

# The Eurocity Puerta de Europa. Cross-border cooperation in a depopulated rural area

## La eurociudad Puerta de Europa. La cooperación transfronteriza en un enclave rural despoblado

María Isabel Martín Jiménez<sup>a\*</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2859-0551>

<sup>a</sup> Universidad de Salamanca, Departamento de Geografía, Salamanca, Spain, e-mail: imaji@usal.es

### Abstract

The study aims to determine the relevance of the Eurocity model for cooperation based on the creation process between 2019 and 2023, of the most recent of the seven Eurocities established on the Spanish-Portuguese border, called Puerta de Europa and comprising the Portuguese *concelho* of Almeida, the *freguesia* of Vilar Formoso and the Spanish municipalities of Fuentes de Oñoro and Ciudad Rodrigo. An analytical methodology was followed, with the following results: the creation process is analysed with particular attention to problems of how to cope with democratic decline, a lack of administrative capacity, and the loss of transit of persons and goods due to the opening of the E-80 highway link. The paper concludes that Puerta de Europa shows structural weaknesses concerning cross-border development in a depopulating area.

Keywords: Spanish-Portuguese border, Eurocity, cooperation, Iberian borderland.

### Resumen

El objetivo del estudio es conocer la pertinencia de la figura de eurociudad para la cooperación a partir del proceso de creación, entre los años 2019 y 2023, de la más reciente de las siete eurociudades constituidas en la raya hispanoportuguesa, denominada Puerta de Europa e integrada por el *concelho* portugués de Almeida, la *freguesia* de Vilar Formoso y los municipios españoles de Fuentes de Oñoro y Ciudad Rodrigo. Se ha seguido una metodología analítica con los siguientes resultados: conocimiento de las fases de creación de la eurociudad y de los problemas marcados por la debilidad demográfica y administrativa y la necesidad de buscar alternativas a la pérdida económica del tránsito de personas y mercancías ante la finalización del enlace de la autovía E-80. Como conclusión se acredita la insuficiencia de la eurociudad Puerta de Europa para el desarrollo de proyectos de cooperación transfronteriza en una zona rural despoblada.

Palabras clave: frontera hispanoportuguesa, eurociudad, cooperación, raya ibérica.

Received on October 31, 2024.

Accepted on June 26, 2025.

Published on August 11, 2025.

\* Corresponding author: María Isabel Martín Jiménez. E-mail: imaji@usal.es

ORIGINAL ARTICLE LANGUAGE:  
SPANISH.



This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribución 4.0 Internacional.

CITATION: Martín Jiménez, M. I. (2025). The Eurocity Puerta de Europa. Cross-border cooperation in a depopulated rural area. *Estudios Fronterizos*, 26, Article e169. <https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2511169>

## Introduction

### *Objective and context*

The study of the Eurocity Puerta de Europa aims to answer the following research question: Is the Eurocity an appropriate model for European cross-border cooperation in a rural and depopulated area? To answer this question, Puerta de Europa was chosen as a case study as it is the most recently created Eurocity and is located in an area with proven socio-demographic weaknesses. The study aims to explore the background of cross-border cooperation in the European Union, the process of creating the chosen Eurocity, the reasons for its establishment, and its demographic characteristics and the cooperative activities carried out.

The history of cooperation in the European Union's border areas is marked by the Interreg initiative, framework agreements, and the regulations governing European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

Within this context, this paper examines the concept of Eurocities and their formation, both in terms of time and space, as well as the regulations that govern them. The study begins in 2007, when the Chaves-Verín Eurocity was established. It ends in 2023, with the approval of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity, located on the border between Spain and Portugal, along which seven of the eight Eurocities involving Spanish municipalities are formalized. The process of creation and some basic data on each of the EGTCs are outlined.

The most recently created Eurocity on the border between the province of Salamanca and the district of Guarda, known as Puerta de Europa, is examined as a case study, as it suffers extreme demographic fragility. The idea of forming this Eurocity arose as a possible alternative to the loss of synergies generated by the traffic of people and goods between Fuentes de Oñoro and Vilar Famoso once the link between both sides of the border via the E-80 motorway—the European route formed by the A-62 in Spain and the A-25 in Portugal—is completed.

The contacts made between the mayors of Almeida and Fuentes de Oñoro to seek alternatives to the difficulties caused by both the declining population and the administrative weakness, particularly in the municipality of Salamanca, are also highlighted. Meanwhile, the *concelho* (municipality) of Almeida, to which the *freguesia* (parish) of Vilar Formoso belongs, is seeking an ally in the municipality of Ciudad Rodrigo in Salamanca.

Once the necessary consensus has been reached among the political stakeholders to form the Eurocity, the process leading to the approval by the national administrations of both countries of the statutes endorsed by the municipal corporations is reviewed. Considering its recent creation, the activities carried out by this Eurocity are limited, especially because it has not been possible to process or access national or European Union aid based on a specific project within the framework of the Interreg program, the Operational Program for Cross-Border Cooperation between Spain and Portugal (Poctep, Spanish acronym for Programa Operativo de Cooperación Transfronteriza España y Portugal). The neighborly relations forged throughout history are maintained, but the prospects for joint proposals beyond certain meetings do not seem promising, and they are also not a priority on the agendas of the different municipalities.

## *Methodology and sources*

The methodology used to study the aims set is analytical, based on a review of the regulations approved and the literature published on the subject in scientific journals. Other main sources of information have been official gazettes, such as the *Official Journal of the European Union* (OJEU), the *Diário da República de Portugal* and the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (BOE) of Spain, which contain common regulations and the approval of specific agreements and statutes.

The analysis is completed with a review of the documentation provided on the official websites of the different Eurocities and EGTCs, as well as the European Union's own website, particularly the section dedicated to the European Committee of the Regions and the official list of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation. Information on EGTCs involving Spanish municipalities or territories was searched for on the website of the Spanish Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory, in the section dedicated to Cross-Border and Territorial Cooperation.

News items relating to EGTCs and Eurocities from the print and digital press, particularly those most closely related to the case study, were a primary source for learning about the activities promoted in the field of cooperation in the Puerta de Europa.

To characterize Puerta de Europa as a rural and depopulated territory, in addition to reading the bibliographic references, demographic and territorial data were used, taken from the respective official statistics institutes of Spain and Portugal, referring to the 2011 and 2021 census dates and the continuous register. These were used to formalize the tables with the information developed in the text regarding the characteristics of the population in the different Eurocities and the municipalities that comprise the Puerta de Europa Eurocity.

Another resource used to understand the border area under analysis was the cartography downloaded from the official cartographic server—the National Center for Geographic Information (CNIG, Spanish acronym for Centro Nacional de Información Geográfica)—specifically, sheet number 525 of the national topographic map at a scale of 1:50 000, both the one published in 1944 and the one referring to 2003 in order to locate the study area and the hamlet, as well as the border layout, communication routes, and some spatial references through toponymy. Finally, photographs were added to provide visual evidence and information on the subject of the study.

## Cross-border cooperation in the European Union

### *Background*

The border conveys the idea of a boundary or separation, as indicated by the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE, Spanish acronym for Real Academia Española) in its first definition: “placed or positioned opposite”; understood in the political-administrative sphere: “boundary of a state”. To these definitions may be added: boundary or limit of a geographical area at any scale of reference (municipalities, counties, regions, countries or continents). In this context, the Iberian *Raya* or *Raia* (the Stripe), in the strict sense, is the dividing line between Spain and Portugal, established in the

Middle Ages and which has remained almost immovable since those distant times<sup>1</sup> (Martín-Jiménez, 2023), and also the geographical space around that line, that is, the municipalities and parishes.

