CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
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Foreword. Acknowledgments. Introduction.

Written by
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Péter Balogh
Márton Pete
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
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Foreword

Dear Reader,

This volume owes its birth to a hard two-year-long work of many of us. Let me present to You in a nutshell the background of the project through which this book came about.

The beginning of the project dates back to the approval of the Road Map of Priority Area (PA) 10 (Institutional Capacity and Cooperation) of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The third working group of PA10 (lead by the coordinator, Mr Kurt Puchinger) approved the Road Map in February 2012, defining not only the objectives to be achieved but also milestones to pass on the road.

One of the objectives of the Road Map was “[t]o facilitate the administrative cooperation of communities living in border regions”, with a vision of strengthening the internal cohesion of the Danube region. The working group has defined the elaboration of a feasibility study on CB governance based on existing experiences as the first milestone on the road to fulfil the above mentioned objective. CESCI has been invited to be the coordinator of this first project which was drafted and given the title „Crossing the borders” at the beginning of 2013.

With a view to lay the basis for a feasibility study, the current project aimed at unfolding the present conditions of cross-border cooperation within the Danube basin, i.e. the socio-economic features of border regions; framework conditions for cross-border cooperation; and best practice examples thereof, presented in 14 case studies.

Our association as lead partner of the research project has been awarded a grant of EUR 200 000 by the Hungarian Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, directed at that time by Mr Tibor Navracsics, present EU Commissioner for Education.

The scientific frames of the project (hypotheses, methodology and templates of the research) have been set by the former director and deputy director of the CESCI European Institute, Mr Zsolt Bottlik (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) and Mr László Jeney (Corvinus University of Budapest).
The authors of the case studies were selected through a call launched on March 31st, 2014. We invited three contributors each from seven countries. Finally, we received tenders from six countries (from Austria no tenderer applied). Accordingly, the internal borderlands of the Danube region were divided for analysis among the winning tenderers, which were: Institut EuroSchola (Czech Republic), Institute for Spatial Planning (Slovakia), Regional Science Association (Serbia), Superna d.o.o. (Croatia), Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy (Romania), and Sofia University (Bulgaria). Our colleagues at the European Institute (Esztergom, Hungary) completed research on the remaining border areas.

Figure 1: The Danube region borderlands and the division of tasks among partners
The partners were requested to gather territorial data for the investigations targeting the socio-economic situation of the given border areas, and to elaborate two case studies each on best practice examples according to a previously determined work structure. The first versions of all studies and databases were delivered by December 31st, 2014. Following submission, our colleagues started to structure the data bases and to edit the texts. This huge work took almost a year, the result of which you now hold in your hands in this comprehensive volume.

In addition to the studies, our colleagues have been developing an EUSDR border database by utilising the data gathered by the partners. This is undergoing structuration now and will be available in the near future on our website.

According to our plans, we will continue working on the creation of a platform of CBC within the EUSDR and the sharing of information on best practices.

Together with the co-authors and co-editor Péter Balogh we hope and believe that the experiences collected and analysed here will be of interest to all studying or actively engaging in cross-border cooperation in the Danube region and beyond.

Gyula Ocskay
Acknowledgments

We owe first and foremost our co-authors from abroad for their demanding and particular work; our former colleagues for developing the common research methodology and the templates; Mr Puchinger, coordinator of PA10 of the EUSDR, for his encouraging attitude and professional support; and Mr Tibor Navracsics, EU Commissioner for Education, former Minister of Public Administration and Justice of Hungary for his financial support that made the implementation of the project viable.
1. Introduction, content, research design and methodology

(Written by: Márton Pete and Péter Balogh)

1.1 Introduction and content

This volume is targeted at policy experts and the scientific community alike. A comparison of fourteen vast case studies of border regions is a relatively rare opportunity for scholarly experts, and as such forms an added value in itself. Additionally, as mentioned in the Foreword the studies were prepared not just by the team of one single organisation, but by competent experts from each of the countries involved. Apart of the latters’ in-depth knowledge, this contributes to mitigate any potential bias from the side of the coordinating organisation.

The volume is structured in two parts. The first one begins with this introductory chapter explaining the methodological foundations of the research. It is followed by a general presentation of the Danube region. The two subsequent chapters deal more specifically with the border regions in the area and their cross-border cooperation. Chapter 2 provides a statistical analysis of the borderland areas of the Danube Region, thereby identifying their socio-economic position within the larger area’s general pattern. Here, we seek to answer the question to what extent border regions can be considered as a distinct territorial category with regard to their characteristic features. Chapter 3 aims at a general evaluation of institutionalized cross-border cooperation initiatives throughout the macro-region. CBC bodies are scrutinized regarding their institutional form, work intensity, ethno-linguistic and historical characteristics, major fields of activity, duration and number of countries involved. The second part contains the fourteen case studies, each of which forming a chapter of its own. The final chapter is a comparative analysis of the case studies, recognising patterns behind the apparently varying intensity of the cross-border regions.
1.2 Research design and methodology

We opted for the implementation of a series of case study analyses on some selected cross-border cooperation bodies. A total of fourteen case studies were implemented by CESCI and its partners from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. All participants were requested to conduct two analyses each, on two cross-border initiatives of their own choice, either at the external or at the internal border of the Danube Region, while selected bodies must have had partners from at least two EUSDR Member States. Another important criterion was the request to choose cooperation bodies resulting from systematic thinking rather than occasional project-level working organs established for single projects. Both CESCI and all the partners were able to choose from a wide range of cooperation initiatives with various institutional forms such as EGTCs, Euroregions, twin cities etc., that

- are institutionalised;
- were established by cooperation between territorial administrative entities (e.g. settlements, municipalities, districts or counties); and
- were established with development aspirations.

For the selection of the best possible cases the following aspects were suggested to be taken into consideration:

- Has the collaboration resulted in an intensification of meaningful cross-border relations?
- Has some kind of local identity appeared in the area of the cross-border cooperation?
- Have they managed to exploit development funds for the cross-border cooperation?
- Are their objectives adequate in relation to the socio-economic situation in the border region?
- Has the cross-border cooperation affected the development of the region?

Partners were asked to prepare interviews along with the case studies with officials and the most active actors of the respective cooperation initiatives.

The case studies were supposed to contain approximately 150 000 characters (space included), yet their extent turned out to show some diversity.

The case studies were required to refer to the border section indicated to the research partner (see Table 1) and partners were enabled to prepare both case studies for the same border section. Evidently, once a cooperation body was chosen, the research area should cover both or all sides of the respective cross-border cooperation rather than only the side belonging to the partner’s country of origin. Therefore participants were prevented from choosing the same entity, as all border sections were addressed to different partners.

Some of the border sections could not be automatically addressed to the partners as none of the neighbouring countries were represented among the participant institutions. Therefore the
Austria–Germany, Austria–Slovenia, and Bosnia–Montenegro border sections were subject to application and were taken over by three of the partners.

Table 1: Research partners for the case study analyses by country and study areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner institute</th>
<th>Border section</th>
<th>Number of case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CZ</strong> Institut EuroSchola</td>
<td>Czech–German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech–Austrian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech–Slovak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Austrian–German</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SK</strong> Institute of Spatial Planning, Bratislava</td>
<td>Slovak–Austrian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovak–Ukrainian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovak–Hungarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HU</strong> European Institute of Cross-Border Studies, Esztergom</td>
<td>Hungarian–Ukrainian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungarian–Serbian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungarian–Croatian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hungarian–Slovenian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HR</strong> Superna Ltd.</td>
<td>Croatian–Slovenian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Croatian–Bosnian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Croatian–Montenegrin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenian–Austrian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RS</strong> Republic Science Association Subotica, Serbia</td>
<td>Serbian–Croatian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serbian–Montenegrin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serbian–Bosnian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bosnian–Montenegrin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BG</strong> Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Geology and Geography Faculty</td>
<td>Bulgarian–Serbian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulgarian–Romanian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RO</strong> Institute Of Geography, Romanian Academy</td>
<td>Romanian–Hungarian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanian–Serbian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanian–Moldavian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanian–Ukrainian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the elaboration of the case studies, the structure below was proposed to the partners, including the respective questions as aspects for further clarification in their chapters. Though the use of this very same structure was not mandatory for the partners, all of the questions were required to be answered within the studies, if applicable.
Proposed structure for the case studies

I. Introduction
   o In brief, for what reasons was this cross-border cooperation chosen to be the best example?

II. The development of the cross-border cooperation
   o What were the antecedents?
   o When was it established?
   o How was it established?
   o Was it a bottom-up initiative or a top-down decision?
   o Who were the most active participants of the establishment?
   o What kind of pros and cons were identified during the establishment?

III. Determination of geographical confines
   o Which are the associated settlements?
   o Did this area previously exist as an administrative unit?
   o Is it a contiguous area?
   o To what proportion does it extend to the area of the participating countries?
   o Has the delimited area of cooperation changed?
   o Is territorial expansion included in the plans?
   o Would any other actor (municipality etc) like to join?

IV. Organisational and institutional structure, operation
   o What kind of organisational units is the cooperation built up of?
   o What is the role of each organisational unit?
   o Has the organisational structure changed over time?
   o Where is its seat located?
   o Who is the leader, where does (s)he live?
   o What is/are the working language(s)?
   o What kind of institutional form does the cooperation function under? (Is it an organisation, legal person, enterprise, etc?)

V. Composition of the working group
   o How many employees does it have?
   o What qualifications do employees have?
   o What is the composition of the employees based on nationality and citizenship?
   o Are there any commuters?

VI. Main activity areas/profile
   o Is the cooperation involved in academic research activities?
   o Is it involved in publishing activities?
   o Does it offer legal assistance?
   o Does it apply for development funds for the involved partners?
   o Does it communicate tender calls to local actors?
   o Is it involved in educational and training activities?
   o What kind of programs and events does it organise?
Despite these largely fixed criteria, the case studies showed a high variety upon their finalisation by the partners. Therefore, after submission, all of them were worked through and adjusted by the colleagues at CESCI to making them more comparable. In the remaining of the book the reader can gain an insight in the outcomes of this complex, thought enriching work process and its results.
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1. Introduction

The territorial cohesion of the European Union does not only necessitate the opening of internal borders as well as the removal of legal and administrative barriers, but also the appropriate evaluation and analysis of the integration process, based on objective data. In the last few years, the extension of the European Union and the resulting changes of the territorial processes, the relocation of territorial focal points and the growing demand on community financing tools made it more and more important for the distinct specialized policies to redefine their activities, toolkits and objectives as well as to enhance their efficiency; for all of these aims the review and assessment of the most important shifts and achievements on the respective fields were essential.

Such was the case for one of the most dynamically evolving community policies of the recent years, INTERREG too. Started as a community initiative in 1990 and concentrating on the overcoming of social, economic and cultural barrier effect of state borders through the promotion of cross-border cooperation on local and regional levels, the policy proved successful; as a result it became part of the regional policy of the European Union under the name European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) for the 2007-2013 budget period. The underpinning of the achievements of the past two decades, the promotion of the measurability of cross-border interactions is of utmost importance therewith to prove to policy makers: it worth to support such objectives from community funds because they create tangible added value. Moreover, territorial monitoring based on the possibly largest range of data and information may ensure in a long term the efficient use of development funds whilst feedbacks can contribute to make the interventions of INTERREG program and also that of European regional policy more targeted.

In the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the evaluation of cross-border interactions has high actuality. The average surface of the countries is smaller than in Western Europe; therefore, the extent of borders is higher. Moreover, these borders meant hardly penetrable barriers in many fields of social life for the countries of this region during the years of communism. European integration not only enabled the former socialist CEE countries, the opening of physical borders but it created an opportunity for the exploitation of local and locational energies. In our days, the CEE region is great beneficiary of European Union supports dedicated to cross-border cooperation (INTERREG/ETC). However, strategic planning necessitates the objective interpretation and assessment of local conditions and processes, based on the possibly widest range of statistical data.

The specific situation of the region within the all-european space has already been recognized by the European Union, having launched macroregional initiative Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) in 2011. The surface of the macroregion does not only cover the territories of the former European socialist countries (Poland and the Baltic States are not even members), old member states (such as Austria and the German federal states of Bavaria and Baden-
Württemberg) as well as candidate countries (Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro), but ENP countries (Ukraine, Moldova) also take part in the joint work. Nevertheless, the macroregion embraces a largely coherent area in both historical, geographical, economic and social terms, which lays the ground for being considered as an adequate spatial entity for the interventions targeting the reinforcement of territorial cohesion.

At the same time, the region is characterised by powerful social and economic inequalities, which counteract cohesion efforts. The spatial structure of the region is marked by various dichotomies both in the terms of large scale patterns as well as regional and local levels. The revelation of these inequalities together with the identification of the causes and circumstances behind are, as we have already mentioned it, of decisive importance for the planning of development policies. Macroregional differences are largely dependent on the economic situation of the distinct countries; therefore, the Danube Region is only slightly competent in the handling of these questions. Regional and local level imbalances however cannot be ignored by the (macro)regional policy of the European Union, certainly not in the case of zones such as borderland regions which hold a certain relevance from the point of view of the creation of territorial cohesion as the experiences of these areas may anticipate the likely outcomes and even the failure of the distinct interventions.

In the followings, we are making an attempt to reveal and analyse the regional and the local level social and economic inequalities which must be taken into consideration in all cases in the course of the elaboration of policy planning. In the case of the Danube Region, no analysis with such a depth has been performed and, as we shall see in the followings, the implementation of this present investigation also met a series of difficulties. Nevertheless, we find its realisation important, assuming that it may lead us to a more inclusive Danube Region which is able to provide with an adequate territorial framework for the achievement of a real territorial cohesion.
2. Research database and methodology

Our present study strives after a situation analysis of the sub-state, mainly local level, entities of the countries involved in the European Union Danube Region Strategy. The basic aim of this analysis is to indicate to what extent borderlands regions may contribute to the strengthening of macroregional territorial cohesion, both in the terms of the Danube Region and the European community, as well we to what extent their difficulties may hinder their efforts for cohesion. For this objective the socio-economic conditions of borderland regions are needed to be revealed and their position in the wider geographic space must be identified.

2.1 Database

For the purposes of the investigation we used the following indices on the possibly lowest territorial administrative level:

- Population density
- Population ageing index
- Natural population increase as well as decrease
- Birth and death rates
- Migration rate
- Commuting rate
- Activity rate
- Unemployment rate
- Proportion of working-age inhabitants
- Tourist accommodation capacity
- Occupancy of tourist accommodations

Although, Eurostat collects statistical data on EU Member States (along with some Non-Member States) on the basis of a uniform methodology, the tight range and moderate actuality of accessible data, on the one hand, and the territorial levels of data gathering (predominantly NUTS 2 and NUTS 3) which are inadequate for the measurement of local-level processes, on the other hand, are important concerns. The acquaintance with the processes indicating the deepening of European level social and economic integration over the borders necessitates datasets which are measured and registered on the local territorial levels marked as LAU 1 (district) and LAU 2 (settlement) by Eurostat.

In the case of such in-depth analyses, a fundamental problem is meant by the fact that statistical data for the local-level territorial entities of the distinct countries are collected from different sources. The principal and thus most reliable sources of statistical data are national
statistical offices which basically carry out their activities within the framework of the individual state; therefore, considerable differences may occur between distinct national systems.

