

Towards a Historical GIS of Europe: State-building processes and comparative spatial statistics in a “Digital Atlas on the History of Europe since 1500”

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Abstract

Since 2008 work on a European GIS has been underway at the Institute of European History, Mainz (Germany), as part of a Digital Atlas on the History of Europe since 1500 which is being put together as an online information system. A first prototype can be visited at <http://www.ieg-maps.uni-mainz.de/AtlasEuropa/>. The aims of the historical GIS-portions of the Atlas are threefold: 1. Offer an interactive map on the evolution of the European state system since 1815, and – in exemplary fashion – since 1500. 2. Become a generator of maps on selected themes for the thematic section of the Atlas. 3. Become the main base for the statistical portion of the Atlas, thereby offering spatial statistics on a comparative basis for the 100 or so different European countries that existed between 1815 and 2009. The paper will report on the general basis and aims of the EU-Atlas GIS and, secondly, present some first results pertaining to the three areas of GIS-based activity outlined above.

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