Opposite to the idea of a border associated with separation is another associated with exchange, characterized by a relationship that flows back and forth, with an idiosyncrasy that transcends landmarks, and with examples throughout time and space. On the Iberian border, the most singular case is that of Rio de Onor and Rihonor de Castilla, a single village with two names, one Portuguese and one Spanish, divided by an imaginary line that was sometimes marked by a chain that could easily be skirted or jumped over, and only represented a real barrier<sup>2</sup> during the strict COVID-19 lockdown.

This initial idea of borders as a means of separation is countered by a second idea, associated with European cross-border cooperation policy, which can be traced back to 1989, when the Interreg initiative was designed. The initiative has been reformulated with the necessary changes and continues up to 2025 (Hortelano Mínguez & Mansvelt Beck, 2017). The European Commission launched this initiative once the Single European Act had been approved and in the context of reform and better use of structural funds as an instrument for promoting cross-border collaboration (Martín Jiménez et al., 2007, p. 566). The aim is to find solutions to the problems arising from the lack of connection or isolation of regions on both sides of national borders and to revitalize the economy through specific programs and projects pointed at promoting regional development in the short and medium term and, in the long term, advancing the process of community integration (Heredero de Pablos & Olmedillas Blanco, 1998, p. 1405).

The first period of implementation of the Interreg initiative (1989-1993) allowed Spain and Portugal—which joined the European Community in 1986—to submit projects financially supported by this initiative, as well as in subsequent programming periods under different names (Quetglas Lull & Ventura Fernández, 2023, pp. 987-988). In recent years, the Spanish-Portuguese line was known as Poctep (Operational Program for Cross-Border Cooperation Spain-Portugal). From 2007 onwards, it retained the same acronym but then referred to the Interreg Spain-Portugal Cooperation Program, and currently to the Interreg Spain-Portugal Program (Poctep) 2021-2027 (Interreg España-Portugal, n. d.).

Further advances in border cooperation and integration in the European Union have come about as a result of Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of July 5, with the creation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), which encompasses neighborhood cooperation formed within the Council of Europe under the European Framework Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation between States (Reglamento (EC) 1082/2006 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, 2006). In the case of Spain, the Framework Convention, or Treaty of

---

<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Alcañices, or Concordia de Alcañices, establishes the border between Spain and Portugal and was signed on September 12, 1297. The border Stripe can also be seen in the Acta general de demarcación de la frontera entre España y Portugal, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> The border closure during COVID-19 was a serious problem for people with properties and jobs or residences on different sides of the border. Very complicated conditions for movement were put in place, only applicable to residents of the two towns, Spanish and Portuguese, and only for agricultural and livestock work (Ramis, 2021; Saavedra, 2021).

Madrid, drafted in 1980, was signed by Spain on October 1, 1986, and entered into force in 1990 after its ratification (Instrumento de Ratificación del Convenio-Marco Europeo sobre cooperación transfronteriza, 1990). Based on this, bilateral agreements were signed between neighboring countries in the European Union, such as the Treaty of Bayonne between Spain and France, signed in 1995 (Tratado entre el Reino de España y la República Francesa sobre cooperación transfronteriza entre entidades territoriales, 1997), and the Treaty of Valencia, signed between Spain and Portugal in 2002 (Tratado entre el Reino de España y la República Portuguesa sobre cooperación transfronteriza entre entidades e instancias territoriales, 2003), as well as other agreements and protocols on cross-border collaboration and cooperation between neighboring municipalities (Secretaría General de Coordinación Territorial, 2021).

The 2006 European Union regulation led, as noted, to the creation of EGTCs and the inclusion within them of intermunicipal cooperation agreements signed between municipalities or institutions located near a border between different countries with historical ties and common interests. After formalization as EGTCs, these entities acquire legal personality and can access various programs and grants to finance specific projects in their areas of activity (Amado et al., 2024, p. 4).

The first group to be formed, in January 2008, was the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, comprising the cities of Lille, Kortrijk, and Tournai, located in France and Belgium. In September of the same year, an agreement was signed that led to the formation of the Ister-Granum EGTC, located at the mouth of the Garam and Ipoly rivers on the Danube, between Hungary and Slovakia. Thirdly, in October 2008, the Galicia-North Portugal EGTC was established, being the first on the border between Spain and Portugal (see Table 1). Many others have been added between different states, resulting in a total of 87 groupings by 2025.<sup>3</sup>

The agreements established between Spanish municipalities, institutions or administrations with those of other countries bring the number of EGTCs in force to 21, of which seven have been signed with France, 10 with Portugal (see Table 1), and the other four involve more than two European Union Member States (Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones, 2024). Italy, Cyprus, Spain and Greece participate in the so-called Mediterranean Archipelago (ArchiMed). Cities of Ceramics (AEuCC) brings together 115 cities across Spain, France, Italy, Romania, Portugal, Germany and the Czech Republic. The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) brings together institutions from eight countries, and Euro Contrôle Route involves the collaboration of European road transport control agencies from 14 countries.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The official list includes 89, but there are currently 87, as it includes those signed between Spain and France called Espacio Portalet (registered under number 24) and Huesca Pirineos-Hautes Pyrénées (register number 49), which were dissolved when a new group was formed under the name Pirineos Pyrénées (registered under number 80) (Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> This EGTC is not included in the information provided by the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory, under the heading "European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)" (<https://mpt.gob.es/politica-territorial/internacional/cooperacion/AECT.html>), nor does Spain appear as a member of the association in the European Union register (Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones, 2024), although it does appear as such on the official website of the Euro Contrôle Route EGTC (<https://www.ecr-egtc.eu/about-us/members-1/>).

**Table 1. European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) between Spain and Portugal**

Registration*	Name	Headquarters	Countries	Date**	Number of members***
3	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Galicia-Northern Portugal	Vigo, Spain	Spain-Portugal	23/10/2008 <i>BOE</i> No. 262, of October 30, 2008	2
7	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Duero-Douro	Trabanca, Spain	Spain-Portugal	21/03/2009 <i>BOE</i> No. 57, of March 7, 2009, and <i>BOE</i> No. 292, of December 5, 2019	233
12	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Zasnet	Bragança, Portugal	Portugal-Spain	19/03/2010 <i>Diário da República</i> (Official Gazette) No. 55, Series II, of March 19, 2010	6
46	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Eurocity Chaves-Verín	Verín, Spain	Spain-Portugal	17/07/2013 <i>BOE</i> No. 178, of July 26, 2013	2
50	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Iberian Pyritic Belt	Tharsis, Spain	Spain-Portugal	14/10/2014 <i>BOE</i> No. 257, of October 23, 2014	10
60	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation León-Bragança	León, Spain	Spain-Portugal	29/12/2015 <i>BOE</i> No. 311, of December 29, 2015	2
70	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Interpal-Medio Tejo	Palencia, Spain	Spain-Portugal	24/11/2016 <i>BOE</i> No. 303, of December 16, 2016	2
71	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Eurocity of Guadiana	Ayamonte, Spain	Spain-Portugal	07/02/2018 <i>BOE</i> No. 98, of April 23, 2018	3
72	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Rio Minho	Valença Portugal	Portugal-Spain	20/02/2018 <i>Diário da República</i> (Official Gazette) No. 48, Series II, March 8, 2018	26
87	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Eurocity Gateway to Europe	Vilar Formoso, Portugal	Portugal-Spain	17/02/2023 <i>Diário da República</i> (Official Gazette) No. 58, Series II, March 22, 2023	4

\* Registration number of the groupings in the official register.

\*\* Date of registration in the official register of EGTCs and publication of the convention and/or statutes in the official gazette or journal of each country.

\*\*\* Members may be supra-municipal institutions with numerous municipalities or parishes integrated into them.

Note: records 46, 71, 72 and 87 are EGTCs established as Eurocities or with some of them integrated into their territory.