In the individual national statistical systems the collection and processing of data may be performed in different manners, along with the elaboration of the distinct indicators. The acquisition of absolute indices was preferred so to enable the production of relative figures on the basis of a possibly uniform methodology. These indicators are however not immune from country specific elements. Spectacular example for this is provided by the differences of datasets on unemployment in the distinct countries: the definition of the status of unemployment is diverse from country to country, therefore in spite of the use of standardised relative figures (compared to overall population), the comparison of these data must be considered thoroughly.

The principal sources of datasets at disposal for local-level entities are censuses. A positive trend in this respect is that European countries continuously harmonised their census years; however, the date and frequency of other data registrations are still matters of unfavourable differences. As the frequency of data collection is largely influenced by both the dates of former data registration dates and other traditions, it is in many cases highly improbable that the same datasets are available for all countries for the identical period; therefore, one or two years of differences must be accepted as a compromise.

Many difficulties occur in the terms of the accessibility of data as well. Statistical publications and methodology are still overwhelmingly released on the domestic language and they are only rarely at disposal in English, thought a remarkable advancement took place in recent years in this respect. Nevertheless, for in-depth analyses one still need the consult publication issued on domestic language, for which our partners provided with an invaluable help.

The range of statistical data, collected and processed by statistical offices is also highly varied. The experiences show that the more countries are taken into consideration, the higher the probability is, that a dataset is lacking in one or more of the countries. A general opinion among researchers is that fully appropriate statistical datasets are never at disposal without gap; therefore managing data shortages is a usual task at every scientific investigation. Any research project can get on with some extent of data shortage, and an analysis without full data coverage may also provide with interesting information; however, the interpretation of research outcomes need to be carried out carefully.

National statistical offices are also not able to reflect on numerous activities with a cross-border character. A typical example for this is cross-border commuting, for which usually only estimations are available; nevertheless, estimated numbers from different sources for the same phenomena usually show considerable differences. Some distinct forms of commuting cannot be revealed through statistical methods only (grey and black employment), may be dependent on numerous subjective elements both in terms of time and definition (e.g. shopping tourism) or are measured with figures which may not be reliable from the point of view of comparability (e.g. number of pupils with foreign address in borderland schools,
proportion of SMEs in foreign property). Due to these reasons we did not involve such data within our investigation as the outcomes of such analyses would likely be overwhelmingly irrelevant.

The methodology and temporality of data registration and publication, the degree of collection and systematisation and last but not least the accessibility of data show largely different images for each country, which further worsen their comparability and impede the objectives set at the beginning of the research project. In the forthcoming only those statistical analyses are presented in the study of which the data were reliably at disposal in the majority of the respective countries.

2.2 Methodology

The aspects introduced in the previous subchapter accurately defined the framework for the setup of the research database. The range of the deliverable investigations was needed to be specified accordingly. In an attempt to outline of the present situation and future perspectives of borderland areas, we needed to find such methods which may be able to present the macroregional position as well as the socio-economic characteristics and problems of these areas on the basis of the possibly most complex aspect. As a consequence of this and also that of the assumption that cohesion policy may bring along new territorial organisational shifts, we considered the notion and principle of territorial cohesion itself as a guiding line for our investigations. As a result, we performed a highly comparable situation analysis on the entirety of borderland areas, which has a strong cohesional focus and is able to answer the fundamental questions.

The use of the indicator of population density enables to indicate which borderland areas fulfilled what role within their own countries (centre, semi-periphery, periphery) as well as to what extent the west-east population density slope is effective and whether borderland-located urban centres are able to exercise their influence on the neighbouring side of the border.

The balance or, as the case may be, the imbalance of the population in terms of age structure is mostly spectacular through ageing index reflecting on which zones have favourable demographic basis for the ensuring of stable economic growth and in which areas may future initiatives on cooperation and development be endangered by the perturbation of demographic balance. Moreover, in case of parallel processes on the neighbouring sides of the border may point at certain phenomena which unfold on supra-state level, largely independently from state borders.

Natural increase as well as decrease, along with birth and death rates are expected to show a largely complex image which is to be influenced by a number of factors (such as economic, socio-cultural, health conditions, etc.); altogether, these indices are likely further developing
the twofold image which differentiate groups of localities with favourable as well as unfavourable situation, based on ageing index.

Migration balance, as of our expectation, may possibly point at the economically favourable and unfavourable (attractive and unattractive) areas, referring to their dynamics, as well as to their ability to attract and maintain population, and thereby to their social and economic significance in the wider geographic space. A similar, thought territorially more focused investigation is awaited to be feasible through the analysis of the figures of commuting.

Activity and unemployment rate may point at economically more and less successful regions; however, they are expected to provide with a largely complex image which is considerably influenced by the structural characteristics of the distinct countries, on the one hand and the varied definitions of unemployment, on the other hand. These all make the comparisons among countries rather problematic, though they may well characterise the domestic spatial structure and focal points of the individual countries.

The figures on tourism (bed places per 1 000 inhabitants; guest nights per 1 000 inhabitants) are supposed to make the difference between borderlands with favourable and unfavourable economic conditions, by pointing at the areas mostly attractive for domestic and international tourists and enlisting those which are not. Nevertheless, touristic attractiveness is an outcome of both natural, social and economic features, as a consequence a series of interrelationships can be derived from these datasets. Taking into consideration these distinct indices may enable the investigation of the features of tourism (such as domestic vs. international attractiveness), as well as that of the structural characteristics of tourism as a sector.
3. Overall analysis on the regional inequalities of the EU and the Danube region

3.1 Land cover

The Danube Region is generally characterised by balanced duality of lowland surfaces along the River Danube and its tributaries and that of mountainous areas belonging mainly to the great European mountain ranges, such Alps, Carpathians, Dinaric Alps and Balkan Mountains, among others.

This duality is noticeable when looking at the land use pattern. More than half of the Danube region (51.46%) is covered by agricultural areas, typically on the fertile lowlands. The ratio of the woodland areas is considerably high (41.52%), as well, as a characteristic of the mountain areas. The water bodies and wetlands amount to less than 2% of the region’s area, meanwhile about 5.23% is covered with artificial surfaces. However, land cover ratios in the different countries are reasonably variable, the proportion of natural and semi-natural areas is significant throughout the region. In addition, a significant decrease of the cropland area is observed in the region, which is favourable from the aspects of ecosystems (grassland and forest).

![Natura 2000 and national designated areas in the Danube River Basin](image)

*Figure 1. Natura 2000 areas in the Danube Region*
There is a relatively high proportion of protected areas which reflects the natural wealth of the Danube region. Protected areas in the Danube region cover almost the entire spectrum of natural values, such as geological, hydrological, botanical, zoological, landscape values. Among the countries of the Danube region, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Hungary assigned Natura 2000 areas in a ratio above the EU27 average compared to their own areas. Based on the implementing indicator of the Habitats Directive, it can be concluded that only Germany, Bulgaria and Austria are equal to or above the EU27 average. The Czech Republic assigned the lowest percent of its area for Natura 2000 areas, and as for implementing the directive, it is ranked in the last position among the countries of the Danube region.

The larger urbanised areas, indicated on the first map of Figure 2, are largely concentrated.

![Figure 2: Regional differences in land cover and use in the Danube River Basin](image)

The ratio of the artificial areas being almost unusable from the aspects of ecosystems is above 5% in almost all countries having measuring values, which belong to the Danube region. The typical value is about 6% but there are some extremities: Germany provides a ratio above 8%, while in Slovenia, a markedly favourable value (less than 3%) was measured.
3.2 Urban network

Metropolitan and regional urban centres play a significant role in the economic and social life of larger regions, providing them with a spatial concentration of employment opportunities and a range of services. Therefore, these centres have a gravitational effect on nearby or even distant areas and this hinterland can also extend in cross-border terms.

Commonly used scientific methods in the analysis of spatial (power)relations in the urban network are gravity models with which the theoretical hinterlands of the particular centres can be determined. In our analysis, we have chosen the so-called ‘Reilly formula’. When determining the “gravity space”, this model takes into consideration the distance between two points and the “mass” of the network of settlements (mainly: population). It is important to insist that this method is a theoretical research method. It provides no values verifiable from point to point, but it rather (quite realistic) offers ratios, indicating trends in an objective, uniformly comparable form. Moreover, it abstracts from the administrative borderlines which break the spatial continuity, therefore it indicates well the eventual cross-border territorial potentials of the certain centres.

The results of the extensive calculations were illustrated graphically, projected on the map in order to be interpreted in an easier way. The Figure 3 represents the theoretical hinterlands of the broader region’s principal and sub-centres together. All of the hypothetical hinterlands of the NUTS 3 centres, which belong to the macro-region and have at least 50,000 inhabitants can be followed.

Based on this examination methodology Munich, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade and Sofia seems to have considerably large cross-border hinterlands. Some larger areas (such as Bosnia, Dalmatia, Bukovina and Eastern Trachia) are outside of the gravity of principal centres which has a manifest effect on their socio-economic status.

The potential and current urban network connections are eventually organised in two levels in the Danube region. The main centres form the backbone of the network accompanied by subcentres which are able to deserve not only internal but external relations, as well. The role of the subcentres can be identified in the cooperation of city pairs, twin cities and polycentric city networks.

By examining the settlements which serve as seats or branches of the macro-regional cooperation in the Danube region, the capitals of the particular countries (especially Vienna, Sofia, Zagreb, Budapest, Bucharest, Bratislava, Belgrade) and the large cities which follow in the settlement hierarchy are marked out (e.g. in Croatia: Split, in Hungary: Szeged, in Serbia: Novi Sad, in the Czech Republic: Brno).

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Vienna is the only metropolis of the Danube region and its position is unambiguously amplified by the fact that the 3rd United Nations Headquarter, after New York and Geneva, can be found there. The city has altogether 10 organisational units, offices and commissions unlike other cities of the Danube region with no such functions. The organisations and programme secretariats of the European Union are represented in Vienna (European Agency for Fundamental Rights), Budapest (European Institution of Innovation and Technology), Prague (European GNSS Supervisory Authority) and Ljubljana (Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators).

Despite the relatively low number of the institutions, Munich and the adjacent towns (Heidelberg etc.) play the role of the primary scientific centre of the macro-region. In the field of research and development responsible for innovation with its participation international cooperation can be launched, the development of the strong capacities regarding life science and automobile industry provides a good opportunity for this in the region. A co-operation between the region’s pole cities to propagate innovation has great importance in the Danube region. Graz, Brno, Bratislava, Cluj-Napoca, Chișinău, Belgrade, Ljubljana and Ivano-Frankivsk serve as further important scientific bases.
The Central European countries form a common group in the area of the European Union, where the central settlements of Prague, Budapest and Bratislava belong to the 3rd category. The functional urban regions of Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania can be classified only to the fourth level.

There is no global node in the Danube region, which could play an important role on a larger scale. Thus, the urban centres which play an important role in the external and internal macro-regional relations constitute a triple hierarchy system: there are centres of European importance, of macro-regional importance as well as centres at national-regional level. To the category of national-regional centres belong among others Linz, Cluj-Napoca, Győr, Rijeka or Zenica. The category of macro-regional centres are represented by major rural centres, such as

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2 ESPON 111: Potentials for polycentric development in Europe
Stuttgart, Bratislava, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Zagreb and Chişinău. And finally, European-level nodes are Vienna, Munich, Budapest, Prague, Bucharest, Sofia and Belgrade.

Polycentricity, dominating the cohesion of the urban network of the Danube region, is influenced by three factors: size, location and interconnection. The national disparities considered on this field are disadvantageous in terms of the territorial cohesion. According to the figures of ESPON’s POLYCE research, the urban network of only few countries is able to fulfil the fundamental principles of polycentricity within the national borders; however, not the whole macro-region was examined.

The degree of urbanization is relatively high in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Ukraine; the rate of urban population surpasses two-thirds of total population in these countries. The area of the Balkans is much more rural due to its history of urban geography, where small towns dominate in comparison to macro-regional standards.

In terms of ESPON’s METROBORDER project on cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions 11 such regions are referred in the ESPON research, of which two, namely the Vienna–Bratislava and the Katowice–Ostrava region are situated inside the Danube Region. Compared to EU 15 Member States, the development of cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions caught up much later in Eastern and Central Europe. Consequently, the urban network is still dominated by domestic metropolitan agglomerations; however, some prominent cities in the relative proximity of the border has already benefitted from cross-border agglomeration processes, such as the capitals of Vienna and Bratislava together with the regional centres of Győr and Brno, contributing so to the emergence of a cross-border polycentric agglomeration, the so-called CENTROPE region. Besides this area some sections of the Czech-German, Austro-German and Czech-Slovak-Polish border also stand out concerning the density of important urban centres and the intensifying interaction among them.
Figure 5: Cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions and the position of the constituent functional urban areas

METROBORDER: Cross-border Polycentric Metropolitan Regions
3.3 Status of the borders

The internal cohesion of the Danube region has been fundamentally affected by the perpetual status of the borders. In this respect the borderland areas of the region have a wider variety of state borders than ever before. The countries of the Schengen zone have no more internal physical borders; however, there are actually three EU member states outside the Schengen zone among the EUSDR member countries. There are also associated countries, whose borders are to be opened in the medium term; and neighbouring third countries whose borders which will remain permanently closed.

Figure 6: The status of the borders and the expected changes of those in the macro-region of the Danube River Basin
The barrier effect of the borders is not only determined by their legal status, but also by the infrastructural conditions at the borders. Border crossing points are to be found on the borders of Western European countries in an average distance of 7-8 kilometres from each other. The physical geographic features, such as the Alps in the Western part of the Danube Region, can mean physical barriers as a consequent of which this above mentioned density of border crossing points is not possible to reach; however, physical obstacles are less problematic here than in the East. In the Eastern part of the Danube Region, where the border is confined to streams, such as the Danube (in the case of the Hungary-Slovakia, Croatia-Serbia, Serbia-Romania, Romania-Bulgaria and Romania-Ukraine border), the Morava (Austria-Slovakia border), the Drava (Hungary-Croatia border) and the Sava (Croatia-Bosnia border) borders are hard obstacles that would need costly investments (mainly bridges) to overcome. In other cases, border regions simply lack road and rail infrastructure (such as in the case of Hungary-Romania or Hungary-Serbia borders) or it is politic seclusion which ends up in the low number of border crossings (borders of Ukraine at first).

All in all, one could see the weakening of borders as administrative barriers within the macro-region throughout the past decades which points towards a strengthening territorial cohesion. Furthermore, the predicted lifting of visa requirements as well as the cancellation of other travel restrictions might also have a positive effect in this respect. On the other hand, the free
movement of people is challenged from time to time in Western political discourse because of security and social issues, therefore the dissolution of borders is not probable in the near future. The separating function of the borders of the greater region hardens from the Northwest towards the East and Southeast areas and seemingly this remain so permanently or at least for a longer term.

