of law conflicts are key.

The four panels offer ample room for exchange. They will include 3-4 PhD candidates from the LIMES network and will be moderated by an eminent scholar or practitioner.

A **keynote speech** and a **concluding roundtable** bring the discussion together. **Creative intermezzos** and a mix & mingle part **transcend borders** of a traditional conference format.

**Join us in Maastricht on 27 October 2023!**

[Register here](#)

Please turn over for further information

## Programme of the day

- 10:00 Welcome / Introduction
- 10:15 Keynote speech:  
Karl-Heinz Lambertz
- 11:00 Break / change of rooms
- 11:15 Parallel sessions A and B
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Parallel sessions C and D
- 15:45 Break / change of rooms
- 16:00 Roundtable: wrapping up
- 17:00 Drinks / Mix & mingle and creative intermezzos
- 18:30 Dinner

**Keynote: The hardening and softening of borders: The case of border regions**



Karl-Heinz Lambertz, former President of the Parliament and former Minister-President of the German-speaking Community in Belgium, former Chair of the EU Committee of the Regions

## What will the four panels focus on?

<p><b>A: Crossing Borders in the Labour Market</b></p> <p>This panel explores the complexities of the labour market and the ways in which borders – both literal and metaphorical – shape its dynamics. It features four PhD researchers focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The development of liberal arts education in the Netherlands and beyond, examining career preparedness and employability of Dutch university college graduates;</li><li>- How the recognition of foreign qualifications influences the careers of migrants;</li><li>- Obstacles to cross-border mobility and the integration of immigrants;</li><li>- The causes of workplace loneliness, the impact of remote work on the experience of loneliness, and strategies for organizations to alleviate employees' feelings of isolation.</li></ul> <p>The panel commences with short presentations by PhD candidates, providing a glimpse into their research. Next, a roundtable discussion will take place, featuring prominent panellists from academia and policy-making. <b>Together, we explore the manifestation of borders in the labour market, unravelling the challenges and opportunities they present.</b></p>	<p><b>B: Embodying borders? Practices of doing ethnographic fieldwork</b></p> <p>In this roundtable, we explore the notion of embodying borders. Each ESR experienced <b>borders in their research in multi-faceted ways: borders with participants, national and international borders, and language borders. How do they shape the research process and outcomes?</b></p> <p>The three PhD candidates on this panel discuss bordering and border processes from an ethnographic perspective. They will deliver short pitches in which they delve into questions of embodiment, doing borders, and hard and soft borders in research practices. Subsequently, the PhD candidates will engage in a dialogue based on their pitches and invite the audience to share questions and experiences.</p>
<p><b>C: Societal transitions and knowledge exchange</b></p> <p>Tacit knowledge, a general understanding that often remains unspoken, creates shared experiences which leave cultural and social traces not unlike muscle memory. This panel discussion will focus on <b>how cultural historians, archivists and other researchers make explicit tacit knowledge and disseminate it in times of technological transition.</b> Questions about how societal changes impact communities and their development and how important actors – be it businesses, governments, poets and writers, artists and archivists – shape them, are the focus of this interdisciplinary panel.</p>	<p><b>D: The EU 'Crisis of Values'</b></p> <p>This panel explores <b>the EU's normative borders, particularly how the crisis of EU values plays out at its hardening external borders and internally along the scars of the old 'East-West Divide.'</b></p> <p>Academics, policy-makers, and civil society representatives discuss the 'Fortress Europe' model of migration management, the rule of law crisis, and the ongoing contestation of human rights in the EU. We will explore how the current migration management model came to define the EU's external borders and how the rule of law crisis affects civil society, while also reviewing how policy-makers have addressed these crises in a variety of ways and what role academics play in the midst of it all.</p> <p>The roundtable begins with brief presentations highlighting LIMES research and engages with academics focused on migration, the rule of law and human rights; as well as policymakers and civil society actors active in these areas.</p>