Source: Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones, 2024

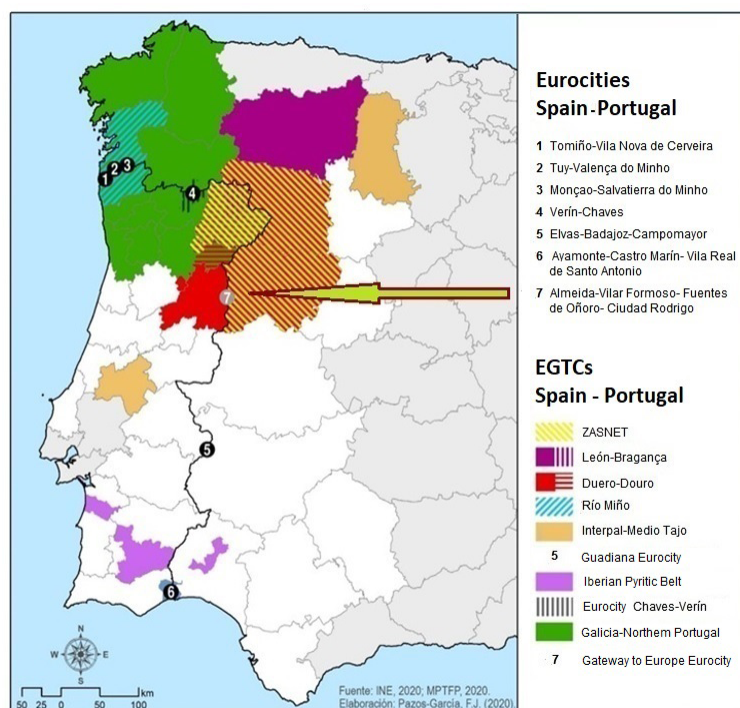
## Eurocities in the Iberian Stripe

At a strictly local level, intermunicipal relations on both sides of the border, recognized as EGTCs or integrated into one of them, have adopted the name of Eurocities. The cooperation agreements detail the neighborly relations throughout history and have the common objective of strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion. From there, each agreement outlines both the specific objectives to be achieved and the governing bodies, headquarters and other relevant details.

In 1993, on the border with France, the Basque Bayonne-San Sebastián Eurocity was established, in accordance with the provisions of the European Framework Convention of the Council of Europe. It is a pioneering and unique initiative on the Spanish-French border (López-Trigal & López-Fernández, 2021).

Subsequently, and under the auspices of the European Union, seven Eurocities were formalized, all in the border region with Portugal (López-Davalillo Larrea, 2015-2016). The first was the Chaves-Verín Eurocity in 2007 (see Figure 1 and Table 2), followed by five more in the following decade and the last one in 2023, called Puerta de Europa. All of them were established under the umbrella of European Union regulations, except for the Elvas-Badajoz-Campo Maior Eurocity, whose protocol was signed in 2018 based on the Treaty of Valencia (Tratado entre el Reino de España y la República Portuguesa sobre cooperación transfronteriza entre entidades e instancias territoriales, 2003) and in accordance with the provisions of Real Decreto 1317/1997 (1997; Secretaría General de Coordinación Territorial, 2021, p. 27).

Figure 1. Map of Eurocities on the border between Spain and Portugal and of EGTCs



Source: created by the author based on Jurado-Almonte et al., 2020

Table 2. Eurocities in the Spanish-Portuguese Stripe

Name/ municipalities	Date of establishment	Headquarters/website
Chaves-Verín Eurocity EGTC	It began with the submission of the application in 2007; EGTC in 2013	Old Customs House Building, Feces de Abaixo, Verín <a href="https://eurocidadechavesverin.eu/">https://eurocidadechavesverin.eu/</a>
Tui-Valença Eurocity	Collaboration agreement signed on February 10, 2012; EGTC 2018*	Valença <a href="https://eurocidadetuivalenca.eu/#/home">https://eurocidadetuivalenca.eu/#/home</a>
Guadiana Eurocity Ayamonte, Vila Real de Santo António, and Castro Marim	Protocol signed on May 9, 2013; EGTC in 2018	Ayamonte <a href="https://www.ayamonte.info/eurociudad-del-guadiana-ayamonte-castro-marim-vila-real-santo-antonio/">https://www.ayamonte.info/eurociudad-del-guadiana-ayamonte-castro-marim-vila-real-santo-antonio/</a>
Monção-Salvaterra de Miño Eurocity	Agreement signed on March 28, 2015; EGTC 2018*	Old Customs House of Monção <a href="https://eurocidade.wixsite.com/moncaosalvaterra">https://eurocidade.wixsite.com/moncaosalvaterra</a>
Badajoz-Elvas-Campo Maior Eurocity	Agreement of May 3, 2018 <i>Diario de República</i> no. 106, Series II, of June 4, 2018, and <i>BOE</i> of April 16, 2019	Elvas, Badajoz, Campo Maior <a href="https://eurobec.eu/es/a-eurocidade/o-que-e-a-eurocidade/">https://eurobec.eu/es/a-eurocidade/o-que-e-a-eurocidade/</a>
Cerveira-Tomiño Eurocity	Friendship agreement signed on June 11, 2014 Eurocity Agreement October 4, 2018*	Vila Nova de Cerveira and Tomiño <a href="https://eurocidadecerveiratomino.eu/pt-pt/">https://eurocidadecerveiratomino.eu/pt-pt/</a>
Puerta de Europa Eurocity; Almeida, Vilar Formoso, Fuentes de Oñoro, and Ciudad Rodrigo	Presentation on July 1, 2020 Agreement signed February 17, 2023 Announcement No. 54/2023. <i>Diario da República</i> No. 58, 2nd series, of March 22, 2023	Vilar Formoso <a href="https://www.ciudadrodrigo.es/ayuntamiento/eurociudad-puerta-de-europa/">https://www.ciudadrodrigo.es/ayuntamiento/eurociudad-puerta-de-europa/</a> <a href="https://www.cm-almeida.pt/informacoes/eurocidade-porta-da-europa-une-almeida-e-vilar-formoso-fuentes-de-onoro-e-ciudad-rodrigo/">https://www.cm-almeida.pt/informacoes/eurocidade-porta-da-europa-une-almeida-e-vilar-formoso-fuentes-de-onoro-e-ciudad-rodrigo/</a>

\*Integrated into the Rio Minho EGTC (Paül Carril, 2022, p. 56).

Source: created by the author based on the websites of Eurocities, the Portuguese Official Gazette (*Diário da República*), and the Spanish Official State Gazette (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*)

The essential prerequisite for the formal establishment of the Eurocity is, as noted above, the existence of a shared history of citizen relations and cooperation as a basis for advancing relations without controversy and carrying out joint projects. Undoubtedly, relations in the Stripe have been well established over time, and interactions have been and continue to be intense in many areas. It should be remembered that this is the oldest border in Europe, whose territories have had links since Roman times, the ancient consular provinces of Gallaecia, Lusitania and Baetica of the 3rd century, and although some towns changed kingdoms when the borders were established in the 13th century (Martín-Jiménez & Fernández-Sangrador, 2022, p. 491), they maintain a basic common heritage that reinforces trade, cultural contact and population flow.

The agreements and protocols signed during the formation of Eurocities ratify neighborly relations and emphasize the need to deepen cooperation to achieve competitive advantages and secure specific funding from European Union-coordinated programs. Beyond the objectives defined in each case, the planning of joint activities and the ability to apply for European aid have largely been closely tied to



the economic dynamism of each area, its socio-demographic characteristics, and accumulated experience.