3.4 Governance and multi-level governance in the Danube region

The European model of governance could not develop at its full extent in the most countries of the Danube Region. To be specific, the late feudal states of the region were not replaced by bourgeois democracies but by authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in the 20th century. Most of the countries of the former Soviet bloc really did not even get a chance for the development of classic (western style) democratic institutions until 1989. Through the Euro-Atlantic integration, the adoption of the western models, the legal stability and the democracy of decision-making, as well as the level of the civil self-organisation have been improved significantly and some mechanisms of the transparency also have been developed. However, it would be a great mistake looking for indicators and mechanisms in the case of the 20-25-year-old Eastern European democracies, for the development of which the western countries had centuries.

States have an extremely important role in the distribution and coordination of financial resources, their hierarchical relationships greatly define the decision-making, its methods and its pace. The vertical structure of the states of the Danube region (role and strength of the central authority, regional and local level) is fairly different, together with the relationship between the authorities and the different levels of stakeholders, the appearance of different competencies.

As for the entire region, we can distinguish three different types of State organisation.

1. In centralised unitary states, the central authority has a dominant role, in contrast regional level is largely of administrative nature. In certain countries (Hungary) the role of the local level is considerable, meanwhile it is almost insignificant elsewhere (Slovenia).
2. In decentralised unitary states the role of the regional level is more powerful. The might of the central authority can be more (e.g.: Slovakia), or less direct (like in the Czech Republic).
3. Lastly, in case of the federal states (Austria, Germany) the central authority unites the independent regions having a local government and a high degree of autonomy (provinces).

As the White Paper of the Committee of the Regions, dealing with this topic, set out states have a decisive role in designing the conditions of multi-level governance. Although some progress
of decentralisation can be observed in the European Union, the conditions of the shared governance are yet quite rudimentary.

The different governance frameworks of the nation-states of the Danube region can be explained by the fact that the states developed individual and different regimes, on the basis of their national features. As a result in case of the cross-border governance, the representatives of two or more authorities with significant differences in competencies and legislative capabilities interact with each other, and they have to face administrative and financial problems when developing common management systems in the absence of appropriate provisions.

Bordersides can also approach to each other through the harmonisation process of laws, thus creating the legal conditions of the cross-border multi-level governance. This is typically a national level competence and the territory of the Danube region is involved in many initiatives aiming at some sort of integration of various governance frameworks. In any case, the Danube Region Strategy is the only one that strives to create the conditions of the harmonisation between the sectorial policies and the relevant legal environment through involvement of the countries. As a result, the White Paper encourages initiatives aiming at the strengthening of territorial cohesion with special stress on the role of the macro-regional strategies in this field, as their implementation cannot be imagined without some degree of implementation of multi-level governance.4

3.5 The initiatives of the Danube Valley integration

The need for the Danube cooperation is not a new idea: the first committee protecting the freedom of navigation on the Danube was established in 1856. Over the course of the last one hundred and fifty years, large number of plans and initiatives were launched, ranging from strict naval issues to political integration.

The „process of Ulm“, dating back to 2001, laid down the base for macro-regional cooperation and a strategy. The first summit in Ulm was followed by 5 further conferences (Melk, Esztergom, Passau, Stuttgart and Ulm). At the latest conference organized in October 2008, commissioner Danuta Hübner announced the inauguration of the second macro-regional strategy of the EU.
The Strategy\(^5\) was approved in 2011 during the Hungarian presidency, and it is based on two documents: the Communication\(^6\) and the Action Plan\(^7\). The Communication has set the main objectives (four pillars) of the Strategy. The Action Plan has defined the priority areas and potential projects (as examples) related to particular pillars (being in harmony with the EU 2020 Strategy objectives):

- connecting the Danube region (1) to improve mobility and multimodality, (2) to encourage more sustainable energy and (3) to promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts;
- protecting the environment of the Danube region (1) to restore and maintain the quality of waters, (2) to manage environmental risks and (3) to preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils;
- building prosperity in the Danube region (1) to develop the Knowledge Society through research, education and information technologies, (2) to support the competitiveness of enterprises, including cluster development, and (3) to invest in people and skills;
- strengthening the Danube region (1) to step up institutional capacity and cooperation and (3) to work together to promote security and tackle organised and serious crime.

Each of the priority areas are hosted by a coordinator state and managed by an international Steering Committee which are supported by working groups deal with issues related to the particular area.

In 2012-2013, the Priority Areas collected and defined particular projects to be realised in an international / transnational context and created their roadmaps aiming to mark the way of implementation. These documents and concrete projects under preparation point at the local needs for transnational cooperation which may be taken into account during the elaboration of the Danube Programme.

### 3.6 Current cross border cooperation initiatives

Since 1990, the countries of East and Central Europe have been gradually working off their handicap in the field powered by the background energy rising from the liberation and the reinvention of cultural-historic togetherness. Moreover, the countries of Eastern Europe could start the common development activities on an advanced level of institutionalisation, and they do not need to go through the whole evolution process as the western countries did.


\(^6\) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. European Union Strategy for Danube Strategy. COM(2010)715 final

\(^7\) SEC(2010) 1489 final
Initially, cross-border cooperation initiatives were local partnerships, motivated by geographical proximity and by the common cultural/natural/historic heritage, managed by a foundation or a public corporation, founded and financed by the wealthier members of the cooperation in order to work out and manage the projects implemented within the frames of partnership.

Institutionalized cooperation saw a boost in the mid-20th century, as the first such initiative, the EuRegion was established in 1958 at the German-Dutch border region. Subsequently, ‘euroregion’ became the most popular form for the following decades. Nevertheless, in most of the cases this name covered only an international agreement constituting consultative bodies, thus being rather a geographical concept without real institutional content. Still, the implementation of these agreements was usually hindered by the incompatibility of the relevant national legislations; therefore, a typical euroregion was not more than a loose association of two non-profit organizations registered on the two bordersides.

Due to the fluctuation of the euroregions’ activities and a lack of exact definition for these organization the fair number is subject to estimation, but at best more than 200 euroregions have likely been founded since 1958, many of them being defunct by now. Among the effectively functioning euroregions 33 are located within the territory of the Danube region (Figure 8).

Twin-city relations are further special forms of cross-border cooperation. There are several cities along the borders of the countries of the Danube region located directly next to each other – on both sides of the border. It is a special feature of the region, that the Danube, in almost half of its length (1197 km), forms a physical state border. Thus, we can find six city-twinnings in the case of which the partners are located on the opposite riverbanks in two different countries. Most of these partnerships have already resulted in valuable common investments, both in symbolic and functional terms.

Besides the border-region settlements, the cooperation between those cities that are located in a bigger distance from the border, but having cross-border functional attraction due to their size, have a significant role (like Vienna-Bratislava, Debrecen-Oradea, Pécs-Sombor-Osijek, Timișoara-Szeged, etc.). This cooperation between the cities may also influence the chance for development of urban regions indirectly connected thereto; moreover, the development of such cooperation is simpler: they are usually bilateral requiring therefore less negotiations and are free from financing difficulties, hence the importance thereof is undisputable.

The acceptance the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities in Madrid, on 21st May 1980 (The Council of Europe Treaty Series - CETS No.:106.) by the Council of Europe provided with some guidelines for cross-border cooperation initiatives. On the basis of the Convention, several interstate agreements were concluded in Western Europe (like the Karlsruhe Convention, Bayonne Convention, etc.) regulating the institutional background of cooperation in the border-regions on a bilateral level.
The most innovative solution for cross-border partnerships is the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), currently representing the highest level of institutionalised cooperation. The groupings are permanent cross-border organisations which are allowed to hire own employees, to launch and operate joint institutions of cross-border scope of activity or even public enterprises. Member states, regional and local authorities, governmental bodies and the associations composed by the above may become members of such groupings, provided that the competences of the members make possible the realisation of certain elements of those common targets defined by the mutual agreement of the participants. Furthermore, EGTCs have full legal personality without the necessity to sign further interstate
agreement therefore they have capacity to act towards all competent authorities in relevant EU member states. Legal entities of third countries may join an EGTC upon separate agreement and/or in compliance with the national regulations of the given country. This opportunity is invaluable at the external borders of the EU within the Danube Region and there have already been attempts to involve third countries in this manner.

Since the adoption of the EU regulation regarding the EGTC\(^8\) in 2006, 57 EGTCs have been successfully registered in the European Union, almost half of them are situated at the territory of the Danube region (Figure 9). Significant number of the groupings were founded along the Hungarian borders.\(^9\) The first trilateral grouping, Tritia EGTC, comprises Slovakian, Czech and Polish members.

\(^{8}\) REGULATION (EC) No 1082/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)

\(^{9}\) For a detailed information and research about the 'European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation' see Chapter III of this volume.
3.7 Economic Growth

The national income of the individual countries has grown at a different pace and shows symptoms of dynamism not at all identical or even similar to each other’s growth characters. This is the case despite their relative geographical vicinity, economic interrelationship or, in the case of 9 countries out of 14, the obvious need, based on their membership in the European Union, of „synchronising” their economic dynamism and partly their economic policies, too.

The structurally stronger, more stable economies of the region with stronger economic structures (Austria, Germany) grew at an average pace, ranging between 2.5 per cent and 4 per cent per year between 2000 and 2008 that was the last year preceding the economic crisis. The growth rate of the majority of the „catching-up“, convergence countries that had obtained EU-membership at the beginning or during the 2000s (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania) was somewhat higher, between 4 and 6 per cent per annum. The country „missing out“ this latter group was Hungary which could only achieve, especially after 2004, a rate of economic growth 2 to 4 percentage points lower. The main reasons for this were the combination of a number of factors like repeated national budget deficits and increasing external indebtedness resulting in slackening growth performance and a slower pace of structural modernisation and adjustment. On the other hand, the countries in the programming
region not being members of the European Union (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova and Montenegro) registered a significantly higher growth rate in the average of these years, each between 5 and 7 per cent per year.

![Regional differences in territorial development in the Danube River Basin](image)

**Figure 11: GDP per capita between 2005 and 2014**

The share of the EU-countries of the Danube Programme in the total national income of the European Union amounts to about 27 per cent. Three-quarters of this; however, is produced by Germany alone. The two German provinces (Lander) involved in the programme, namely Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, represent almost half of the total gross domestic product of the whole programme area (that is, the GDP based on the data of the sub-regions involved in the programme in the case of Germany and Ukraine, too). The EU-members produce approximately 88 to 90 per cent of the combined gross domestic product of the programme area whereas the share of the „external” programme countries (in the case of Ukraine only considering the four border territories involved) is slightly more than 10 per cent. As a matter of fact, the two Southern German provinces are among the most developed ones even within Germany in most economic indicators such as GDP per capita, research and development, innovation, capabilities of high-tech industrial and service sectors, economic and business infrastructure, quality of life, etc. The share of Baden-Württemberg in the total GDP of Germany reaches about 14.5 per cent, while that of Bavaria is near 17.5 per cent. As far as the generation
of the combined GDP within the programme area as a whole is concerned, the share of Austria is around 14 to 15 per cent while that of the Czech Republic is 7 to 8 per cent, Romania is 6 to 7 per cent and Hungary 5 per cent, each, of course, with minor differences every year. The share of the other programme countries (Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and, naturally, the national economies outside the EU) is usually below 3.5 to 4 per cent each.

3.8 External Economic Opening, Export Orientation

Besides the differences in the performance of domestic economies, the degree of external economic openness is also widely different among the countries. The front-runners are the two most developed national economies, namely Germany and Austria, but conspicuously, they are closely followed by Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and, to a lesser degree, by Slovakia, Romania and Croatia, too. In the last decade, even Serbia has caught up with them at a fast pace in these terms. In the most open national economies of the Danube Region, the share of exports from the national product is close to 70 per cent, or even more such as in Hungary and Slovenia. At the same time the countries outside the European Union (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine) are for the moment less open in international or EU-comparison in the field of external economic relations, but based on the expected strengthening of their EU-connections, they will catch up with the most open national economies at a very fast pace. Their limited temporary openness is underlined by the fact that despite their relative geographical closeness, EU-vicinity, „European” character, none of these countries are featured among the 40 or 50 most important external economic partners of the European Union.

3.9 Impacts of the European Crisis

The international financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent general economic crisis had a negative impact on the national economies of the programme area. In 2009, the countries of the Danube region registered a negative rate of economic growth. The following countries were most severely hit by economic recession: Ukraine (-14.8 per cent setback), Slovenia (-8 per cent) and Hungary (-6.9 per cent). The growth performance of other countries ranged between −1 per cent and −5 per cent. The consequences of the crisis, apart from the negative growth performance, were manifested in 2009 and 2010, and in the national economies that had earlier accumulated higher budget, financial or trade deficits even in 2011, by considerable falls in GDP, shrinking industry and especially construction industry, growing central budget deficits, setbacks in investments, weaker bank financing capabilities and by falling money reserves. In this lasting crisis situation some of the governments of the countries participating in the Danube Programme were unable to mobilise sufficient external resources and use them for carrying out structural policy measures, for modernising the structure of their economies (investments, manufacturing industry, the export sector, service industries), or for adjusting
them to international competition and for mitigating the external shock impacts resulting from the crisis.

After 2010, in some cases after 2011; however, several of the countries participating in the Danube Programme, were successful in stopping the general erosion of their national economies. GDP started to grow in a number of countries, especially and most importantly, because of its „role of locomotive”, in Germany. The growth of industrial production and the performance of the service sector turned into positive figures and the import demand of Germany began to grow again. There was another positive impact, mostly independent from economic or structural policies of governments, namely that, as a result of favourable weather in most of Europe, a number of countries in the region heavily dependent on agriculture and food processing could register good agricultural performances and their food production and food exports also began to increase more dynamically.

Based upon the developments and economic policy performance, deep and lasting recession was successfully avoided in Slovakia (3 per cent economic growth per annum between 2009-2012), in Romania (growth rates per year between 0.5 and 1 per cent) and in Bulgaria and Serbia (in both an average of 1 per cent growth rate per year). The national economy of Moldova has been soaring for years now, in the average of the years between 2009-2012 its growth rate was close to 10 per cent per year while that of Ukraine was 3 per cent per year.
The rather fragile base for an economic turnaround and the lasting structural problems are reflected in the fact that in 2012 the growth rate of Slovenia decreased again, after the negative performance of 2009, by 2.5 per cent, that of Hungary by 1.7 per cent, the Czech Republic by 1.3 per cent and Bosnia-Herzegovina by 0.7 per cent. The slackening pace of the Ukrainian economy to 0.3 per cent and the slower-than-expected economic upturn of the two strongest driving forces, namely, Germany and Austria, can prove to be a somewhat worrying phenomenon for medium and long-term national economic policy making.

As a result of the contradictory economic processes between 2000 and 2012 (catching-up, convergence periods followed by economic recession) the per capita GDP of the Danube Region is less than half of the average of the EU28 and around one-third of the average of the EU25 group of countries. The unsuccessful catching-up efforts are proved by the fact that during this period the pace of economic growth as a whole was higher in the significantly more developed Western European countries. The density of all-European income levels in certain Western European regions is well demonstrated by the charts and maps prepared by ESPON and Eurostat. It can also be observed that the per capita economic indicators of some of the national economies in the Danube Region are not unreachably far from those of the most developed regions within the EU. On the other hand, the per capita indicators of others outside of the EU15 or, even more markedly, outside of the EU28, are even lower, their economic performance falls even more behind them. Therefore the convergence criterion should be a
strong consideration to follow in the EU programmes to be launched and carried out until 2020 aimed at strengthening transnational cohesion.

