The right to define and control borders has long been conceptualised as a founding principle of the state. Borders define limits of governance, legal jurisdiction, identities and cultures. The deepening and widening of the European Union over the past decades has, however, started to change the meaning of borders as signifiers of national sovereignty. As its internal organisational borders have come down along with deepening cooperation, the emphasis the Union puts on its external borders has grown. The last ten years of Schengen cooperation between the participating member states and their relevant agencies (police, border guard and army) have been particularly important. This change in the administration of the border has also had a deep impact on notions of internal and external security. European Union member states have redefined their security priorities and re-drawn their security borders. Threats from the outside have global effects and can easily penetrate porous national borders. The outside is ever more present on the inside.

This thesis focuses on Finland in its European Union security context and asks where Finland’s borders are and what they represent. I argue that in our global security context the European Union is no longer concerned mainly with other states as posing threats to security, but with the security concerns of ever more mobile populations. Individuals are threats to be securitised against while the referent object to be protected is the European citizenry and the societal structures that uphold our way of life. The way to achieve this is through ever greater use of surveillance and control technologies and the labelling of individuals according to threat assessments. I come to the conclusion that internal security discourses at the EU level and the Finnish government level use a language of ‘global security’ favouring closed borders. These borders are not physical borders but deterritorialized organisational borders that can be found within member states' administrative practices, in various databanks (cyberspace) and in third countries, for example in the form of visa policies and carrier sanctions.

Finland has taken part in this redefinition of its security priorities since joining the European Union in 1995. It now shares many of the new border security priorities defined in EU-level security documents, i.e. terrorism, organised crime and illegal immigration, but it also has its own particular border issues: mistrust of Russia, mistrust of the security implications of EU enlargement and the need to offset the security implications of Schengen open borders by intensifying information gathering and sharing as well as internal surveillance mechanisms. Finnish internal security actors are not convinced of the ability of other Schengen states to fully secure their borders which Finland now sees as its ‘security borders’. Its relationship with Russia and its eastern border is characterised by distrust of this former wartime enemy and Cold War superpower. However, it also sees the necessity of cooperating with Russian authorities as a securitised border with Russia hinders trade and economic gain.

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