From a population perspective, the Elvas-Badajoz-Campo Maior Eurocity has the largest number of inhabitants, reflecting the presence of the capital of Badajoz, which accounts for 84% of the total. In contrast, the smallest in terms of population is the Puerta de Europa Eurocity, with less than 20 000 inhabitants. Furthermore, its density, as an index of land use intensity, is one-third of the average for border Eurocities, which is already low. This ratio between population and surface area ranks the Tui-Valença Eurocity highest, with a density figure well above that of other associations and the average for Spain and Portugal, estimated in 2023 at 95 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and 114.7 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, respectively. Accordingly, the weakness of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity is evident, as it only has 22.7 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Demographic indicators for the Eurocities in the Spanish-Portuguese Stripe**

EGTC	Total population			Population % ≥ 65 years old			Surface area km <sup>2</sup>	Population density/ km <sup>2</sup>		
	2011	2021	2023	2011	2021	2023		2011	2021	2023
Chaves-Verín Eurocity	55 876	51 234	51 031	23.95	30.74	32.21	685.4	81.5	74.8	74.5
Tui-Valença Eurocity	31 363	31 021	31 486	20.40	23.85	24.16	185.3	169.3	167.4	169.9
Guadiana Eurocity	46 666	46 773	47 778	18.21	22.81	23.51	499.9	93.4	93.6	95.6
Monção-Salvaterra de Miño Eurocity	28 776	27 864	28 306	25.55	30.03	30.42	274.4	104.9	101.6	103.2
Badajoz-Elvas-Campo Maior Eurocity	183 099	179 382	178 518	15.41	18.47	19.23	2 319.0	79.0	77.4	77.0
Cerveira-Tomiño Eurocity	22 857	22 651	23 163	20.53	23.96	24.41	215.3	106.2	105.2	107.6
Puerta de Europa Eurocity	22 124	19 071	18 529	28.74	33.43	34.24	816.4	27.3	23.4	22.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>390 761</b>	<b>377 996</b>	<b>378 811</b>	<b>19.17</b>	<b>23.05</b>	<b>23.81</b>	<b>4 995.7</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>75.7</b>	<b>75.8</b>

Source: created by the author using data from Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units>), Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory: Data from the Local Entities Register (<https://ssweb.seap.minhap.es/REL/>) and National Statistics Institute (INE, Spanish acronym for Instituto Nacional de Estadística) of Spain and Portugal.

Demographic trends between 2011 and 2023, when most of the groups were formed, show a clear decline, consistent with what has happened in the interior of the peninsula, where the population around the border Stripe has been declining for decades. Only at the mouths of the Guadiana and Miño rivers has there been slight growth that exceeds the overall figure for the last two years, but this does not offset the losses in the group of border cities, estimated at -3.12% for the period 2011-2023, with very marked contrasts between them. The population decline has been particularly severe in the first Eurocity to be established, Chaves-Verín, which has lost 8.7% of its population since 2011, and especially in the most recent Eurocity, Puerta de Europa, whose population has fallen by 16.3% in the last 12 years due to out-migration but also

to the increase in mortality resulting from the high number of older adults. This situation is repeated in all areas near the border of the Autonomous Community of Castile and León (Hortelano Mínguez, 2023).

As the data show, the population decline is the result of progressive aging, exacerbated by the emigration of young people and a decline in births, which is reducing the population at its base. Badajoz supports its Eurocity with the lowest percentage of elderly population, while in the rest of the Eurocities, the figures speak for themselves about the overrepresentation of people aged 65 and over. The population decline was significant from 2011 to 2021, and the trend continued in 2022 and 2023. In Chaves-Verín, Monção-Salvaterra de Miño and, above all, in the Puerta de Europa Eurocity, the seriousness of the situation is evident, as in all three, around a third of the inhabitants are over 65 years old.

The demographic indicators mentioned above suggest a relative stagnation that extends beyond the economic sphere and necessitates support policies from the States and the European Union. Concerns about depopulation and aging are reflected in the agreements signed, with clear references to the revitalization of populations and the promotion of joint actions. The protocol between Monção and Salvaterra de Miño states that “this protocol should become a permanent and dynamic element in the lives of its inhabitants” and includes the need for “care for the elderly.” (Protocolo de geminação entre os municípios de Monção [região norte de Portugal] e Salvaterra de Miño [Galiza, Espanha], 2015, point 5). The 2013 statutes of the Chaves-Verín Eurocity state as a specific objective “Establishing mechanisms for managing and enhancing the value of the territory, capable of retaining and attracting population” (Resolución de 17 de julio de 2013, de la Secretaría General Técnica, 2013, Annex I, seventh 1c). Moreover, in the deed of establishment of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity, it is proposed to “Establish mechanisms for the management and enhancement of the territory, capable of retaining and attracting population” (Anúncio n.º 54/2023. Escritura pública de constituição do Agrupamento Europeu de Cooperação Territorial, 2023, objective c).

### *Puerta de Europa Eurocity*

In the Stripe between the province of Salamanca and the district of Guarda, the population references indicated for the different Eurocities are exacerbated, to the point of conditioning exchanges and the possibilities of undertaking joint projects and, consequently, the very creation of a European association for territorial cooperation. This is one of the most depopulated and aging areas of the peninsula, characterized by very small municipalities and *concelhos* that have experienced a sharp demographic decline from the mid-20th century to 2025 (Hortelano Mínguez & Martín Jiménez, 2022; Martín-Jiménez & Fernández-Sangrador, 2022; Poeta Fernandes, 2019). The *concelho* of Almeida in Portugal, with its *freguesia* of Vilar Formoso in the district of Guarda, and the Spanish municipalities of Ciudad Rodrigo and Fuentes de Oñoro in the province of Salamanca, are located in a territory that has been suffering for decades from increasingly severe demographic and economic stagnation (Hortelano Mínguez, 2023). As early as 1972, Pintado and Barrenechea described the central Iberian Stripe between Zamora and Salamanca and Portugal as “the frontier of underdevelopment”,

and although some economic indicators point to an improvement in the situation, the differences with neighboring areas remain.

**Figure 2. Border marker number 518, marked on the road and on the wall of the customs building in Vilar Formoso-Fuentes de Oñoro<sup>5</sup>**



Source: photographs by the author, April 6, 2024

The physical characteristics of this border between Vilar Formoso and Fuentes de Oñoro are, nonetheless, conducive to relations, as it is very porous and can be crossed without difficulty due to the lack of topographical constraints or disruptions linked to the hydrographic network (see Figure 2). It is known as the dry Stripe, as opposed to the wet or river Stripe, the former being marked in the territory by landmarks and described, for example, as follows:

On the right side of the Spanish road that leads from Aldea del Obispo to Fuentes de Oñoro, you will find the Golpina or Provejo valley. Passing near the Cruz de la Raya and further on by the wall of the Tapada de la Huerta de la Calzada, it will go through the Espíritu Santo chapel to Alto or Texo de la Polida, cross the Campo stream, and turn south to head through the Cabeza de Caballo mountain to the top of Los Campanarios. (Tratado ajustado entre España y Portugal, 1866, art. 19) (see Figure 3)

<sup>5</sup> “At the site of Pedra Libreira or Valle de la Juncia, on the edge of cultivated land, you will find marker 518, after crossing a lane that crosses the Stripe in the direction of Villar Formoso station”; “Artificial boundary marker 518 bis is placed on a trench of the Beira Alta to Salamanca railway line, thus indicating the point where the border line is crossed by the aforementioned railway line” (Acta general de demarcación de la frontera entre España y Portugal, 1906).