From the above investigations, charts and maps, it follows that the countries participating in the Danube Programme in the 2014-2020 period are rather heterogeneous. By and large they can be classified, according to their relative economic status and structure as well as their position in the world economy and in the European economic space and; moreover, to a certain degree, according to their former macro-economic policies, economic philosophies and economic strategies, into three distinct categories.

- The GDP/capita of both Austria and Germany are significantly higher than the average of even the more developed countries of the European Union. In Austria in 2012, calculated according to the more reliable purchasing power parity (ppp) base, for example, reached even EUR 36 400, more than 30 per cent of the European average. In Germany the GDP/capita made up EUR 32 600, that is 22 per cent higher than the EU-average, despite the well-known lower levels of development, even after 20 years of re-unification, in the East-German provinces.
- The „midfield” of the countries of the Danube Programme under formation is comprised of the Czech Republic (79 per cent of the average GDP/head of the European
Union), Slovenia (81 per cent), Slovakia, owing to its dynamic economic development in the last 8 to 10 years (75 per cent) and, with certain limitations, Hungary (66 per cent) and Croatia which joined the EU in 2013 (61 per cent).

- The third category is represented by the countries reaching less than 50 per cent of the EU-wide average of the GDP/capita. Two EU-members, Bulgaria (47 per cent) and Romania (49 per cent) belong here, together with candidate-members and those expected to stay outside the EU for a somewhat longer period of time such as Serbia (35 per cent), Montenegro (43 per cent) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (28 per cent). Lastly, Ukraine and Moldova (on the basis of the very sparsely available data also around 22 to 25 per cent each) are also featured in this intermediary group.

3.10 Changes in the Economic Structures

According to the macrostructural changes in the proportions of the value added by the main economic sectors (agriculture, industry, tertiary sector) in the GDP the share of agriculture has shrunk throughout the whole European Union during the 2000s, but the most spectacular decrease has taken place in the countries of the Danube Region. In general, the rate of agriculture dropped under 10 per cent; however, the Southern German provinces and Austria had a much greater weight in this decrease than other states. The share of industry shows a decreasing tendency as well; nevertheless, a renewed increase of the share of industry is to be seen in certain Danube Region countries in the last years, where recession affects industry less compared to other sectors. Meanwhile, tertiary (service) sector has practically come to a halt; moreover, it has even slightly decreased since 2008. These changes in the overall image are also overwhelmingly influenced by the figures of the two highly developed countries, namely Austria and Germany (southern provinces).
In macro-structural comparison the area of the Danube Region is highlighted by the dominance of small farms and plots. The fragmented land structure demonstrates that 85 per cent of farms do not even reach the size of 10 hectares, whereas in the EU15 only every second land or plot have a size below 10 hectares.

On the country level, the average size of land ranges widely by states. With the exception of the Czech, the German and the Austrian cases, very small and fragmented land structure poses a great problem, significantly limiting the competitiveness of agriculture.
Fig. 16: Territorial distribution of agriculture holdings in the EU, 2010

The geographical position of agricultural units depicts the areas, where agriculture plays a distinguished role in the fields of employment and income generation. Basically, a northwest to southeast duality is clearly visible between the two parts of the region. However, a certain convergence is taking place, as the decrease in the share of agriculture from the GDP has been a general tendency in the Eastern „half” of the region. An exceptionally huge decrease was registered between 2000 and 2010 in Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine and Bulgaria.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Geographic and Structural Characteristics of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Danube Region

**Figure 17:** Industry, average value added (% of GDP) between 2000 and 2014

**Figure 18:** Number of industrial local units per 1 000 inhabitants, 2013
In terms of the density of industrial productive units, the Danube Region cannot be easily interpreted at the macro-level as one unified territory. Its western parts show rather more similarities with the European central economic area. The industrial enterprises of the Danube region are present in great proportions in the general enterprise sector in Germany and in Slovakia, while there are very few industrial enterprises in Bulgaria.

Industry has a very high share in some national economies. To be specific, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, developing at a dynamic pace in the last decade and, further, Romania all have rather strong industrial profiles. Structural changes since the turn of the millennium in the field of industry have been perceived to the greatest extent in Moldova, Ukraine and, further, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the former group of countries the process of de-industrialisation, while in the latter one industrialisation has become more prevalent. In most of the countries only smaller changes have taken place in this field.

![Figure 19: Service, etc., average value added (% of GDP) between 2000 and 2014](image)

The contribution of the service sector to the GDP has exceeded by now from 60 to 70 per cent in all three country groups investigated (EU15, EU28, Danube Region). Although the tertiary sector has a decisive share in the national economies of the Danube Region it still remains below the average of the European Union.

The process of „tertiarisation” has advanced the most in the case of Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. This rapidness in structural changes of the economy was in line with a series of
unfavorable changes such as the loss of ground of traditional agriculture, and by the de-industrialisation, the phasing out of the former „Socialist” type heavy industries. As an outcome, the economies of Moldova, Germany, Austria, Croatia and Montenegro rely most on the performance of the tertiary sector.

3.11 Economic Development and SMEs

The term „small and medium-sized enterprises” (SMEs) is interpreted somewhat differently by international organisations and also by countries in Europe in or outside the European Union. According to the interpretation of the EU, three different categories are distinguished:

- **Micro enterprises** have less than 10 workers and their business turnover or balance sheet total is below EUR 2 million;
- **Small enterprises** employ between 10 and 50 workers and their turnover or balance sheet total is between EUR 2 million and 10 million;
- **Medium-sized enterprises** have a range of employment between 50 and 250 people and their turnover ranges between EUR 10 and 50 million (between EUR 10 and 43 million in terms of balance sheet total).

As far as the micro, small and medium-sized companies in the countries of the Danube region are concerned, such a categorisation is somewhat difficult to apply in their case. A company with over EUR 2 million, or, even more so, with over EUR 10 million of turnover, with employment levels over 10 or even 50 persons in the rest of the Danube region is usually regarded as great in the business life of the relevant country and acts, behaves and is treated as such in financial, administrative, regional and sometimes even political terms as well. It is useful to take this into consideration when discussing SME developments and possibilities in the region.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises play a key role in the European economy as a whole. There are almost 21 million SMEs in the non-financial business sector in the European Union, employing close to 90 million people that is about two-thirds of those employed in the competitive sector. SMEs represent almost 60 per cent of the total value added generated throughout the EU. About 92 per cent of the total business sector consists of micro enterprises employing less than 10 people. Interestingly the average size of a European enterprise is slightly over 4 persons (slowly decreasing since the middle of the last decade) therefore it can be stated that the typical European business company is, in essence, a micro enterprise. This pivotal role of SMEs in the EU economy is recognised by the various EU institutions, especially by the European Commission and from the legal and regulatory point of view it is anchored in the Small Business Act (SBA) approved in 2008, thus establishing a comprehensive policy framework for the EU in general and its member countries in particular.
The share of SMEs in generating GDP is close to one-fourth of total GDP in the region (except for Austria and the two Southern German provinces). At the same time; however, their share in generating exports is considerably less, not significantly higher than 10 to 12 per cent on the average as a whole; although, this average hides a range of great extremes in both directions. As far as the share of SMEs in employment is concerned in most countries it is rather high, it is around 70 to 72 per cent in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia or Slovakia and even higher in the Southeast and the Western Balkans.

The changes of the last decade suggest; however, that in the Eastern parts of the Danube region the enterprise sector is rather fragmented. The low efficiency of the SME-sector, coupled with poor competitiveness have contributed to the emergence of „unhealthy” dual economic structures in which the enterprises are simply unable to connect to the all-European production mainstream.

In terms of the sectoral division of small and medium-sized enterprises a decisive role is played, besides wholesale and retail activities, by professional, scientific and technological activities and, further, by the construction industry. One finds a great number of enterprises in the fields of manufacturing and horeca (Hotel/Restaurant/Café) sector. The charts and maps demonstrate that the regional inequalities of the SME-sector are not caused primarily by the disproportions in their sectoral structure.
The demand crisis, started by the end of 2008, had a significant effect on the SMEs of the Danube Region. Due to the decrease of sales and capacity utilization SMEs draw on the already limited internal funds to finance their working capital and increase the level of debt. The most pressing problem for 15 per cent of SME managers in the EU and 19 per cent of SME managers in the Danube Region was the limited or sometimes practically non-existent access to finance. Thus the financing problem is placed second alongside competition in the ranking of most important company problems.

Generally speaking, loans are the main source of external SME finance and loan schemes, especially guarantees, tend to have a much larger impact in terms of the number of firms affected. Venture capital and similar schemes, on the other hand, are more restricted. Other sources of finance such as private placements, listings on the regulated exchanges or issuing of bonds are not usually available for the majority of SMEs. However, there is some research evidence that there is a lack of awareness among medium-sized firms about opportunities in debt capital markets which could be away to diversify funding sources for them.

The extent to which enterprises are able to thwart these negative effects depends strongly on competitiveness and innovation performance of their home countries. The decline in overall demand impacts negatively almost three-fourths of all enterprises in the countries that are considered to be modest innovators (practically all those outside the EU plus Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and to a lesser extent in Hungary and Slovakia). At the same time, it is also a handicap for less than half of the SMEs in countries that are considered to be the innovation leaders (Austria and the two southern provinces in Germany, Baden Württemberg and Bavaria, both being innovation leaders even within their own country) or fairly innovative ones (the Czech Republic, Slovenia and, with strong sectorial and regional limitations, Hungary). Apparently, more innovative economies suffered less from the economic crisis than less innovative ones, innovative enterprises, as well as enterprises from more innovative countries, more often reported employment growth and had higher employment growth rates. There has also been a strong correlation between the level and dynamics of internationalisation, innovation and the development of employment. Internationally active SMEs are more innovative and report higher employment growth.

Last but not least, there is also a clear size class effect: smaller enterprises more often suffered more from the negative effects of the crisis than larger enterprises. This is consistent with the fact that after the outbreak of the crisis in 2008, SMEs' employment decreased more than that of large enterprises. This effect is valid in the case of all European SMEs in general and in the majority of SMEs in the Danube region in particular.
3.12 Rural Development

Rural areas dominate the territory of the most EU member states and they are home to a significant share of population. At the same time their importance in terms of gross value added and employment gradually becomes less significant. The average income is lower than in urban areas, while jobs and services are fewer. Land abandonment is closely linked to peripheral regions as local populations decline due to demographic ageing, the outward migration of younger persons and the lack of economic and social opportunities. More centrally located rural areas increasingly have to face the urban sprawl thus being subject to increased environmental pressure without benefiting fully from the process. All rural areas need to diversify their range of economic and social opportunities in the future in order to improve their employment potential, income levels or access to services and developing new transport, information and communication infrastructures.

The Danube Region is rather varied in terms of rural development: the share of the population in predominantly rural areas is over 50 per cent in Slovakia and some other non-EU countries (Western Balkans and Eastern Europe), while in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Austria it is below 10 per cent. The share of predominantly rural areas in total employment is between 40 and 45 per cent in Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria while in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Austria it remains between 5 and 15 per cent. Otherwise, the rural regions of Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia generate approximately over 35 per cent of the total GDP, while the non-EU countries of the region have over 50 per cent of total economic activity in their rural areas.

The proportion of elderly people increased in all countries in the region. In rural regions, only Slovakia has a clear positive balance, whereas the others count less than 65 young person for every 100 elderly inhabitant. The highest employment rates in the primary sector are experienced in the rural regions of Romania (41.5 per cent) and Bulgaria (32 per cent) while this sector provides less than 5 percent of rural employment in Germany and the Czech Republic.

In the rural regions of all remaining countries in the Danube region, with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania, the non-agricultural sector produced more than 90 per cent of the total value added: the highest rates among rural regions are found in the Czech Republic and Germany both above 97 per cent. Beside traditional farming, there has been a shift in secondary activities such as contractual work, forestry, processing farm products and renewable energy production. Tourism and related activities, notably construction, distributive trades, food and beverage services and transport services, also play an even more important role in rural economies. Austria represents almost 10 per cent of total EU rural tourist accommodation facilities.
3.13 Transport infrastructure

The development status of transport infrastructure is reflected well by the density of the road network. Germany and Slovenia have the densest networks; Austria, Croatia and Hungary are also connected to the surrounding regions with relatively dense networks. Bratislava is characterised by outstanding values, but in other regions of Slovakia and in the overwhelming majority of the territories of the Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria, the network is seriously underdeveloped. In contrast to the western half of the programme territory, the core network elements and international connections in the Balkans and the Eastern European region have only been built over the recent decades. Not only is the density of the network insufficient here, but the capacity of the roads as well.

Huge territorial inequalities can be observed in road traffic between the economic and transport hubs of the western and central areas and the southern and eastern peripheries. Based on forecasts, road transport traffic is expected to increase considerably along the Stuttgart–Munich–Vienna–Budapest, the Ljubljana–Zagreb–Belgrade–Sofia–Istanbul, and the Vienna/Bratislava–Brno–Prague axes. This means that the Rhine-Danube and the Baltic-Adriatic trans-European transport axes together with the hubs of the Czech Republic, Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest as such are likely to gain further weight concerning road transport.

![Regional differences in total road freight transport, 2014](image)

*Figure 21: Regional differences in total road freight transport, 2014*
Inequalities in the railway network are much less extreme than the differences of road (and mainly that of dual carriageway) network. The density of the railway network is outstanding in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Slovakia and in Northern Croatia, beside Germany. The quality and capacity of the network is traditionally lower in Southeast Europe, this being especially true for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Southern Serbia and Montenegro.

In rail passenger transport, the uniformity of the eastern regions is only interrupted by the regions of Ostrava, Vienna and Central Hungary beside the Munich–Stuttgart–Mannheim and the Munich–Nuremberg lines. Based on Figure 22, the Rhine-Alpine and (to a much lesser extent) the Scandinavian-Mediterranean axes emerge.

Contrary to passenger transport modes, inequalities in rail freight transport among the countries of the Danube Region are not significant; only the Rhine area and the Vienna-Linz section have remarkably higher freight traffic volumes compared to the entire macroregion.

However, trans-Balkan rail connection, which would be important for the strengthening the cohesion of the Danube Region, is a bottleneck. The weakness of these connections has led to disadvantageous consequences for the entire continent. A rail link between the marine ports

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of the Adriatic Sea (Trieste, Rijeka and Koper) and the port of Constanţa at the Black Sea, as well as the Mediterranean and the Rhine-Danube axis, would be of key importance for the states of the Danube Region, together with the integration of important ports and road-rail terminals.

Romania, Serbia and Austria play a key role in the water freight transport of the Danube River Basin, while the volumes of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Ukraine are marginal, and the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Montenegro have no Danube port. A significant proportion of the Danubian freight traffic originates from transit in the cases of Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria. The East-West difference is shown in the higher share of the domestic traffic and export volumes of the eastern countries and the high rate of import of the western countries.

The OECD-paper on “The Competitiveness of Global Port-Cities: Synthesis Report” clearly outlines the regional inequalities in the full capacity of the ports on the Danube. The largest traffic volumes are largely concentrated at the two end points of the Danube waterway (e.g. Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Linz, Brăila and Constanţa) and, to a lesser extent, in the intermediate section of the river, in the ports of Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade, Smederevo and Ruse, having well-built port and freight transport infrastructure.

