



BeNeLux Geography Conference 2026 – 60th RSA Anniversary Report

From 8-10 April 2026, Leuven, Belgium hosted the inaugural BeNeLux Geography Conference, a 2.5-day gathering that I helped organise as part of the organising committee. The conference brought together the geographical communities of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg for the first time in this format, drawing over 500 participants including early career researchers (ECRs), senior academics, and policymakers.

The conference was designed to provide a platform for presenting and debating the latest work in geography, spatial planning, and policymaking, while also creating space for informal exchange, networking, and career opportunities. By offering an accessible and easily reachable forum for colleagues across the Benelux region and beyond, the event helped inform both the daily and strategic work of researchers and policymakers, pooling resources, strengthening collaboration, and raising the visibility of geographic and regional research.

The programme combined substantial academic content – three keynote speeches spanning different sub-disciplines, 90 sessions and more than 400 presentations – with dedicated networking and icebreaking activities, as well as field trips that encouraged connection beyond the formal sessions. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, and the conference's success has already secured its future: a second edition is confirmed for 2028 in Groningen, the Netherlands. Networking opportunities proved especially valuable for early career researchers.

Secured RSA sponsorship for this conference was flexibly repurposed from catering funding into a new **BeNeLux Geography Early Career Initiative Award** scheme, and a winning grant proposal has now been selected under this scheme. This will be officially announced in early September 2026, after the summer break. The RSA sponsored award (£500) invited early career scholars to propose initiatives, in any format, from workshops to podcasts to collaborative projects, that carry forward the conference's spirit of cross-border geographic exchange and community-building across the Benelux and beyond.

By Sabine Dörry
RSA Ambassador to Luxembourg
Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER).



Photo credit ©jdesign