Figure 3. Municipality of Fuentes de Oñoro: place names along the border in 1944



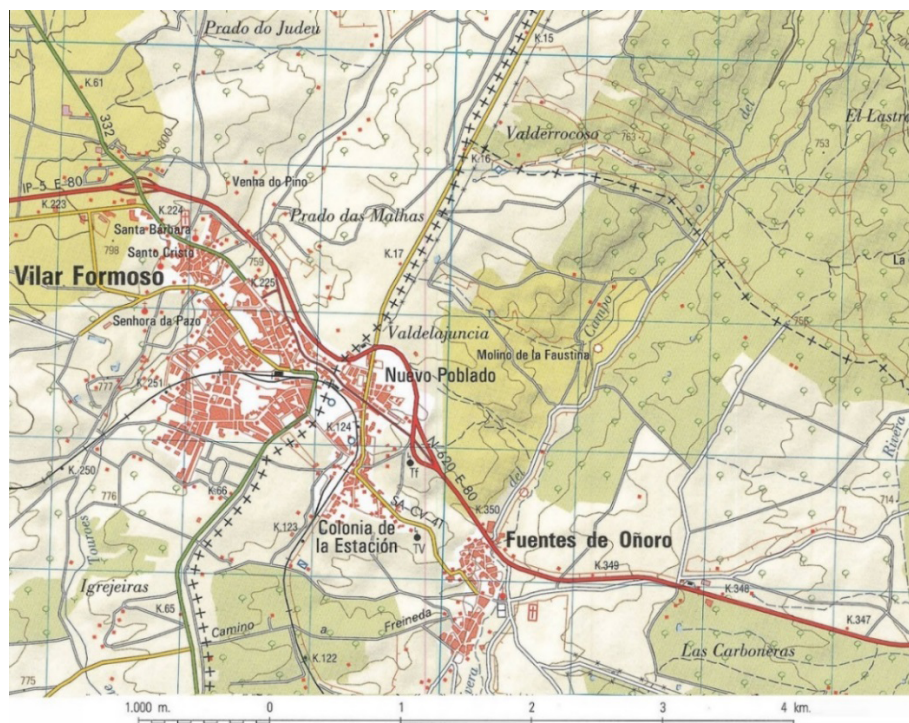
Source: Dirección General del Instituto Geográfico y Catastral, 1944, sheet 525

At the time of publication of this paper, the hamlets of Vilar Formoso and Nuevo Poblado de Fuentes de Oñoro extend to the border between the two towns. Neighborly relations and movement between them encounter no barriers to overcome since, as noted, it is a dry border, with no rivers or other obstacles to the passage of people on foot or vehicles (Hortelano Mínguez, 2014), and with a practically flat topography (see Figure 4).

The customs checkpoint formerly located at the junction of the N-620 highway and the IP-5 slowed down cross-border traffic. However, the disappearance of continuous surveillance at the European Union's internal borders and the transformation of both roads into expressways (the A-62 Castilla motorway and the A-25, respectively) have blurred the perception of the once clearly identified crossing point (see Figure 5) and the invitation to stop.<sup>6</sup> In 2025, the so-called E-80, part of the Trans-European Transport Network, facilitates road traffic, and only a sign on the side of the road, with the European Union flag and the name of the corresponding country, indicates that a border line is being crossed.

<sup>6</sup> According to the council, more than nine million people pass through the Spanish-Portuguese border crossing each year, making it "the busiest traffic area in the Iberian Peninsula" (Dorado, 2024).

**Figure 4. Continuity of buildings on the border between Vilar Formoso and Fuentes de Oñoro, 2003**



Source: Dirección General del Instituto Geográfico Nacional, 2003, sheet 525

**Figure 5. Customs crossing between Fuentes de Oñoro and Vilar Formoso, junction of the IP-5 and N-620 (view from Spain toward the customs office [alfândega])**



Source: photographs by the author, September 30, 2024

### The process of establishment

Precisely, given the prospect of the definitive connection of the two routes mentioned above in December 2021 (Ministerio de Transportes, Movilidad y Agenda Urbana, 2021), concern grew about the future of the two border towns that had until then benefited from the mandatory route between the urban areas. In the search for alternatives to the reduction in road traffic through the towns, municipal officials looked to the existing Eurocities on the border and took the joint decision to begin the process of forming a Eurocity, not without some difficulties. The first of these is demographic weakness marked by a tiny population (Hortelano Minguez & Martín Pescador, 2025). It should be noted that this is the Eurocity with the smallest number of inhabitants, which is declining year after year due to emigration and negative natural growth. Between 2011 and 2023, the number of residents in the area fell by 16.3%, and in the municipality of Almeida, the figure rose to 21.62% (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Population trends and demographic structure of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity**

	2011			2021			2023			
	Total	% <15 years	% ≥65 years	Total	% <15 years	% ≥65 years	Total	% <15 years	% ≥65 years	Index 2011 = 100
Concelho de Almeida	7 242	8.2	36.9	5 887	6.1	44.1	5 676	6.2	44.5	78.38
Fuentes de Oñoro Municipality	1 174	9.7	25.3	1 119	8.0	24.1	1 043	7.1	26.3	88.84
Ciudad Rodrigo Municipality	13 708	12.6	25.2	12 065	11.7	29.1	11 810	10.6	30.03	86.15
<b>Puerta de Europa</b>	<b>22 124</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>19 071</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>18 529</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>34.243</b>	<b>83.75</b>
Vilar Formoso Freguesia (Parish)	2 219	11.1	25.1	1 791	8.3	35.2				80.71

Note: the data for the municipality of Almeida cover the entire municipality. The parish of Almeida had 1 314 inhabitants in 2011 and 1 145 in 2021. In 2023, there were no disaggregated data for the parishes. The index for Vilar Formoso corresponds to the period 2011-2021.

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Spain and Portugal

In addition to the demographic decline, there is a very high degree of aging, which is increasing every year and is accompanied by a decline in the number of people under the age of 15, compromising generational renewal. The situation in the municipality of Almeida is alarming in this regard, as half of its population is aged 65 or over (Hortelano Mínguez & Martín Jiménez, 2022). These population characteristics, which are replicated in the surrounding parishes and municipalities, result in a decline in administrative services and limited financial capacity, particularly in the municipality of Fuentes de Oñoro, the smallest in terms of population. The concerns of residents and authorities about the socioeconomic future are accentuated by the planned link between the A-25 and A-62 highways, as it is anticipated that this will lead to a greater decline than the one that has been ongoing for some time.

Another difficulty is the distance between the capital of the municipality of Almeida, to which Vilar Formoso belongs, and where the administrative services are located, and the Stripe *sensu stricto*. To overcome these drawbacks, the focus is being shifted

beyond the border line and an ally is being sought in Ciudad Rodrigo, some 25 kilometers and several municipalities away from the border (see Figure 6), with which it has historical ties of proximity and a significant population that would increase the Eurocity's population to 11 810 inhabitants in 2023, almost two-thirds of the total. Nevertheless, as noted above, this would still be insufficient to match the other Eurocities in the Stripe region.

With this demographic framework in place, the first steps toward creating the Eurocity began in 2019; however, the outbreak of COVID-19 delayed the project's presentation until July 1, 2020. With the pandemic, the Spanish-Portuguese border returned to its role as a barrier and control point, becoming an almost impassable frontier, closed as never before. The return to relative normality, decreed for the beginning of July, was greeted with jubilation and seen as a symbolic milestone, not only for the reopening of communications but also for the resumption of interrupted contacts.

**Figure 6. Puerta de Europa Eurocity. Parishes in the municipality of Almeida and municipalities in Salamanca near the Stripe**



Source: created by the author, 2024

Talks soon resumed and a meeting was scheduled at the old customs house, with the mandatory and necessary health and safety measures in place, between the mayors of Almeida (Antonio Machado), Vila Formosa (Manuel Gomes), Fuentos de Oñoro (Isidoro J. Alanís) and Ciudad Rodrigo (Marcos Iglesias) to sign the proposed agreement and statutes of the Eurocity under the legal status of EGTC and with the name Puerta de Europa (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). This name recalls the departure of Portuguese emigrants to countries beyond the Pyrenees and the entry of goods from Europe.