Figure 23: Full capacity of the ports of the Danube in 2009

The OECD-paper on “The Competitiveness of Global Port-Cities: Synthesis Report” clearly outlines the regional inequalities in the full capacity of the ports on the Danube. The largest traffic volumes are largely concentrated at the two end points of the Danube waterway (e.g. Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Linz, Brăila and Constanţa) and, to a lesser extent, in the intermediate section of the river, in the ports of Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade, Smederevo and Ruse, having well-built port and freight transport infrastructure.

Page 71 cargo
There are major inequalities in the macro-region regarding the use of clean, safe and quiet vehicles. The vehicles sometimes do not reach the EU standards; their average age are two or three times higher (especially in the Balkans and in Moldova and Ukraine) and have old propulsion systems compared to the German and Austrian vehicles that are increasingly hybrid and electric.

As for the potential multimodal accessibility, again, the strong East-West inequality is quite manifested. From the perspective of economic cohesion, the German regions are firmly integrated in their broader surroundings and the various other transport modes meanwhile Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary are in a transitional position. The accessibility of the capital city regions is favourable, in contrast, the accessibility of the East and Southeast is very poor; a quasi-homogeneous region is found here with far fewer links to the European economy. The lack of intelligent transport systems and the multimodality ensuring continuous and rapid transport represent additional problems here. The lack of multimodality hinders the deepening of East-West and North-South economic ties and the development of network economy.

3.14 Tourism

A conventionally strong relationship characterises the internal tourism traffic of the Danube region between Austria and Germany, towards Austria from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia and to Croatia from Slovenia, Serbia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Moldova, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina are greatly left out of the macro-regional level international tourist traffic, but the share of Romania and Bulgaria are also below potential needs.

The capacity of tourist accommodations is high in the western states of Austria, in Istria and in certain border zone German territories. In the central and western countries, the touristic accommodation capacity is higher in the western parts of the countries than in the East. In the eastern countries, this territorial pattern is reversed: the eastern seaside have far superior capacities than the Western parts. While the high level touristic facilities are widespread available in the West, such capacities and services are highly concentrated in the East on specific regions as well as resort areas.
The territorial inequalities, outlined by the number of guest nights, are quite similar. Austria and Croatia are the most important host countries (with 12,000 and 8,000 guest nights/1,000 inhabitants, respectively) with a high concentration on mountainous and seaside resorts, the states of Tirol and Salzburg in Austria and Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia which stand out by far in comparison to any other areas of the Danube Region. The strength of the tourism functions of the two states is indicated by the fact that both countries are among the most popular European destinations; the former ranking 5th, the latter 8th. In comparison to Croatia, half as much less of the guest nights are spent in Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Germany on average. It is also worth to mention the outstanding role of Vienna and Prague, both being among the ten most visited European cities. These countries are followed by Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania at last. In spite of spatial shifts between 2007 and 2011, no significant restructuring has taken place on the touristic market. The most marked change took place in the appreciation of Adriatic Croatia and the Bulgarian coastline and the recession of certain regions of the Czech Republic.

Figure 24: Regional differences in capacity of collective accommodation establishments, 2011
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3.15 Research and Development

The competitiveness of Europe as a whole is greatly determined by the resources allocated to research and development. In general, the Danube Region is characterised by uneven distribution and a generally low level of the resources of R+D.

On the basis of total intramural expenditure on research and development there are two distinct subregions unfolding here. Expenditure in Germany and Austria (EUR 600 to 1,000) is outstanding even in an all-European comparison and only Northern Europe and Luxembourg come ahead of them in this respect. Eastwards from these two countries the per capita expenditure is far below the required level, it does not even reach EUR 150 (with the exception of the Czech Republic and Slovenia).

In terms of the share of research and development expenditures in the entrepreneurial sector the backwardness behind Western and Northern Europe is less notable. Role of Germany is still overwhelming, in contrast to this Austria appears in a somewhat unfavourable situation, whereas Slovenia and Hungary seem to enjoy a little more favourable position. The enterprises of Bulgaria and Serbia lack capital therefore they are unable to allocate significant financial
resources to innovation activities which could safeguard competitiveness and a growth potential in the modern economy.

The size of factor based resources allocated to research, development and innovation is not only a significant indicator of the level of economic development achieved but also an important basic pre-condition of economic catching-up process and convergence. However, in comparison to the EU average of EUR 510 of research and development expenditure per capita in 2011, the figures for those on top of the group-ranking were in Slovenia EUR 436 (85 per cent of the EU-average) in the Czech Republic they amounted to EUR 274 (53 per cent), in Hungary to EUR 120 (23 per cent). The expenditure of Romania, Bulgaria and the other countries in the Western Balkans were all below 15 per cent of the EU-average. On the other hand, the same figures for Austria and Germany (EUR 983 and EUR 900 per capita, respectively) amounted to near the double of the EU-average.

![Business expenditure in R & D (€ per inhabitant), 2013](image)

*Figure 26: Business expenditure in R & D (€ per inhabitant), 2013*

The exceptionally high level of economic development, modern economic structure, forward-looking policies in the field of research and development at provincial levels in both all-European and world economic comparison is highlighted, among others, by the fact that R & D expenditures in Baden-Württemberg in 2009 amounted to EUR 1.520 per head, in Bavaria to EUR 1.040 per head. It is worth mentioning that the figures of the capital of Baden-
Württemberg, Stuttgart (above EUR 2.000 per head) and that of Upper Bavaria containing the city of Munich (more than EUR 1.800 per head) were even more outstanding. The combined average expenditure of the 28 member countries of the European Union hardly exceeds 2 percent of the total gross domestic product. The target figure of the Europe 2020 Strategy 3 percent of the GDP by 2020.

Among the individual Danube Region countries, in Hungary the R & D figure for Budapest and its region (Central Hungary) is EUR 250 per capita which is twice as high as the country average, but it reaches only about half of the total EU-average. In terms of the share of R & D from the GDP in Hungary it is about 1.6 to 1.7 per cent. A similar trend is visible in the cases of Prague (2.15%), Vienna (3.93%) and Bratislava (1.14%), all three reaching about one-and-a-half to two times higher levels. Albeit at a much lower level, research and development intensity in the region of Bucharest (1.09%) is also in line with the trends highlighted above. It deserves; however, special attention that the R & D expenditure in the NUTS2 region of Western Slovakia
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(2.64%/GDP) is, on the one hand, way above the EU-average in this field and, on the other hand, it is more than twice as high as that of the Slovakian capital and its surroundings. Western Slovakia is well known for having caught up very quickly, through its full economic and business integration to the highly developed German, Austrian and Czech economic area within the last decade.

![Employment in technology and knowledge-intensive sectors as a % of total employment, 2012](image)

*Figure 28: Employment in technology and knowledge-intensive sectors as a % of total employment, 2012*

Besides the regional differences in R & D expenditure, shifts in the figures and rates concerning enterprises, scientists, developers and special personnel in this field are also significant as they suggest that East-West inequalities mentioned earlier are also manifested in the relative weight of research and development in employment. According to this, Germany plays a leading role as far as the proportions of researchers and scientific experts, specialists in the total economically active population are concerned. Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia also have relatively favourable indicators within the larger image. Especially the regions of the capital cities and their surroundings seem to stand out in this respect and this phenomenon is especially true in the eastern and southeast parts of the programme area. Thus, the lag of the Danube Region behind, either the EU15 or the enlarged European Union, is considerable.
As far as the share of researchers in employment is concerned, the western part of the region, first of all Germany and Austria are fully in line with the other Western European and Northern European countries which have wide scientific bases. The countries Southeast of Budapest form a separate group. The proportions of researchers in Germany, Austria and, partly, in the regions of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia reach favourable levels. In the case of...
Bulgaria and Romania, only the capitals and the immediate surroundings stand out in this respect. All in all, the states in the East of the macroregion do not qualify as bearers of innovations yet. In their case, first of all the infrastructural conditions are to be established for the adaptation and dissemination of innovations.

3.16 Innovation and Higher Education

The organic relationship between higher education institutions and different centres of innovation, research and development is of utmost importance throughout Europe in general and in the national economies of the Danube Region in particular. It is especially true at a time when the world economy is undergoing rapid structural change and new players (whole continents and aspiring countries in these continents alike) are appearing on the horizon of global economic competition. Innovation, levels and structures of higher education, efficiency of workplace-related training, further education and life-long learning, and the efficiency levels of cooperation among these, have become one of the most important yardsticks of modern economic and social development in recent decades.
The tertiary educational institutions of the Danube Region are highly developed in the German-speaking area of the region, while the network is far thinner in the Southeast (Figure 30). The educational profiles also show a diverse picture. Compared to the total number of institutions, agricultural science prevails in Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia. Arts faculties and social sciences reach a high proportion in Slovenia and Moldova, while in the case of economics, the educational network of the macro-region is quite balanced, except for Montenegro. The IT profile, important for information economy, promoting innovative and sustainable development is the strongest in Germany, unlike Moldova, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Technical sciences are also of key importance for the establishment of economic development, with the German states leading in this field as well, in a sharp contrast to Moldova. For many countries of the region, attracting the electrical and automobile industry as an innovation-bearing sector is of great importance; hence the need to train appropriately qualified technical professionals in adequate numbers.

The promotion of natural sciences contributes to the installation of innovative industry branches of high added value (e.g. biotechnology) as well as adapting to climate change. Again, Germany puts the greatest emphasis on this field of science, while capacities of this profile in Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro have low shares.

Beyond the growing capacity and specialisation of tertiary educational institutions the performance of these institutions is also from great importance. The level of education, capacity and innovation potential of the particular universities provides a good basis for the internationally renowned Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), also known as the Shanghai Ranking. Germany and Austria stand out both in terms of the number and the ranks of tertiary educational institutions. On the other hand, the situation of the states of the Eastern and Central European is unfavourable as only one university from the cities of Prague, Budapest and Belgrade (ranked 301-400), Szeged, Zagreb and Ljubljana (ranked 401-500) were listed in the TOP500 in 2013. Not a single institution has been included in the ranking from the Southeast European states, nor from Ukraine and Moldova.

The principal targets of student migration inside the European Union also reflects the attractiveness of university centres. The majority of the study-related migrations take place today within the Erasmus programme with the number of students increasing year after year. In the academic year 2011/2012, ten universities were listed among the TOP100 universities with the largest number of incoming students. Charles University (Prague) is at the 8th place, where, similarly to Masaryk University (Brno) students are present in large numbers from the neighbouring Slavic countries, especially from Slovakia. The faculties of Munich, Vienna and Heidelberg, with their renowned courses on European scale, extend their catchment area to several countries of the Danube Region. Two further universities of Budapest and one from Ljubljana were also listed, while Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia were left out completely.
One fundamental characteristic of the differences in vocational training is whether the state in question has adopted the German type dual vocational training system. The East-West difference is apparent to the advance of Austria and Germany in the field of practice oriented trainings. Hungary has done a lot over the recent years to introduce the system, but the Czech Republic is further down this path than most other countries.

The large proportion of early school-leavers in the Balkans and the eastern regions is huge challenge, together with the appropriate coordination of education and labour market demand and the lack of professionals due to employment-triggered. Based on the experiences of the Leonardo programme, the most intensive and attractive vocational training connections are characteristic in Germany, receiving the most qualified professionals from the entire region.

3.17 ICT

In the course of the transformation of society into information society, the spread of information and communication technologies and the development of such networks is of decisive importance.

![Internet users (per 100 people), 2005 - 2014](image)

*Figure 31: Change of the number of Internet users in the Danube Region between 2005 and 2014*
Within the Danube Region, northwestern states are in an advanced phase. Germany, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Hungary are leaders in the rate of internet users. The states of the Balkan Peninsula and particularly Moldova and Ukraine are lagging far behind, in spite of their rapid progress in the last few years. This means that not only the physical accessibility, but also the virtual accessibility of these countries is also problematic, and they cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by electronic commerce and the World Wide Web to boost their convergence.

3.18 Summary

The internal economic and social cohesion of the Danube region is basically characterised by East-West inequalities concerning the economic status and the human resources of the countries of the macroregion. The western states, especially Germany, possess significant economic weight within the region, indicated its dominance in foreign trade, capital investment and technological transfer over the other countries of the macroregion. At the same time, the economies and societies of the eastern and southeast countries, despite their advanced transformation, possess marginal positions according to their economic status and innovation potential.

The East-West inequalities are apparent in the economic infrastructure and the connectivity of the transport networks, in the attractivity of training and education systems and within the usage of the infocommunication networks, among others, that are highly unfavourable from the viewpoint of the internal cohesion on macroregional level.

After having revealed the wider economic and social framework of the macroregion, in which the interventions of the EU regional development policy seek to contribute to the emergence of a coherent and balanced spatial structure, we now step forward to a lower scale, thus focusing on the regional and local scenes of cross-border interactions. In the followings we aim at introducing where the different borderland areas of the Danube Region are situated in the current spatial structure of the macroregion and to what extent they can benefit from their borderland locations and face the challenges of this very same geographic position.
4. Detailed analysis on the socioeconomic inequalities along the borders of the Danube region

4.1 Introduction – Borders and state territories

Borders have since long been identified as discontinuities in the geographical space as one can observe significant inequalities in economic and social terms between the two sides of the border even among largely homogeneous physical geographic conditions. As the British historical geographer Norman Pounds put it, ‘Boundaries not only set limits to political obligations; they also set bounds of economic regimes. [...] one frequently finds abrupt changes at political boundaries, quite unrelated to the physical setting. Their explanation must lie with the contrasted economic and social policies pursued on each side of the line.’

Differences on the neighbouring sides of a state border can at best be understood through the consideration of state territory as a ‘container’ in political, economic, cultural and social terms. Such a notion was elaborated by the British political geographer Peter J. Taylor, having based his work on the concept of the compatriot sociologist, Anthony Giddens, who described the state as a ‘power container’. In his argumentation, Taylor suggests, that state territories became sole actors in the containment of power, wealth, culture and society through the use of four strategies of territoriality: waging wars, managing economy, giving national identity and providing social services. This effective ‘omnipotence’ of states was formally sacrificed in the Treaty of Westphalia, together with the principle of non-interference of foreign powers in the domestic affairs of individual states. Thereby, states would indeed be able to direct different internal policies, with no or few regard to those of the others, as presented by Pounds above. Through their internal policies, states targeted above all the conversion of the state area into one single economic and social unit, managed from a central seat of power. Accordingly, local and regional structures were largely subordinated to central ones and cross-border ties lost their importance to domestic ones. Therefore, the internal homogenization of state territories in these above terms usually was often coupled with the divergence of state territories along the borders. No surprise then, that state borders became the most spectacular places where significant socio-economic differences were and are still to be observed in the closest possible geographic proximity.

