

Annual Conference of the Working Group Geographical Migration Research of the German Society for Geography

22-23 January 2026 in Esch-Belval, Luxembourg

The annual conference of the Geographical Migration Research working group will take place at the University of Luxembourg from 22-23 January 2026. The topic is '**Borders in migration research - far more than territorial borders?**'.

The temporarily reintroduced border controls, the discussions about the future of the Schengen area and the global rise in nationalism are all evidence of this: Borders are back — politically, in the media and socially. Borders reveal themselves not only as lines, but also as dynamic and conflictual social practices that regulate mobility and supposedly organise affiliation, inclusion, and exclusion.

In geographical migration research, this brings questions of bordering, de-bordering and re-bordering into focus. How, where and by whom are borders drawn, shifted or made permeable? What role do state migration regimes, everyday discrimination and (in)visible exclusion play in these processes? And how can such border formations be researched, analysed and critically questioned?

We invite submissions that address the spatial dimensions of border processes in migration contexts from theoretical, empirical or methodological perspectives. We welcome papers that address borders as material, symbolic and political phenomena at different scales (from local to global). Critical, postcolonial and intersectional perspectives are expressly encouraged.

The 2026 conference will take place in neighbouring Luxembourg, a small yet highly diverse country in the heart of Europe with numerous EU institutions. Nestled between Germany, France and Belgium, Luxembourg is characterised by its border locations and intensive cross-border mobility. With an exceptionally high proportion of people from migrant backgrounds (73.7 % in 2023, STATEC) and a lively multilingualism – with German, French and Luxembourgish as official languages, supplemented by English and Portuguese as important everyday languages – the country offers an exciting environment in which to explore issues related to migration and border geography.

Location:

University of Luxembourg
Maison des Sciences Humaines
11, Porte des Sciences L-4366 Esch-sur-Alzette
Black Box

Registration: <https://forms.office.com/e/GSbPV6HERt?origin=lprLink> (until 18th December)

Programme:

Thursday, 22 January 2026

12.00-13.00 PhD Lunch in MSH in front of the Black Box (for PhDs)

13.00 – 13.20 Registration & Coffee in front of the Black Box (next to the entrance of the building)

13.20 – 13.40 Welcome and Introduction (Birte Nienaber & AK Speakers), Black Box, MSH

Session 1

13.40 – 14.00	Kholoüd Awada: <i>Grenzen auf Papier: Visalisten als Instrumente der Externalisierung</i>
14.00 – 14.20	Hanna Büdenbender: <i>‘Smart’ borders? The US-Mexico border and the EU’s external borders in the Mediterranean in contemporary photography</i>
14.20 – 14.40	Andreas Spaeth: <i>Wirkung von Grenzen in Südosteuropa</i>
14.40 – 15.00	Discussion

15.00 – 15.30 Coffee break

15.30 – 15.50	Philipp Themann: <i>Informelle Wege des Überlebens im Grenzraum: Zivilgesellschaftliche Netzwerke im Schatten des europäischen Grenzregimes</i>
15.50 – 16.10	Jana Bleckmann, Victoria Grau & Tanja Potezica: <i>Postmigrantische Perspektiven auf Peripherisierung & Infrastrukturen der Ankunft</i>
16.10 – 16.30	Oxana Chaika: <i>From War to Borderland: Ukrainian Experiences of Visible and Invisible Borders in Luxembourg</i>
16.30 – 16.50	Discussion

17.00 – 17.40 General Assembly of the Working Group Geographical Migration Research of the German Society for Geography

Black Box, MSH

18.00 – 19.00 Bridge Walk from Belval to Esch

19.00 Dinner in Chiche!

125, Rue de l'Alzette

<https://www.chiche.lu/locations/chiche-l-esch>

Chiche! combines authentic, home-made Lebanese food with social cohesion.

Friday, 23 January 2026

09.00-09.20	Jörg Gretel: <i>Capabilities and Aspirations: Mobile Grenzregime aus tunesischer Perspektive</i>
09.20-09.40	Zekiye Gürün-Üçem, <i>Invisible Borders Within: The Case of Turkish Asylum Seekers in Germany</i>
09.40-10.00	Birte Nienaber & Jutta Bissinger: <i>Crossing Lines: Migration and Bordering in Luxembourg and the EU</i>
10.00-10.20	Discussion

10.20 – 10.40 Coffee break

10.40-11.00	Anas Ansar & Benjamin Etzold: <i>Rerouting the Narratives: Dehomogenising Rohingya Refugee Crisis in the Bangladesh-Myanmar Borderlands</i>
11.00-11.20	Janek von Stebut & Denis Zeković: <i>Narrative als unsichtbare Zugehörigkeitsordnungen – Umkämpfte Grenzziehungen in der lokalen Produktion von Migration</i>
11.20 – 11.40	Mustafa Obaid: <i>Planen für Vielfalt: Entwicklungsinstrumente für offene Städte</i>
11.40 – 12.00	Discussion

12.00 – 13.00 Interactive Session: Borders in migration research - far more than territorial borders?

13.00 – 14.00 Networking Lunch in MSH in front of Black Box