The documents were endorsed by the municipal corporations between September and December 2020, except for Fuentes de Oñoro.<sup>7</sup> Once approved, they were sent to the respective authorities in Spain and Portugal for authorization and registration by the European Committee of the Regions on the official list of EGTCs (Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones, 2024).

The process took a long time, and it was not until February 17, 2023, that the EGTC was entered in the official register of the European Union (Información procedente de los Estados Miembros, 2023) and listed as association number 87 (Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones, 2024), once the deeds of incorporation of the Eurocity had been signed by the political representatives, as recorded in Announcement No. 54/2023, Public deed of incorporation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (Anúncio n.º 54/2023. Escritura pública de constituição do Agrupamento Europeu de Cooperação Territorial, 2023) inserted in the *Diário da República*.

The first general assembly of members was held in April 2023 at the association's headquarters in Vilar Formoso, where the governing bodies were appointed for a two-year term. The presidency of the EGTC was assumed by the mayor of Almeida (Antonio Machado), the presidency of the General Assembly was held by the town council of Ciudad Rodrigo, led by Marcos Iglesias, and the Fiscal Council was headed by Fuentes de Oñoro, led by Laura Vicente. At that meeting, it was agreed that these bodies would be appointed on a rotating basis.

**Figure 7. Signing of the agreement at the presentation of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity on the border on July 1, 2020**



Source: Comunidad de Trabajo Castilla y León-Centro de Portugal, 2020

<sup>7</sup> In view of the lack of ratification by Fuentes de Oñoro, the municipality of Ciudad Rodrigo submitted the agreements to the Secretary of State for Public Administration. Finally, in March 2022, the Spanish Ministry of Territorial Policy issued the relevant order for Fuentes de Oñoro to become part of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity. The statutes were formally approved in August 2022.



**Figure 8. First general assembly on April 5, 2023, in Vilar Formoso**

Source: Rodríguez, 2023

## Discussion: objectives and future of the Puerta de Europa Eurocity

The association's founding document sets out 26 objectives, the first words of which are: "to work on joint proposals" to boost economic activity to generate employment and combat depopulation (Anúncio n.º 54/2023. Escritura pública de constituição do Agrupamento Europeu de Cooperação Territorial, 2023). It begins by stating the main problem facing the Eurocity, namely demographic decline and its link to economic decline and job opportunities. It then goes on to emphasize territorial management and the management of resources that have the "capacity to retain and attract population".

Issues related to the need for public policies and funding and cooperation projects designed to contribute to the necessary economic and social cohesion are outlined in the statement of objectives. Issues related to education, health, service provision, the availability of industrial land, the revitalization of commercial areas and the promotion of tourism are also detailed.

Policy makers had already discussed, during the process of creating the Eurocity, "promoting business spaces that generate jobs and stabilize the population, because otherwise there is a risk that this area will disappear in ten years".<sup>8</sup> At the 2023 assembly, it was added that "this area has not received the attention necessary to address the main problem, which is depopulation, affecting both sides of the Stripe equally" (Casamar, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Statements by Isidoro Alanís, mayor of Fuentes de Oñoro, as reported by García (2020).

Also noteworthy is the inclusion of objectives related to the recognition of “cross-border workers” and the “Eurocitizen card”, a demand to resolve the bureaucratic obstacles faced by people who live on one side of the Stripe and work on the other, that is, to be a “citizen of the Stripe”, in the words of Efer Vitor Nascimento, as reported in the press (García, 2020). The Manifesto of Eurocities of the Spanish-Portuguese Stripe (Eurociudades Ibéricas, 2020)—agreed upon and announced at the online meeting of its political representatives, held in the midst of the pandemic—already supported this proposal.

Other objectives are aligned with promoting tourism, creating themed fairs or joint Iberian events to strengthen the identification of the border, the Puerta de Europa, as a recognizable brand for potential visitors and attractive for business, commercial and cultural exchanges and knowledge.

Given the youth of the Puerta de Europa EGTG, joint activities have been sporadic. Noteworthy examples include integration into the Portugal-Spain Cross-Border Cooperation Network (Redcot, Spanish acronym for Red Portugal-España de Cooperación Transfronteriza) and the completion of a study identifying several actions considered strategic and eligible for funding by governments and the European Union, which was presented at the first partners’ meeting in April 2023. While awaiting this funding, meetings have been held under the guise of cross-border meetings, with local funding, some of which have been promoted independently on either side of the border.

Among the various examples, the joint cross-border celebration of Christmas 2023 in Fuentes de Oñoro and Almeida stands out, with the opening of a Christmas market in the customs area with Vilar Formoso, presided over by a tree erected on the border itself and open at the base to pass “from country to country”, among other activities. This initiative was repeated at Christmas 2024 (see Figure 9). Another example is the Feira da Diversidade in Vilar Formoso, which has been held for years with the collaboration of the Municipal Council of Almeida and the City Council of Fuentes de Oñoro and is now integrated into the activities of the Eurocity. Likewise, the First Contraband Fair, organized in 2023 by Vilar Formoso and Fuentes de Oñoro, which has not been replicated to date, is also worth mentioning. The creation of a sports complex for the Spanish-Portuguese Stripe around the Fuentes de Oñoro swimming pools is another “cross-border” proposal, but one promoted and financed by the town council itself, as is the “Business Village” designed for the area. It is also worth noting the organization on April 6, 2024, of the 14th chapter of the *Confraria Gastronómica dos Aromas e Sabores Raianos* (Gastronomic Brotherhood of Border Flavors and Aromas), based in Almeida, within the Eurocity, with events in Vilar Formoso and Fuentes de Oñoro, and a walking tour between the two towns across the border.

**Figure 9. Joint activities in the Eurocity. Left: the president of the Municipal Chamber of Almeida and the mayor of Fuentes de Oñoro at the presentation of “Christmas without borders”. Right: XIV Chapter of the *Confraria Gastronómica dos Aromas e Sabores Raianos* (Presentation of a joint Christmas activities programme on the border between Spain and Portugal)**



Source: Left photo: Radio Águeda, November 16, 2023; Right photo: author, April 6, 2024

## Conclusions: from enthusiasm to indifference

The path taken by the Puerta de Europa Eurocity has been positive, as it has been formally established, neighborly ties have been strengthened at the institutional level, and contacts are ongoing, with the invitation and presence of councilors at activities sponsored by either party. Analysis of the path taken leads to the conclusion that this is more a matter of goodwill and friendship than a commitment to achieving the objectives set out in the statutes and achieving genuine collaboration.

The suitability of the Eurocity model for cross-border cooperation, which has proven successful in other areas, is insufficient for a rural and depopulated region such as Puerta de Europa. Demographic weakness conditions economic development, reduces municipal budgets and detracts from the financial and personnel contributions that are vital for the presentation of joint projects to the European Union aimed at revitalizing this enclave on the border between the province of Salamanca and the District of Guarda.

The time that has passed since the Eurocity was established, with its founding assembly held in April 2023, warrants caution when concluding that this association has failed. Nonetheless, the lack of joint activities, the failure to renew the governing bodies, and the lack of publicity for the association among residents undoubtedly speak to a current indifference that contrasts with the initial enthusiasm. The course of events, studies on the involvement of institutional representatives, and awareness among civil society, as well as new research in the coming years, will confirm or refute this initial assessment.

The future, in any case, remains uncertain in terms of achieving the primary objective of economic improvement and job creation to combat depopulation, as this largely depends on the implementation of joint projects financed by national authorities or within the Poctep program. The preliminary work required to secure these

projects entails efforts that are challenging for local councils, whose administrative services and financial capacity have been depleted by the demographic decline in this territory, which is the most pronounced of the six EGTCs located on the Spanish-Portuguese border.

## Acknowledgments

This paper is part of the project “From cross-border to inter-regional cooperation: challenges and opportunities for the territorial organization of Spain. Lessons learned on the Spanish-Portuguese border” (TRANSINTER), code PID2021-126922NB-C22. Funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation, AEI/10.13039/501100011033, the State Research Agency, and ERDF “A Way to Build Europe”.