Please look below for the detailed programme of the day

## Programme of the day

9:30	<b>Arrival and coffee</b>	
10:00	<b>Welcome and presentation of the LIMES booklet</b> Thomas Conzelmann & Sophie Vanhoonacker (LIMES project coordinators)	
10:15	<b>Keynote speech:</b> Karl-Heinz Lambertz The hardening and softening of borders: The case of border regions	
11:00	Coffee break / change of rooms	
11:15	<p><b>Panel A</b> <b>Crossing Borders in the Labour Market</b> Moderator: Renze Kolster (University of Twente)</p> <p><b>Pitches of PhD projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alina Shirshikova: Borders, geographical mobility and educational opportunities</li> <li>- Timo Walz: Workplace loneliness: Mental borders for employees in the future</li> <li>- Saena Chakkar: Qualification recognition and migration: Understanding cross-border careers</li> <li>- Milan Kovačević: Dutch University College graduates and the world of work: Making or breaking borders?</li> </ul> <p><b>Roundtable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theo Bovens (Former Governor of the Province of Limburg)</li> <li>- Renze Kolster (University of Twente)</li> <li>- Saena Chakkar (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Milan Kovačević (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Alina Shirshikova (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Timo Walz (Maastricht University)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Panel B</b> <b>Embodying borders? Practices of doing ethnographic fieldwork</b> Moderator: Lauren Wagner (Maastricht University)</p> <p><b>Pitches of PhD projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maha Naami: Experiencing the borders among North African youth beyond the insider-outsider dichotomy</li> <li>- Cecilia Schenetti: Encountering the borders in doing ethnography among Senegalese youth</li> <li>- Marie Rickert: Understanding the borders in co-creating linguistic ethnographic research with children</li> </ul> <p><b>Roundtable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maha Naami (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Cecilia Schenetti (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Marie Rickert (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Lauren Wagner (Maastricht University)</li> </ul>
13:00	Lunch break	
14:00	<p><b>Panel C</b> <b>Societal transitions and knowledge exchange</b> Moderator: Joop de Jong (Maastricht University)</p> <p><b>Pitches of PhD projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sara Atwater: Does humour have a role in knowledge dissemination and creation?</li> <li>- Tereza Bauer: What role has knowledge creation sharing played in the key societal transitions of recent decades?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Panel D</b> <b>The EU 'crisis of values': Bridging the gap between academics, policy-makers, and civil society</b> Moderator: Matteo Bonelli (Maastricht University)</p> <p><b>Pitches of PhD projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aida Halilovic: The role of EU agencies in the management and guarding of borders</li> <li>- Andreina De Leo: The EU's shifting borders: Scrutinising the externalization of border controls to third countries</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Judith van Puyvelde: Arts and heritage and the process of knowledge construction</li> </ul> <p><b>Roundtable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Celine Huits (Sociaal Historisch Centrum Limburg)</li> <li>- Anthony Manu (Vrije Universiteit Brussels)</li> <li>- Sara Atwater (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Tereza Bauer (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Judith v. Puyvelde (Maastricht University)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Akudo McGee: How Polish liberal civil society contested government standards for the rule of law and human rights</li> </ul> <p><b>Roundtable:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marta Górczyńska (Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights)</li> <li>- Jasper Krommendijk (Radboud University and OurRuleofLaw)</li> <li>- Chris Jones (Statewatch)</li> <li>- Łukasz Szopa (Committee for the Defence of Democracy - KOD)</li> <li>- Andreina De Leo (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Aida Halilovic (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Akudo McGee (Maastricht University and Studio Europa)</li> </ul>
<b>15:45</b>	Coffee break	
<b>16:00</b>	<p><b>Concluding roundtable:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teun Dekker (University College Maastricht)</li> <li>- Karl-Heinz Lambertz (Former Minister-President and Former President of the Parliament, Belgian German-speaking Community; Former Chair, EU Committee of the Regions)</li> <li>- Milan Kovačević (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Maha Naami (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Tereza Bauer (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Andreina de Leo (Maastricht University)</li> <li>- Moderation: Sophie Vanhoonacker (Maastricht University)</li> </ul>	
<b>17:00</b>	<p><b>Mix &amp; mingle</b>  <b>Creative intermezzo:</b> Works by artist Donnie Gerhardus</p>	
<b>18:30</b>	<b>Dinner</b> (for invited participants)	