

Letter of introduction

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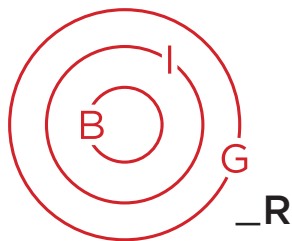
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Letter of Introduction

Dear Readers,

Our much-anticipated 6.2 issue of *Borders in Globalization Review* (*BIG_Review*) is finally here! Leading the issue is a Special Section on the European Union Borders with Ukraine. As always, it is free. It is published Open Access, and printed copies are available and distributed at cost by the University of Victoria's [Bookstore](#). *BIG_Review* is produced on the unceded Indigenous lands of the Łakv'əŋən and WSÁNEĆ peoples, and we are very grateful to live and play on those beautiful lands.

The issue begins with a research article by Ruchika Raina and Firdoos Ahmad Reshi, exploring gender dynamics in the Jammu and Kashmir borderlands through critical analysis, ethnography, and fieldwork interviews. Our Special Section was guest edited with Gyula Ocskay, Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Martin Van der Velde, and Tatiana Shaban, and by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly. It presents six research articles that emerged after a 2023 conference organised by the Association European Border Region and the Hungarian Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives on 'Ukraine on the road to EU integration (reconstruction, cooperation, pre-accession)'. These research works assess coordination and cooperative efforts straddling the borders of the European Union and EU member states with Ukraine at a time of war.

The papers (by scholars Andrzej Jakubowski, Martin Lačný and Jana Michalková, Marija Mendzhul, Tatiana Shaban, and Iryna Yaremak, as well as by professional border managers Julianna Máté, Monika Kolvek, Iveta Kubeková, and Daniela Kolcunová) illustrate the challenging but very promising cross-border reality and various facets of cross-border relations, i.e., partnerships and trade on the eastern borders on the European Union with Ukraine. Because of their focus on democratic and security concerns, regional development and education, healthcare, culture, and energy, the six papers contribute to an under-researched assessment of cross-border integration and relations between the Visegrad counties of the European Union (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) and Ukraine. Collectively, the articles also document the status of the relationships and emerging legal and policy alignments of Ukraine, a candidate-country, with its neighbors and the Union. Indeed, this is key to any European processes of integration. (Note that two additional papers will be published in our winter issue, *BIG_Review* 7.1.)

As always, our Editor in Chief's Choice Portfolio is published at the centerfold of *BIG_Review*. This time, "Divided Landscape" will take you, our readers, back to North America with an unsettling yet stunning set of photography by Guillermo Arias Camarena and a powerful poetic essay by Viviana Mejia Cañedo. The Wall running along the Mexico–United States

boundary cuts through the ecosystems as it divides life, as well as deserts, mountains, rivers, and valleys. Arias' photos illustrate the ecological impact of the militarisation of the region and our human cosmopolitan condition with the natural environment, while Mejia Cañedo's narrative explores the profound denaturalizing impact on outstandingly beautiful, big-sky countrysides.

This issue also presents three Policy Papers, by Hubert Duchesneau on the evolution of the Customs profession, Paola Malaspina on the environmental impact of the Italian–Swiss border's Cervinia–Zermatt Cable Car, and Kalliopi Mitrousi on how Customs organisations can play an important role mitigating climate change. Duchesneau's paper is a masterful review of the evolution of the role of the Customs profession over the last few decades. Malaspina's policy paper underscores how in the face of ecological challenges, technological innovation plays an important role that cannot, however, supplant human interactions. Mitrousi's policy analysis focuses on the counter-intuitive impact of the implementation of Customs' Multilateral Environmental Agreements signed and recorded at the United Nations, which transforms the UN Sustainable Development Goals into Customs' goals worldwide.

This month's Poetry Section, brought to you by Poetry Editor Natasha Sardzoska, presents six war-themed poems by acclaimed poet Diana Burazer. As a borderlander torn between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burazer humanizes and denationalizes conflict through the power of her verse.

The issue also offers a Film Review of award-winning documentary *YINTAH* (2024), dealing with Wet'suwet'en land defense and Indigenous sovereignty, by Jacob Smallboy, and two Book Reviews: Kalpana Jha reviews *Gender Dynamics in Transboundary Water Governance* (2022, edited by Jenniver Sehring, Rozemarijn ter Horst, and Margreet Zwartveen), and Jules Soupault reviews Silky Shah's *Unbuilding Walls: Why Immigrants Justice Needs Abolition* (2024).

BIG_Review is made possible by a team of editors, board members, blind reviewers, and other colleagues who contribute the labour of reviewing and producing the work, supported by grant funding from SSHRC and Erasmus+. We are also grateful to the Centre for Global Studies and University Libraries at the University of Victoria for hosting and supporting *BIG_Lab*.

We hope you enjoy and share this latest issue.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, Chief Editor