## References

- Acta general de demarcación de la frontera entre España y Portugal desde la desembocadura del río Miño hasta la confluencia del Caya en el Guadiana: aprobada por Canje de notas fechadas en Lisboa a 1º de diciembre de 1906. *Gaceta de Madrid*, no. 354, December 20, 1906 (Spain). <https://www.boe.es/gazeta/dias/1906/12/20/pdfs/GMD-1906-354.pdf>
- Amado, A., Paül, V. & Trillo-Santamaría, J.-M. (2024). La dimensión transfronteriza de los planes territoriales y urbanísticos en el ámbito vasco (España-Francia). *Estudios Fronterizos*, 25, Article e153. <https://doi.org/10.21670/ref.2417153>
- Anúncio n.º 54/2023. Escritura pública de constituição do Agrupamento Europeu de Cooperação Territorial. *Diário da República*, 2.ª série, Parte H, no. 58, page 319, March 22, 2023 (Portugal). <https://files.diariodarepublica.pt/gratuitos/2s/2023/03/2S058A0000S00.pdf>
- Casamar. (2023, April 7). La eurociudad donde está Fuentes de Oñoro empieza su lucha contra la despoblación. *La Gaceta*. <https://www.lagacetadesalamanca.es/provincia/la-eurociudad-donde-esta-fuentes-de-onoro-empieza-su-lucha-contrala-despoblacion-HE13535543>
- Comunidad de Trabajo Castilla y León-Centro de Portugal. (2020, July 1). *Eurociudad “Puerta de Europa”: presentación*. Interreg España-Portugal / Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Centro, Instituto Público / Junta de Castilla y León. <https://www.cencyl.eu/eurociudad-puerta-de-europa-presentacion/>
- Dirección General del Instituto Geográfico Nacional. (2003). *Ciudad Rodrigo 525* [Cartographic material]. Ministerio de Fomento. <https://www.ign.es/web/catalogo-cartoteca/resources/html/037060.html>
- Dirección General del Instituto Geográfico y Catastral. (1944). *Ciudad Rodrigo 525* [Cartographic material]. <https://www.ign.es/web/catalogo-cartoteca/resources/html/037059.html>
- Dorado, S. (2024, October 16). Fuentes de Oñoro se sitúa como “enclave estratégico” empresarial. *La Gaceta*, p. 20.

- Eurociudades Ibéricas. (2020, May 14). *Manifiesto eurociudades de la Raya hispano-lusa* [Press release]. Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional. <https://2007-2020.poctep.eu/es/2014-2020/manifiesto-eurociudades-de-la-rama-hispano-lusa>
- García, C. (2020, November 6). Ciudadanos de La Raya, una asignatura pendiente. *Diario Libre*. <https://www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/internacional/ciudadanos-de-la-rama-una-asignatura-pendiente-MF22508004>
- Herederero de Pablos, M. I. & Olmedillas Blanco, B. (1998). La cooperación transfronteriza: Interreg II para Castilla y León. Una propuesta de evaluación. In Consejería de Economía y Hacienda, *6º Congreso de economía regional de Castilla y León, Junta de Castilla y León* (Comunicaciones, pp. 1404-1420). Junta de Castilla y León. [https://www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cee/dgeae/congresos\\_ecoreg/CERCL/152\\_1.PDF](https://www.jcyl.es/jcyl/cee/dgeae/congresos_ecoreg/CERCL/152_1.PDF)
- Hortelano Mínguez, L. A. (2014). Dinámicas actuales en la “raya” de Castilla y León y Portugal: despoblación, atonía económica y desvertebración interna. In R. Jacinto (Coord.), *Espaços de fronteira, territórios de esperança. das vulnerabilidades às dinâmicas de desenvolvimento* (Coleção Iberografias, no. 27, pp. 255-274). Centro de Estudos Ibéricos / Âncora.
- Hortelano Mínguez, L. A. (2023). Los retos demográficos de Castilla y León para el siglo XXI. In L. A. Hortelano (Dir.), *Gestionando la despoblación* (pp. 23-42). Junta de Castilla y León / Aranzadi.
- Hortelano Mínguez, L. A. & Mansvelt Beck, J. (2017). El desarrollo local y la cooperación transfronteriza en la Raya de Castilla y León. *Polígonos, Revista de Geografía* (29), 37-60. <https://doi.org/10.18002/pol.v0i29.5200>
- Hortelano Mínguez, L. A. & Martín Jiménez, M. I. (2022). El “reto demográfico” del sector central de la raya hispano-portuguesa: visibilidad del problema y transferencia de soluciones. In R. Martínez Cárdenas, M. de la Calle Vaquero, M. García Hernández, L. F. Cabrales Barajas, M. C. Mínguez García, L. Troitiño Torralba (Coords.), *Leyendo el territorio. Homenaje a Miguel Ángel Troitiño* (pp. 522-533). Universidad de Guadalajara. <http://repositorio.cualtos.udg.mx:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/1438>
- Hortelano Mínguez, L. A. & Martín Pescador, C. A. (2025). *Atlas de la raya hispano-lusa. Castilla y León-Centro y Norte de Portugal*. Junta de Castilla y León. [https://geografia.usal.es/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Atlas\\_de\\_la\\_Raya\\_CyL\\_Norte\\_Centro\\_2024-1.pdf](https://geografia.usal.es/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Atlas_de_la_Raya_CyL_Norte_Centro_2024-1.pdf)
- Información procedente de los Estados Miembros. Información que debe presentarse con arreglo al artículo 5, apartado 2 Creación de una Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial (AECT) [Reglamento (CE) n° 1082/2006 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 5 de julio de 2006 (DO L 210 de 31.7.2006, p. 19)]. *Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea* C 84/5, March 7, 2023. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C\\_.2023.084.01.0005.01.SPA&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2023%3A084%3AFULL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2023.084.01.0005.01.SPA&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2023%3A084%3AFULL)
- Instrumento de Ratificación del Convenio-Marco Europeo sobre cooperación transfronteriza entre comunidades o autoridades territoriales, hecho en Madrid el 21 de mayo de 1980. *BOE*, number 248, pages 30270-30279, October 16, 1990 (Spain). <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1990-24961>