Border regions have always had distinct economic and social conditions since the emergence of modern territorial states. For various reasons, border areas were preferred neither by central

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governments nor by meaningful economic actors when establishing economic activities with high added value or implementing large-scale infrastructural investments (except for defense-related facilities). Most important reasons for this relative ignorance are economic and strategic ones. From an economic point of view, border areas are usually the most distant places from the other parts of the country; therefore, they are at a competitive disadvantage compared to more centrally located areas, particularly because of higher transport costs (for a more detailed explanation see the works of August Lösch\textsuperscript{15} or Herbert Giersch\textsuperscript{16}). From a strategic point of view, border regions were thought to be too hazardous for greater investments, as these edges were supposed to fall at first in case of a possible foreign attack from the other side of the border. All in all, border regions remained more or less unfavourable and thus they are underdeveloped areas, except for special cases.

In the second half of the 20th century, with the continuous peaceful economic development of the countries of Western Europe and the reconciliation of the political relations among these countries on the one hand, and the restructuring of the international economic system from the sum of national economies into a profoundly interconnected global economy on the other hand resulted in the radical reassessment of state borders and borderland location as such. The continuously widening, deepening economic and political integration process, which subsequently led to the establishment of the European Union in 1993, targeted an open supra-state economic space where the free movement of goods, capital, services and labour force is ensured. With the scaling-up of the management of economy from state to global (or at least supra-state) level was due to the strengthening role of transnational companies, which were able to organise their activities without being confined to any sole national economy and gradually took over the control of international money flow. As for the barrier-free movement of people and merchandises, an important step forward was the removal of physical borders, set out in the Schengen Agreement (1985) and accomplished by the 1990s.

As a result of these above described processes, the formerly disadvantageous location of border areas turned into markedly advantageous as they were able to benefit not only from the dynamics of their own states, but also from that of the neighbouring one(s) as well. However, as we shall see, the volume of a possible upturn of a border region usually depends on many factors, such as the existence and the volume of economic inequalities and social differences between the two sides of the border, economic structure of the neighbouring areas, historical background, the features of physical geography and the location of the whole border region within the macroregional space, among others.

However, in spite of the new chances for border areas, the world’s fundamental political geographic structure did not change: the international system is still built up by territorial


states. Therefore, as it will be presented in the followings, no cross-border region has yet seen the final disappearance of the border. Apparently, significant differences remain in existence between the neighbouring sides of the border as these areas are confined to different political, juridical, economic, monetary, etc. regimes and policies. One cannot deny the positive effect of the opening of borders, as some settlements on the less wealthy side of the border have indeed shown remarkable prosperity. Villages, towns and cities located directly at the border or in its close proximity were the most successful ones, especially if they are some kind of central places. However, if no deep structural changes occur, such an upturn can easily couple with a polarisation among the more and less successful settlements, as the most attractive places, especially on the wealthier side, may drain the resources of less beneficial places. Nevertheless, this process raises several questions about the changing spatial structure of borderland regions.

In the followings, a possibly detailed image is to be depicted on the entirety of border regions within the Danube Region, on supralocal (district) level. We are trying to point at the fact that border opening has resulted in fairly unequal spatial development on local and regional levels in recent decades. Though in some cases not enough data is at disposal, and plenty of methodological concerns may also arise (see: Chapters II.2. and II.3.), some basic characteristics and trends are supposed to be noticeable and they may give us valuable information on the restructuring of the border landscape. The most important questions to answer are the followings: what kind of general pattern characterises the spatial reconfiguration which unfolded along the borders in the last decades, on the one hand, and whether it brought along basically a win-win, a zero-sum or, as the case may be, a negative-sum situation for the neighbouring sides of the borders.

### 4.2 Overall image on the entirety of border regions of the Danube Region

In this chapter the borderlands of the Danube Region are to be analysed and compared according to their development status. The delimitation of the borderlands was based on geometric attributes, namely on a distance basis. The basic entities of the analysis, designated as ‘border areas’, are local administrative units (predominantly LAU 2 entities in the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) which are incorporated in district level entities of which the centroids do not lie farther than 50 kilometres from the borderline. This is the approximate distance which have been supposed to mark the limit of the border effect. In other words, these are the edges of the countries where the presence of the border has a significant effect on local and regional society and economy. Nevertheless, such a geometrical criteria clearly cannot claim to objectivity inasmuch as it is not about homogeneous areas neither in terms of physical geography nor in that of socio-economic spatial pattern. Moreover, as the administrative structures and their spatial delimitations are largely different in the distinct countries, the average size of the local entities are largely variable; therefore, the width of the
border zone shows remarkable differences from country to country, which results in significant asymmetries along certain borders.

The delimitation of the frontal zones is not only problematic from the asymmetric point of view, but also from holistic approach. Border regions can hardly be considered as stand-alone zones, being only characterised by the presence of the border and isolated from the central areas of their countries. This is certainly not the case in countries of smaller extent, such as Slovenia or Croatia, where the major part of the territory falls within the 50 km zone, but also in the most countries of the Danube Region this zone makes up a significant proportion of the overall surface. In contrast, taking into consideration each local level (LAU 1 or even LAU 2) entities of the Danube Region would certainly lead to a far too enormous and complex territorial scope and is unlikely to result in clear study outcomes and conclusions. Therefore, we opted for a territorially more focused investigation, while trying to eliminate the risks of performing a too much fragmented analysis.

A further concern is, already mentioned in the methodological part, that not every indicators are available for each country. Some indicators such as accommodation capacity, commuting or unemployment are not available either in the requested format or at all in certain countries. As a result, some borders tend to remain asymmetric in many of the analyses in terms of data coverage. This phenomenon is largely unfavourable but though necessary to tackle; therefore, our study did not aim to exclude imperfect data collections but rather to complete them with additional information from alternative sources.

In spite of all these burdens, we aimed at providing a possibly comprehensive insight into the socio-economic status of borderland areas within the Danube Region. We used a series of indicators, including indices for economic performance (accommodation capacities and their occupancy), demographic changes (birth and death rates, natural increase/decrease, population ageing), spatial pattern and movements of the society (population density, commuting, migration) as well as employment conditions (working-age inhabitants, unemployment), to reveal the differences between border regions. Through the consideration of the territorial patterns of these different indices we do not seek for an overarching general structure which may give an encompassing explanation for the entirety of the borderlands of the macroregion, thought we do not exclude the existence of such samples either. We rather aim at pointing at the distinct characteristics of border regions in different contexts, and lay the ground therewith to the argumentation on how appropriate regional development policies at
community level should be elaborated, in order to enable local problems and challenges to be handled within their contexts.

### 4.3 Economic performance

The economic status of an area can be measured in different ways and it may be characterised by a wide range of indices. However, methodological concerns, already mentioned multiple times in this study, largely restrict the number of possibly applicable indicators. The comparison of wages is not feasible due to different taxation systems in each country, whilst the number and size of enterprises would also be largely inefficient due to the differences in company registration systems and the lack of such data in many countries. Other sorts of indices, such as gross domestic product (GDP), are not at all available on local level entities.

In this present case, we opted for the use of indices on tourist accommodation capacities as well as on their occupancy in the measuring of economic performance. These data proved to be mostly accessible in all of the investigated countries and they are supposed to point at significant local features.

It is clear from the map that though border regions in general are rather unexceptional areas from the point of view of tourist capacities, some smaller areas may eventually reach high rate of supply in accommodation capacities (Figure 32). From this aspect mountainous areas and seaside areas obviously have a distinguished situation as they attract great numbers of tourists every year, though in the cases of seaside resorts it may eventually be unbalanced as of its seasonality.

Nevertheless, seashores within the Danube Region are all among the best-equipped areas concerning accommodation capacities. Both Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia, as well as Bulgaria and Romania have indeed high values of lodging capacities in their seaside localities, thought in the case of Romania, the most of the settlements lying at the coast fell off the investigation due to the distinct delimitation of border zones in this country. Though coastal areas are rather not strictly included within the classical category of border regions and their participation in cross-border cooperation initiatives is limited, some of their problems may also coincide with those of the areas along land borders; therefore, they may also be taken into consideration when enumerating the concerns of peripherally located frontal zones.
Mountainous areas are rather present in the Danube Region than seaside areas are, accordingly their impact on border regions is obviously more significant. These areas are considerably noticeable on the map, as they usually show higher values than neighbouring localities farther from the border. A great example for this situation is the southern border of Bavaria, southeast Germany, where settlements lying at the very proximity of the border tend to offer a much higher amount of bed places than the ones 15-20 kilometres apart do. As we shall see, the rates of bed places per 1,000 residents is not outstanding in the Bavarian mountain resorts, compared to other countries, the fact that these localities form a largely coherent zone. This zone is supposed to continue on the Austrian side though the lack of data does not enable us to see it in statistical terms.

Similarly to the Bavarian case, the mountainous areas of Slovenia, predominantly around the Slovenia–Italy–Austria triborder, and at the borders of the Czech Republic, though scarcity in data does not enable a comprehensive view on the entirety of the border zone. Border zones with high supply in accommodation capacities can also be found on both sides of the Serbia-Montenegro border, as well as on the southwestern borderlands of Bulgaria. Other border regions, such as the northern frontal areas of Hungary and those of Romania, among others,
are also above average in the terms of bed places but the spatial pattern of the localities with remarkable supply volume is largely dispersed. This pattern points at important inequalities among neighbouring settlements which may result from distinct local characteristics either in economic, social or even physical geographic terms.

The capacities of accommodation facilities provide us with a fine overview on the opportunities and conditions of the touristic sector, but they refer only indirectly to real economic performance. The occupancy of tourist accommodation is a better indicator in this respect (Figure 33). This key figure shows the actual number of incoming guests along with the duration of their stay, or, with other words the volume of revenue produced.

The effective use of touristic overnight stays show a largely different spatial pattern than accommodation capacities do, at least in the case of border regions. Similarly to bed places, touristic stays also largely concentrate on seashores and mountainous areas. Focusing only on this latter this time, we can see that the basic pattern is largely similar between the two images, significant differences can be observed in the terms of intensity.

**Figure 33: Regional differences in occupancy of tourist accommodations along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011**
*Data source: National statistical offices*
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The southern borders of the German federal state of Bavaria were mentioned above as localities which offered a relatively high, but not exceptional rate of bed places. Concerning the volume of incoming guests by contrast, the importance of this zone is outstanding: guest nights often exceed 10 000 per 1 000 inhabitants, whilst the rate of bed places remain under 50 per 1 000 inhabitants in most of these towns and villages. This means that, in average terms, the touristic capacities in this borderland region are booked for at least 7 month in a year. The volume of touristic stays is largely similar at the Bavarian side of the Germany-Austria-Czech Republic triborder, despite the fact that capacity rates are somewhat lower than in the Bavarian Alps. This suggests an even higher efficiency of room rental. At the same time, the rate of guest nights also reaches high rates on the Czech and likely on the Austrian sides; however, in the absence of data the volume cannot be revealed.

By and large, the pattern of the occupancy rate of tourist accommodations is largely identical to capacities. The Alps in Slovenia, the coastal areas in Croatia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, and some mountainous regions in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria have relatively high values, though in this latter case the lack of complete datasheets does not enable us to establish whether they are typical or rather exceptional elements within their broader environment.

In contrast to these above areas, borderland areas in the eastern countries of the Danube region, specifically Ukraine, Romania and Moldova seem to form a largely contiguous zone where the rate of incoming tourists tends to remain low. The only exceptions are the Western and Northwestern areas of Romania, where the territorial pattern of capacities and incoming tourists is much more similar to that of Western neighbour Hungary, presented later in this chapter. The relative insignificance of tourism is in line with the low rate of touristic capacities meaning that low demand is coupled with low supply in these regions. Though in the cases of Ukraine and Moldova, inequalities among localities is hidden, as we were forced to use data from regional level, it is highly probable that only greater urban centres are significant actors in tourism. In contrast, Romania has in general very low cvalues in the southern and eastern areas. This is certainly interesting in the case of the southern borders of Romania, where the Romanian settlements with marginal touristic importance are neighbour to Serbian and Bulgarian localities having significant accommodation capacities and numbers of guests.

As mentioned above, the borderlands in the central countries of the Danube Region show a distinct pattern which can be interpreted as some kind of transition zone between east and west. Greater urban centres, such as the Hungarian and Slovakian capitals among others, and other popular localities have significant capacities and attract large number of incoming guests as a results whilst other, mainly rural areas suffer from the lack of such opportunities. As a result, differences within tourism contribute to the increasing of inequalities between local level entities.

All in all, the two above analysed indices on tourism drew up a characteristic image on the economic performance of border regions within the Danube Region. In spite of the scarcity on appropriate data a more or less threefold division can be revealed. The western part of the
Danube Region, namely the two German federal states (Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg), Austria and the Czech Republic seem to have more or less dynamic border regions in the terms of tourism. Apart from these countries, we can also find peripheral regions with favourable conditions for tourism such as in Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, thought positive effects are territorially limited. The remaining borderlands of these countries, together with other ones in the central part of the Danube Region, including Hungary, Slovakia and western Romania, show more dispersed pattern with significant inequalities between neighbouring localities. The third type of border regions is rather characteristic in the eastern part of the macroregion, including eastern Romania, Moldova and Ukraine. In these regions borderlands have a significantly more difficult situation then in the others as they can only hardly benefit from tourism which is often considered as a possible way out of backwardness.

In the followings, we are laying a special attention to the question to what extent this threefold structure is true in other socio-economic investigations.

### 4.4 Demographic changes

The use of indicators on demography are important part of our investigation. They do not only depict the composition of society in the distinct territorial entities along with its evolution, but they may also refer to a series of social attitudes, personal well-being or even economic success/failure. Normative approach suggests that countries and regions ought to show a slightly positive natural increase rate with a possibly harmonic age structure, dominated by the middle age group, to be regarded as ideal. In contrast, regions and countries with fast growth or remarkable decrease, as well as with a high proportion of younger and/or elder age people, are widely considered as areas with unfavourable situation. Though it is not an intention of this current investigation to subject this approach to criticism, we aim to point at the fact that such conditions do not necessarily reflect on the overall image of the distinct borderland areas.

If we have a look at the territorial pattern of birth and death rates, we must face a highly a contradictory situation (Figure 34). Whilst birth rates tend to show a more or less geographically dispersed pattern, death rates are rather characterised by a slope-like macroregional structure, rising from the west to the east.

In the terms of birth rates, relatively few strong territorial tendencies can be revealed. The volume remains under 15 per 1 000 inhabitants throughout the whole Danube Region and there remain relatively few border areas which attain higher values. Such localities can be found in the southern parts of the Czech Republic, south-eastern Slovakia, in northeastern and southwestern Hungary, western Romania as well as in the western and southwestern borderlands of Ukraine, though this time meso-level entities were used due to the lack of relevant data on local level. On the other hand, birth rate remain below 0,5 % in numerous localities from different parts of the macroregion. It is all about rural areas with few and distant urban centres, where the shortage of jobs and thus long term perspectives for youth often
result in their selective migration which lead to the decrease of the number of birth. Such areas are present in almost all of the Danube Region countries, but they form more or less contiguous zones in eastern Bavaria, south-eastern Austria, south-eastern Slovakia, in northeastern and south-western Hungary and western Romania, among others. The cases of Hungary and Slovakia are by far the most interesting ones as the localities with the highest and lowest values can be found in the direct neighbourhood of each other. In both cases, it is about rural areas which are not only peripheral in geographic but also in socio-economic terms, and localities are overwhelmingly populated by underprivileged social groups including ethnic minorities (mainly romani people) and retired people with low revenues. The dominance of the former group usually results in high fertility rates, while the latter one is marked with low fertility rate, coupled with higher death rates, as we shall see later on. Nevertheless, these extreme differences between neighbouring localities can be explained with local characteristics of historical legacy rather than with an established general formula.