- Interreg España-Portugal. (n. d.). *Qué es el Poctep*. Retrieved on June 24, 2025, from <https://www.poctep.eu/presentacion-poctep-2021-2027/>
- Jurado-Almonte, J. M., Pazos-García, F. J. & Castanho, R. A. (2020). Eurocities of the iberian borderland: a second generation of border cooperation structures. An analysis of their development strategies. *Sustainability*, 12(16), 6438. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166438>
- López-Davalillo Larrea, J. (2015-2016). Las eurociudades rayanas: Tui/Valença, Verín/Chaves, Badajoz/Elvas, Ayamonte/Sto. Antonio Vilareal. *Espacio, tiempo y forma*, (8-9), 131-167. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/0d091ef98a9c73be4cb0c5ad16b447da/1?cbl=1596337&pq-origsite=gscholar>
- López-Trigal, L. & López-Fernández, N. (2021). Territorio Bidasoa y eurociudad Vasca: estrategias y retos de una cooperación transfronteriza histórica. *Ciudad y Territorio. Estudios Territoriales*, 53(208), 331-352. <https://doi.org/10.37230/CyTET.2021.208.03>
- Martín-Jiménez, M. I. (2023). La atonía demográfica de la frontera salmantina (2000-2021). *Salamanca. Revista de Estudios*, (67), 69-87, <http://www.lasalina.es/documentacion/revistadeestudios/381-2-2.pdf>
- Martín-Jiménez, M. I. & Fernández-Sangrador, L. (2022, July). Crónica del retroceso demográfico en la Raya Central Ibérica (2000-2020). In M. I. Martín Jiménez, J. I. Plaza Gutiérrez & D. Ramos Pérez (Coords.), *XVII Coloquio ibérico de geografía. Nuevas fronteras y nuevos horizontes en la geografía ibérica: políticas y transformaciones territoriales* (pp. 490-502). Universidad de Salamanca / Asociación Española de Geografía / Associação Portuguesa de Geógrafos. [https://www.age-geografia.es/site/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ACTAS\\_V5\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.age-geografia.es/site/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ACTAS_V5_compressed.pdf)
- Martín Jiménez, M. I., Hortelano Mínguez, L. A. & Plaza Gutiérrez, J. I. (2007). Cooperación territorial y gobierno del territorio en Castilla y León. *Estudios Geográficos*, 68(263), 547-574. <https://doi.org/10.3989/egeogr.2007.i263.68>
- Ministerio de Transportes, Movilidad y Agenda Urbana. (2021, December 20). *Mitma pone hoy en servicio en Fuentes de Oñoro los últimos 3,2 kilómetros que completan todo el trazado de la Autovía de Castilla A-62* [Press release]. [https://www.transportes.gob.es/recursos\\_mfom/sala\\_prensa/211220\\_np\\_ps\\_a-62\\_frontera\\_portugal.pdf](https://www.transportes.gob.es/recursos_mfom/sala_prensa/211220_np_ps_a-62_frontera_portugal.pdf)
- Paül Carril, V. (2022). A estratexia do Río Miño transfronteirizo 2030: unha ordenación territorial para a raia húmida galegoportuguesa? *Revista Galega de Economía*, 31(2), 47-73. <https://doi.org/10.15304/rge.31.2.8291>
- Pintado, A. & Barrenechea, E. (1972). *La Raya de Portugal. La frontera del subdesarrollo*. Cuadernos para el Diálogo.
- Poeta Fernandes, G. (2019). Rural depopulation, social resilience and context costs in the border municipalities of central Portugal. Dichotomies of social reorganization vs absence of public policies. *Economía Agraria y Recursos Naturales*, 19(1), 121-149. <https://doi.org/10.7201/earn.2019.01.07>
- Protocolo de geminação entre os municípios de Monção (região norte de Portugal) e Salvaterra de Miño (Galiza, Espanha), March 28, 2015. [https://08e0e77b-2901-43b4-85d6-bbe6cb386381.filesusr.com/ugd/1edb10\\_50340f45f590410783e28331356ac3ec.pdf](https://08e0e77b-2901-43b4-85d6-bbe6cb386381.filesusr.com/ugd/1edb10_50340f45f590410783e28331356ac3ec.pdf)
- Quetglas Lull, L. & Ventura-Fernández, J. (2023). Un nuevo enfoque en la cooperación transfronteriza: el caso de la eurociudad del Guadiana. In *Geografía: cambios, retos*

- y adaptación. *Actas del xxviii Congreso de la Asociación Española de Geografía. Logroño, 12 al 14 de septiembre de 2023* (pp. 985-994). Asociación Española de Geografía / Universidad de La Rioja. <https://doi.org/10.21138/CG/2023.lc>
- Radio Águeda. (2023, November 16). *Presentación de una Navidad sin fronteras entre Fuentes de Oñoro y Vilar Formoso* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWT-a3frtcY>
- Ramis, S. (2021, March 22). Rihonor de Castilla, el pueblo de doble personalidad. *La Vanguardia*. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/ocio/viajes/20210322/6601864/rihonor-castilla-pueblo-doble-espana-portugal.html>
- Real Decreto 1317/1997, de 1 de agosto, sobre comunicación previa a la Administración General del Estado y publicación oficial de los convenios de cooperación transfronteriza de Comunidades Autónomas y Entidades Locales con entidades territoriales extranjeras. *BOE*, no. 207, pages 25908-25910, August 29, 1997 (Spain). <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-1997-19081>
- Reglamento (CE) 1082/2006 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 5 de julio de 2006, sobre la Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial (AECT). *Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea* (L210), July 31, 2006. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1082/oj?uri=CELEX:32006R1082>
- Resolución de 17 de julio de 2013, de la Secretaría General Técnica, por la que se publica la inscripción de los estatutos de la Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial “Eurocidade Chaves-Verín” en el Registro de Agrupaciones Europeas de Cooperación Territorial. *BOE*, no. 178, pages 54800-54819, July 26, 2013. [https://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2013-8151](https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2013-8151)
- Rodríguez, D. (2023). *Almeida asume la presidencia de la Eurociudad de la que forman parte Miróbriga y Fuentes de Oñoro*. Salamanca RTV al día. <https://salamancartvaldia.es/noticia/2023-04-10-almeida-asume-la-presidencia-de-la-eurociudad-de-la-que-forman-parte-mirobriga-y-fuentes-de-onoro-319742>
- Saavedra, A. (2021, February 4). Restricciones en Zamora | El paso fronterizo de Rihonor reabre para los vecinos. *La Opinión de Zamora*. <https://www.laopiniondezamora.es/comarcas/2021/02/04/paso-fronterizo-rihonor-reabre-vecinos-34027712.html>
- Secretaría General de Coordinación Territorial. (2021, May). *La cooperación transfronteriza realizada por las entidades territoriales españolas*. Ministerio de Política Territorial y Función Pública. [https://mpt.gob.es/dam/es/portal/politica-territorial/internacional/cooperacion/Coop\\_Transfronteriza/2013\\_04\\_Informe\\_web\\_cooperacion\\_transfronterizax.pdf](https://mpt.gob.es/dam/es/portal/politica-territorial/internacional/cooperacion/Coop_Transfronteriza/2013_04_Informe_web_cooperacion_transfronterizax.pdf)
- Unión Europea. Comité Europeo de las Regiones. (2024). *Lista multilingüe de todas las Agrupaciones Europeas de Cooperación Territorial (AECT) inscritas en el registro*. [https://cor.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-07/official\\_list\\_of\\_the\\_egtcs.pdf](https://cor.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-07/official_list_of_the_egtcs.pdf)
- Tratado entre el Reino de España y la República Francesa sobre cooperación transfronteriza entre entidades territoriales, hecho en Bayona el 10 de marzo de 1995. *BOE*, no. 59, pages 7789-7791, March 10, 1997. [https://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-1997-5148](https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-1997-5148)
- Tratado entre el Reino de España y la República Portuguesa sobre cooperación transfronteriza entre entidades e instancias territoriales, hecho en Valencia el 3 de octubre de 2002. *BOE*, no. 219, pages 33937-33943, September 12, 2003. <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2003-17351>

Tratado ajustado entre España y Portugal con el objeto de fijar los límites de ámbas naciones en la porción de frontera correspondiente á las provincias de Pontevedra, Orense, Zamora, Salamanca, Cáceres y parte de la de Badajoz, firmado en Lisboa por los Plenipotenciarios respectivos el día 29 de Setiembre de 1864. *Gaceta de Madrid*, year 205, no. 159, pages 1-2, June 8, 1866. <https://www.boe.es/gazeta/dias/1866/06/08/pdfs/GMD-1866-159.pdf>

María Isabel Martín Jiménez

Spanish. PhD in Geography from the Universidad de Salamanca. Professor in the Department of Geography at the Universidad de Salamanca. Representative of the Universidad de Salamanca on the executive committee of the Centro de Estudios Ibéricos based in Guarda (Portugal). Research lines: mountain landscapes, land use planning, rural development, territorial policies, cross-border cooperation. Recent publication: Martín Jiménez, M. I. (2024). Desequilibrios territoriales en la distribución de la población en Castilla y León. In L. A. Hortelano Mínguez (Dir.), *Gestionando la despoblación* (pp. 43-59). Aranzadi.