Figure 34: Regional differences in birth rate along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011
Data source: National statistical offices
In contrast to fertility numbers, death rates seem to show a rather explicit macroregional tendency for border regions (Figure 35). The map shows a somewhat straightforward slope from the west to the east, on the one hand, and a fairly sharp division along the Slovenia-Croatia, Slovenia-Hungary and Hungary-Austria border whereas Slovakia is quite distinctly separated into two parts, a western edge with lower rates and the southern border with a more elevated average volume, with the exception of the very eastern section, which is to be outlined below.

**Figure 35: Regional differences in death rate along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011**

In spite of the well-established claim for a general formula describing a West-East slope on macroregional level, the geographic pattern of death rate shows a series of local and regional particularities which do not fit entirely this image. Starting from the western edge of the macroregion, we can notice once again that the outer edges of the southern German federal states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg are exceptions within their broader environment, as these predominantly rural borderland areas have less favourable figures than localities in general in these two states. Apart from the Rhine Valley which is an outer border of the Danube Region these are the eastern borderlands of Bavaria that show mostly the patterns of a contiguous substandard zone, with even less favourable death rates as on the neighbouring Czech side.
Surprising anomaly can be observed in the western border regions of Hungary where death rate is in general fairly higher than in on the neighbouring sides of the state border. When zooming within the region, it occurs that higher death rate is a characteristic feature of smaller localities whilst urban centres usually have low or at least moderate rates. This points at an increased urban-rural bipolarity which is fairly characteristic in the region.

As mentioned above, a positive anomaly is observed at the eastern part of the Slovakia-Hungary borderland, both on the Slovakian and the Hungarian sides; however, in Hungary the lowest values can be found rather eastwards. It is about predominantly rural areas, though important regional centres are also present here, such as Košice in Slovakia and Nyíregyháza in Hungary. These areas suffer from a peripheral situation both in geographic, economic and social terms, along with the difficulties resulting from the collapse of traditional heavy industry on the Slovakian side as well as the crisis of the agricultural sector on the Hungarian side. Both areas are inhabited by a large number of romani people living in deep poverty, though characterised by a fairly young age structure which result in low death rates compared to a growing population.

The comparison of the spatial dynamic of these two above datasets already presumes some basic characteristic features of the spatial pattern of natural increase and decrease. As these above two indices show largely different geographic configurations, the spatial image of the resulting population change is also expected to bring about a fairly complex image.

At first sight, the map on natural increase/decrease (Figure 36) suggests a traditional west-east slope where the highest rates are characteristic in the western areas and the average volume shows a more or less continuous decrease eastwards. This is largely similar to the macro-level geographic pattern of death rate which is quite obvious, considering that birth rates do not show such a distinct territorial configuration. Nevertheless, the influence of outstanding birth rates can also be revealed on the map.

As we have already seen, the southern federal states of Germany show a largely twofold image. While the borderlands of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg have in general favourable position, rural entities in the direct neighbourhood of the state border are usually characterised by natural decrease. This is especially true along the border between Bavaria and the Czech Republic where the German side is dominated by shrinking localities whilst the situation is rather balanced at the Czech side. As we shall see later on, this is largely in line with the differences of ageing index and its economic and social implications. It is also interesting to see a similar rupture at the Bavaria-Austria border as Austrian localities show a slightly increasing population in contrast to the decreasing German side. Nevertheless, this basically favourable demographic condition of Austrian borderlands is largely characteristic in the proximity of Germany, but not necessarily in the case of other border zones. Demographic situation is rather stagnant in the Austrian borderlands along the Slovakian and Slovenian borders, whilst natural decrease is overwhelmingly typical at the borders with Czechia and Hungary. Thus, demography
is largely in line with the overall economic and social conditions of the neighbouring region on the other side of the border.

Figure 36: Regional differences in natural increase/decrease along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011

Data source: National statistical offices

Among the former socialist countries, only Czechia and Slovenia tend to show an overall positive balance in their border zones. Slovakia has an intermediary situation in this respect, showing population increase in the western and eastern ends, but decrease along the southern border. The slightly positive balance of Western Slovakia is largely due to the presence of the capital city region which attract younger people, contributing thus to the relatively high birth rate while death rate remains low as a result of the favourable living conditions. The decrease along the southern border zone occurs in predominantly rural areas where significantly high death rates are coupled with the mass emigration of young people. In contrast, the borderlands of Eastern Slovakia are characterised by high population increase, mainly due to high birth rates, already presented above. The same phenomena is present on the Hungarian side of the respective border section, though to a much smaller extent due to higher death rates and, as we shall see, advanced population ageing.
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By and large, the eastern countries of the Danube Region face the challenge of population decrease. Only some smaller areas can be considered as exceptions, such as some localities in western and northwestern Romania as well as in Ukraine and Moldova, thought in the case of these latter two countries the inadequate level of accessible territorial data prevent to show the differences between urban centres and rural hinterlands.

Apart from birth, death rates and resulting population changes, population ageing is also an important indicator of the demographic situation when it comes to the analysis of social conditions in the light of long-term processes. The rate of elderly people does not only depict the actual composition of the entire population according to age groups, but it may also shed light on life conditions and on actual, as well as future economic challenges. Such challenges usually result from the greater imbalances between larger age groups and it can hardly be treated. However, it is important to see which are the major problems with which the borderlands of the Danube Region are, or will likely be concerned.

The overall territorial pattern of population ageing depicts a largely diverse image. In contrast to the most of the above presented indices, population ageing does not tend to show a characteristic macroregional pattern, but rather distributed one where the rate of elderly people is defined by regional features much more than by the geographic position within the macroregion.

The borderlands of the westernmost areas, namely those of the two German federal states show outstanding values in population ageing. The highest rates of elderly people can be found in the mostly rural localities in close proximity to the border line along the River Rhine, in the Bavarian Alps, as well as in north eastern Bavaria. These same zones were also characterised by relatively high death rates and natural decrease which are obviously interrelated with population ageing. However, similarly to other above presented indices, the volume of elderly people shows a significantly lower degree on the Czech and Austrian neighbouring localities of the respective borders, compared to the Bavarian side. This refers to the more progressed outmigration of young people from rural areas in Germany, whilst neighbouring countries are yet less concerned by this challenge. Nevertheless, other borderlands of Austria in the north and the southeast are rather characterised by ageing population, in line with the population decrease already presented above.
In the central areas of the macroregion, ageing population is more or less a general phenomenon, whilst borderland areas with outstandingly high, or even low, economic performance are characterised by markedly young age structures. This latter is the case around capital cities such as Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana and Zagreb, or even regional centres such as Timișoara in Romania which all constitute highly important economic centres within their own countries. On the other hand, impoverished rural areas with high birth rates, such as southwestern and northeastern Hungary, eastern Slovakia or eastern Croatia also have relatively young population.

Moving toward the eastern part of the macroregion, largely twofold image is revealed. The borderlands between Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia are by and large characterised by aged population. These mostly rural areas with scarce connections and infrastructural conditions all face the process of mass outmigration of younger generations, thus deepening the economic and social crisis of these rural zones. Population structure is somewhat younger in the eastern seaside areas of Romania and Bulgaria, where industrial and service sectors offer more favourable employment conditions.

In contrast to these south-eastern borders, the situation of the north-eastern areas of the macroregion is somewhat different. Population ageing is less progressed, especially in Moldova.
and the southwestern regions of Ukraine, however local-level imbalances remain undisclosed as datasets are only available at district level. The relatively young age structure is in line with the moderate death rates and favourable birth rates, hence these borderlands seem to have relatively balanced age composition. Nevertheless, younger population is largely confined to urban centres whilst rural areas tend to have rather aged population.

As a conclusion, one must see that from a demographic point of view the borderlands of the Danube Region show a great complexity. Only some of the border zones can be treated as peripheries in the traditional sense, mainly in the easternmost and westernmost countries. In more centrally located countries, the actual situation of the distinct borderland areas is much less defined by their geographic location within the country, but rather by their position within the larger economic and social space. Historical traditions may also have a significant impact on demographic conditions thought this present analysis is not enough far-reaching to be able to reveal these factors.

4.5 Spatial pattern and movements of the society

In the course of the assessment of borderland areas it is interesting to see which areas are attractive from an economic point of view and which ones are not. The capability of certain places in attracting people is well indicated by a series of indicators on population, such as population density, on the one hand, and the spatial movements of the population, like commuting or migration, on the other hand. Population density points at the volume of the mass of people who expect to find employment in, or around, a defined locality. At the same time, commuting and migration may indicate important economic centres which are able to attract people from farther areas. What makes the difference between these two phenomena is their scope: commuting targets (urban) centres which can be reached from one’s home within an affordable travel time for daily basis, whilst migration occurs when the appropriate workplace falls outside the daily travel scope of the employees. In line with this disparity, the latter one refers to a stronger attractiveness.

In terms of population density, border areas are generally considered as slightly densely populated areas, or at least show lower values than their domestic average. As already presented earlier, border areas have always been less attractive for people throughout history than more centrally located areas, and this is especially true since the emergence of modern states, which put a more or less significant emphasis on economic and political centralisation. However, due to the radical changes of borders in the 20th century, many formerly centrally located areas and urban centres found themselves at or near the border. On the other hand, important processes that have been triggered since the second half of the 20th, such as globalisation and European integration, resulted that the significance of location in geographic space has been shifted and modified. Position of cities/areas and their importance within the domestic territorial framework were overwhelmed by larger economic space. This
reassessment of the relative geographic position had a deep spatial restructuring as a result and thus it contributed to the growing attractiveness of a significant number of borderland areas.

In the aftermath of these processes today we have a rather complex image on population density within the border regions of the Danube Region (Figure 38). It is remarkable that no general pattern can be revealed for the entire macroregion; however, some basic features are premised. First of all, population density is generally higher in Western Europe than in the east, the volume of population density shows a decreasing trend eastwards. Nevertheless, we cannot speak about a straightforward descent as rural areas in the west and urban agglomerations in the east largely disturb such a model. Secondly, land relief tend to play an important role as mountainous areas are less inhabited than flatter ones. In contrast, there is no straightforward link between elevation and density volume as hilly areas in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic or Slovakia are more densely populated than many plain areas in Hungary, Romania or Bulgaria. Third, proximity to domestic capitals also presupposes higher values in population density, but this is not of decisive importance either. For example, we can find zones with remarkably low values within the very close reach of the cities of Budapest and Vienna, while eastern Bavaria or north-eastern Hungary have relatively elevated population density despite the lack of powerful urban centres.

Starting from the west, we can see that the two German federal states show significantly high values in population density. Traditional industrial areas as well as touristic destination, such as the Rhine Valley or the Lake Constance, show outstanding values, while hillier rural area in the very proximity of the border, mainly in southern and eastern Bavaria, are the least frequented zones. Nevertheless, despite this descent within Bavaria towards the east and the south, the borders with Austria and the Czech Republic are relatively sharp ones in statistical terms. With the exception of north-western Austria, including the city of Salzburg, as well as the region of Innsbruck in the southwest, the Austrian and Czech sides of the border are significantly less populated than the German side. This is not only in line with the rural and mountainous nature of these edges, but also with the weak attractiveness of neighbouring German areas falling within the scope of daily commuting. Therefore, the presence of an economically stronger neighbour have surprisingly limited impact on the popularity of border areas, especially on the Czech side.
A different image can be observed at the eastern edge of Austria where the cities of Vienna and Graz have significant impact on the border areas in their proximity. Both cities have a counterpart centre on the neighbouring side of the border, namely Bratislava on the Slovakian side and Maribor on the Slovenian side. The domestic hinterland of these centres complete those of the Austrian ones, therefore population density is relatively high on both sides of the Austria-Slovakia and Austria-Slovenia border. However, this is not the case with the border in Hungary, as in these zones, both sides of the border are traditionally characterised by agricultural rural areas with few, but growing urban centres.

By all means, the central areas of the Danube Region show a complex image in terms of population density. On the one hand, the hinterlands of capital cities and regional centres usually show relatively high population density. Beyond the above mentioned cases at the eastern edge of Austria, capital cities such as Budapest, Ljubljana or Zagreb, and regional centres, such as Košice or Miskolc, establish densely populated zones around themselves. An interesting case is the Czech Republic-Slovakia border, which is accompanied on both sides by relatively densely populated areas without any single outstanding regional centre. This area has undergone industrialisation already in the 19th century and is traditionally characterised by a
great number of small and medium factories, which contributed to the emergence of small, but numerous urban centres. On the other hand, the central areas of the Danube Region are mostly characterised by slightly populated borderland areas. These are, as mentioned above in the case of the Austria-Hungary border, generally rural areas with agricultural heritage and due to the relative weakening of the sector, they remain unattractive for potential settlers. The borderlands of Hungary, with the exception of the above mentioned smaller parts, largely belong to this category, but eastern Slovakia (apart from the Košice agglomeration), eastern and southern Croatia as well as western Romania are also scarcely inhabited.

The borderlands at the eastern edge of the Danube Region are characterised by low population density with the exception of some important urban centres though appear as island-like peaks. Such city areas are Bulgarian and Moldovan capital cities, Sofia and Chișinău, and regional centres such as Varna and Burgas in Bulgaria, Galați and Iași in Romania as well as Chernivtsi and Odessa in Ukraine. As in other former analyses, the lack of data on local level entities, especially in Moldova and Ukraine, may hide the outstanding role of some significant cities behind the likely favourable values of some meso-level entities.

All in all, population density is a fine indicator for the economic situation of the distinct localities. It is also favourable that the necessary datasets for this indicator are widely available in most countries. Unfortunately, this is not true for more dynamic indices such as flow data on commuting. This phenomena is not registered in each countries and even if datasets are available from neighbouring countries their outcomes are likely not comparable. In our present case, datasets on commuting are available in seven of the thirteen countries. Subsequently, this does not enable a correct analysis; therefore, we could not take this indicator into account.

In contrast, the figures on migration have considerable relevance from the point of view of economic situation in borderland areas. Thought the positive or negative balance of migration as well as its volume is an outcome of multiple factors, labour market situation is by all means decisive. High or at least increasing demand on labour force generate pull effects in and/or around the respective localities, whilst low or decreasing demand reinforce push effects. However, due to a series of other influencing factors, such as the structural characteristics of real estate market or unattractive salaries, the process is not straightforward, in many cases local particularities are more effective.

In general, borderlands of the Danube Region show a very mixed pattern in terms of migration balance and rate (Figure 39). In contrast to the majority of images, the spatial structure of migration volume shows relatively few contiguous zones sharing the same trends, but it rather depicts characteristic disparities on local level within tighter regions. Apparently, differences in migration are closely linked to urban-rural divide as urban centres are more attractive with their higher job supply, while rural localities are usually concerned by unidirectional population outflow. However, this general trend is often perturbed by the presence of larger urban agglomerations, often affecting the other side of the border as well.
In the westernmost areas of the Danube Region, settlement density in general is much higher than elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe. In line with this, the borderlands of Germany, Austria and, to some extent, the Czech Republic show relatively balanced patterns in terms of settlements with different trends. This means, that these areas are composed of several growing urban centres, a fair number of neighbouring localities with more or less balanced migration figures and a moderate number of shrinking localities. However, larger zones of meaningful outmigration can be identified along the Austria-Czech Republic border as well as in the mountainous areas of southern Austria and in central Slovenia.

![Regional differences in migration along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011](image)

*Figure 39: Regional differences in migration along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011*

*Data source: National statistical offices*

In the central areas of the macroregion, the presence of larger urban centres has a great importance for migration trends. Capital cities, such as Bratislava or Budapest, and regional centres, such as Timișoara in Romania or Košice in Slovakia, are significant actors in this matter. Taking into consideration that these cities have several hundred thousand or even more than a million inhabitants, the positive rate they showed in recent years meant the inflow of tens of thousands of people. Moreover, these urban centres not only attracted people themselves, but they affected the localities of their hinterlands, which also saw a more or less dynamic upturn in the number of inhabitants during the same period. Apart from these agglomeration areas, a series of local centres throughout the countries of the Central Danube Basin also underwent
significant growth. In some cases, such as in Western Hungary or Western Romania, a change was enabled by the new economic environment resulting from the gradual opening of the border in recent years and the opportunity of cross-border commuting was also attractive for incomer residents. However, local centres in economically less dynamic areas, e.g. Northeastern and Southwestern Hungary, have increased the number of inhabitants at the expense of the neighbouring localities which often resulted in unhealthy overconcentration and growing imbalances.

In the eastern and southeastern part of the Danube Region, borderlands are largely affected by outmigration. Exceptions are Ukraine and Moldova which show a more or less balanced image on regional level; however significant differences between urban centres and rural areas are obvious. Some significant urban centres, such as Galați and Iași in Romania, Vidin and Ruse in Bulgaria, have experienced substantial growth in recent years. What is more, a fair number of localities in both countries showed a balanced image in terms of migration. Nevertheless, the most localities in these borderlands were concerned with shrinking population, due to massive outmigration. The same challenge was even more serious in Montenegro and Serbia, where majority of borderland areas are profoundly affected by the outflow of people, and only a few urban hinterlands, like the Montenegrin capital Podgorica, were able to attract incomers.

Simply, one can see that the movements of society in the geographical space and the resulting territorial patterns show a threefold structure for the entire Danube Region and thus they point at the most important economic attributes characterising the macroregion. The westernmost areas are more or less balanced in economic terms. Obviously, smaller settlements are not able to provide with the same employment conditions as urban centres do; nevertheless, they did not lose their entire significance to these latter ones. As a result, the territorial pattern of population and the attractiveness of certain places are not homogeneous, but they show a healthy composition. In contrast, the central areas of the macroregion are characterised with huge urban-rural disparities which point at the fact that urban centres, especially larger ones, were much more able to benefit from the opening of the borders, while in many rural borderland areas and slightly dynamic local central places enabled to accumulate the out-migrants of the hopelessly lagging smaller villages. Last but not least, in the easternmost countries, along with southern non-Member States, the borderland areas are contiguous zones of outgoing migration, targeting mainly distant places such as the national capital or even more Western Europe. At the same time, a few centres were able to achieve a positive balance rate through an overwhelming oligopoly of workplaces.

4.6 Employment conditions

The image on the economic and social conditions of the borderland areas may be completed by the actual and possible participation at the labour market. The most common indicator is employment rate which is widely used to refer to the economic performance of a country, a
region or a locality, thus this normative approach couples low unemployment rates with favourable economic performance. Nevertheless, it shall be noted that the proportion of unemployed people is not only influenced by economic features, but by a series of socio-cultural factors, too. Another frequently applied figure is the rate of working-age inhabitants, indicating the volume of the workforce at disposal as well as its expected shifts in the following decades. From the point of view of economy, the indicator reflects on the present and future assets of labour market and economic growth.

Figure 40: Regional differences in the proportion of working-age inhabitants as percentage of total population along the borders in the Danube Region, 2011

Data source: National statistical offices

Starting the latter one, the territory of the Danube Region shows complex territorial pattern in terms of labour force, which is not necessary in line with the general macroregional economic structure. The proportion of working-age people is higher in the central areas of the Danube Region than in the westernmost and easternmost parts of the macroregion; however, zones with outstanding values can also be found at the very edges.

The German federal states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg have relatively moderate values, compared to the entire macroregion and border edges that are especially characterised by low values, mainly on the southern and northeastern border areas of Bavaria. This is in line
with population ageing and the outmigration of the youth, already mentioned in the case of these zones above. Higher values are largely attained in and around meaningful urban centres, such as Passau or Regensburg, in the Bavarian case. In contrast, the Austrian and Czech sides are characterised by much higher values. Especially the neighbouring Czech side shows high levels of possibly active population which refers once again to the attractiveness of the German side in terms of economy and livelihood. This also true for the Czech side of the Austria-Czech Republic border unlike the Austrian side of this same border which in some rural zones show markedly low values. Although to a limited degree, the same can e said about the Austria-Slovenia border, where the Austrian side is in general characterised by a lower rate of working-age population than the Slovenian one; although, both borderlands are predominantly rural areas.

In the central part of the Danube Region, the borderlands of Slovakia show mostly increased rates of active-age population. This is largely due to the border location of the capital city of Bratislava which encounters a significant economic dynamism and is therefore attractive for working-age incomers. This belt of economically emerging areas extends all along the northwestern part of the country, thus it exerts its influence on the Slovakian side of the Czech Republic-Slovakia border. Unlike these westernmost areas, the southern and eastern borders of Slovakia are characterised by a rather dispersed pattern. Here, urban settlements and their close neighbourhood have higher shares from working-age population, while more peripheral rural zones are characterised by modest values, as a result of ageing population, low birth rates and outmigration of youth. Ultimately, this leads to significant territorial imbalances within relatively short distances. To a limited extent, the situation is largely the same in northeastern and southwestern Hungary, where elevated and diminished rates may be found in the close proximity to each other. Otherwise, a common structure for the countries of the Middle Danube Basin is that that capital city regions and other important cities have outstanding (or at least above-average) values, in sharp contrast to the low values of contiguous rural zones. This is especially true for Hungary and its southern neighbours, thought regional differences are relatively moderate in Slovenia.

The eastern part of the Danube Region does not show a straightforward image, but is marked with obvious differences between the distinct countries. This time, only regional level statistics are available for Ukraine and Moldova; therefore, local level analysis is not enabled for these countries. Nevertheless, it is clearly noticeable, that urban centres and agglomeration areas show the highest values. In Ukraine, the cities of Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi and Odessa stand out in this respect, whilst the presence of the capital city of Chişinău in Moldova significantly raises the average of the southern part of the country.

The same phenomenon, namely the outstanding role of urban centres, is even more outstanding in Romania, where the eastern and southern borderlands are mostly characterised by rural areas with low rates of working-age inhabitants and few towns and cities with prominent figures. Fine examples for these peaks are the already mentioned Galaţi and Iaşi at
the Romania-Moldova border, Tulcea at the Ukrainian border, or Călărași at the Bulgarian border. In contrast to this, Bulgarian borderlands are far less polarised in this matter. Urban centres, such as Vidin or Montana in the northwest or Silistra and Dobrich in the southeast, tend to show outstanding values, while a wide range of less urbanised localities, mainly in the west and the south, have significant rate of active-age people. Nevertheless, this is to some extent controversial to formerly presented relatively high death rates and ageing index therefore this phenomenon may only be explained through the investigation of local particularities.

As for the indices of labour market, taking into consideration unemployment rate as an indicator for the economic conditions is quite common; however, the use of this indicator meets several difficulties, thus it must be carried out with restrictions. Unemployment rates are produced through different methodologies; consequently, they are only slightly comparative between distinct countries. Even the subject of measurement is varied: some countries enumerate all people from working-age population who do not have fixed jobs whilst others focus only on registered unemployed as well as job seekers and ignore otherwise significant groups such as university students or people with seasonal job. Moreover, unemployment is not always in such a strong correlation with economic success or failure, respectively, as it is often suggested by the purely technocratic view. Employment rate is not only about pure economic conditions, but it expresses a series of social, political and cultural features of society which might include social/moral concepts, political intentions and/or cultural traditions. Subsequently, the normative approach of unemployment, that links the indicator of low unemployment with successful macroeconomic structure and economic growth, may not be validated. Nevertheless, the differences among the borderlands of a distinct country can point at interesting territorial structures and imbalances within the respective country. Therefore, we aim at following such an approach in the investigation of the unemployment figures of the Danube Region.
In line with the above described concerns, the area of the Danube Region does not show the traditional west-east slope in terms of unemployment rates, as it is often suggested by the great majority of analyses dealing with socio-economic imbalances on European level. Although, the lack of data for Germany and Ukraine prevents us from having an encompassing overview on the entire macroregion, hence the data at disposal enables us to have an insight on some significant features of the territorial pattern of unemployment.

Considering this time Austria, as the westernmost part of the Danube Region, one must admit that unemployment rates are among the lowest ones in the borderlands of the country. However, employment figures are not necessary confined to the western areas of the country but much more along the northern borders. In contrast, the neighbouring Czech side of this border is characterised by significantly higher unemployment rates. Moreover, rates are largely homogeneous in both urban and rural sites in northern Austria whilst these values are much more disperse in the Czech Republic where rural edge areas are more concerned with employment than urbanised areas farther from the border. This same pattern goes for the Austria-Slovenia border as well unless than Slovenia is largely monocentric in terms of low unemployment rates, concentrated around the capital city of Ljubljana.
The countries of the central areas of the macroregion show relatively straightforward images. Both Slovakia and Hungary have their most favourable figures in the proximity of the capital cities as well as in their westernmost areas which two largely coincide in the case of Slovakia. As for the other end of the scale, highest unemployment rates may be found in southwestern and northeastern Hungary and in the eastern part of the southern borderlands of Slovakia, already mentioned as zones with multiple challenges. In eastern Slovakia the Košice agglomeration stands out as an exception, providing with reasonably good employment conditions in its tighter hinterland. Countries in the south such as Croatia and Serbia show somewhat lesser internal equalities; however, significant patterns may also be revealed here. In Croatia, the capital city agglomeration of Zagreb as well as the Mediterranean seaside zones are characterised by moderate unemployment rates whilst mainly rural and peripheral borderland areas along the Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina border together with the eastern Croatian historical region of Slavonia are facing an increased lack in workplaces. In Serbia, borderlands with more intensive interactions, such as the Hungary-Serbia border, tend to have lower unemployment rates, along with areas of touristic attractiveness (at the southern part of Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina) or significant industrial sites (at the southern part of the Serbia-Romania border). Other border regions, mainly those having weaker connections and less favourable economic structure, are in contrast much more concerned with unemployment. This goes for Montenegro as well; although, small size of the country and the relatively great extent of territorial entities prevent us from having a more detailed insight on domestic spatial imbalances.

The eastern part of the Danube Region is considerably hard to be assessed through the use of unemployment rates. Relevant datasets are lacking or at least in accessible for Ukraine, while figures from Moldova and Romania are largely inaccurate for detailed. The most prevalent problem is that rural population with even minor agricultural affiliations are not considered as unemployed. As a result, rural areas tend to have extremely low unemployment rates which do not automatically mean high rates of employment but rather the outflow of active-age inhabitants. Only Bulgaria can be evaluated on the basis of its figures on unemployment rate. Here, the wider area of the capital city of Sofia can be seen as a dynamic edge with relatively favourable labour market figures, whilst northern and southern borderlands are marked with significantly worse numbers. The southern borderland, a mountainous and predominantly rural area, seems to benefit in certain localities from increasing tourism which may help in the economic restructuring of the peripherally located zone. The northern border, in contrast, is much more concerned about the crisis of traditional industry which affects more heavily some urban centres, as shown by the map (Figure 41). Relative concentration of the unemployed in cities with considerably good accessibility and potentials (such as the River Danube) proves that unemployment problems are basically of structural nature.

By and large, we can confirm that employment figures tell less about overall economic patterns within the Danube Region than about domestic inequalities. Due to already outlined methodological concerns, the distinct sides of the border cannot simply be compared on the
basis of these datasets; therefore, we opted for the assessment of the economic geographical position of borderlands within their country. This is also supposed to have much relevance as it enables us to differentiate between more and less dynamic edges and to identify their situation within the larger area. To a limited extent, these indices may reflect the intensity of cross-border interactions as well; however, we do not suggest that higher economic performances automatically result in an increased volume of flows across the border. In other words, cross-border flow is directly influenced by a series of other factors, both quantifiable (e.g. salaries, currency rates) and non-quantifiable (e.g. language skills, neighbourly relations) ones, which are not taken into account this time.

4.7 Summary

Thought not awaited at the beginning of our investigation, more or less a straightforward general trend may be revealed on the socio-economic conditions of borderland areas on local level within the Danube region. This trend suggests that geographical spaces from the west toward the east are increasingly polarised in terms of social and economic inequalities on local level within the more or less contiguous zones along the distinct border sections. In the westernmost countries, including Germany, Austria and Slovenia, borderland areas are rather characterised by layered territorial structure which means that the more the localities are at the proximity of the border, the lower their socio-economic statuses are ranked. Nevertheless, territorial inequalities tend to remain relatively moderate in these centre/periphery distributions, largely due to the considerably harmonious settlement structures including numerous small and medium urban centres.

Going eastwards means the increasing spatial polarisation of socio-economic conditions in geographical space. In the central areas of the Danube Region, contiguous zones of localities with either predominantly favourable or basically unfavourable figures are rather typical whilst zones of transition between these two characteristic types are usually tight. In countries such as Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia and also the Czech Republic, in spite of this latter’s western location, science and technology together with services and workplaces are concentrated in capital cities and regional centres as well as in their direct hinterlands. Nevertheless, it is true that inasmuch as these urban centres are located in the relative proximity of the border, they significantly influence the socio-economic conditions of the borderland area and exert influence on the neighbouring side of the border. At the same time, in borderlands with weak or lacking urban centres, the whole zone is usually concerned with the very same social and economic challenges. This results in twofold dividedness of the Central Danube basin, where successful cross-border cooperation initiatives and borders with few interactions exist equally.

The easternmost areas of the macroregion including eastern Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, along with the southern rim areas of Serbia and Montenegro, socio-economic concentration in urban centres is even more increased; therefore, predominantly rural borderland areas usually
suffer from peripheral situation in various terms. Few urban centres are located in these areas and many of them are concerned with structural economic and social problems, thus their capacities for the stimulation of cross-border interactions are limited. Nevertheless, as the opening of the borders has not yet reached such an advanced degree in this part of the Danube Region as it has already been accomplished in the central and western areas, a straightforward and uncritical comparison is reasonably misleading. However, the survival of administrative burdens, along with other significant barriers, such as the lack of appropriate physical infrastructure, mark considerably tight limits for present and future development policies for these areas.

In the course of the analyses, we have taken a fairly wide range of socio-economic indices into account, all of which contributed to gain the widest possible perspective on borderland areas. The figures on tourism showed us that thought the sector is widely considered as a possible way out of backwardness, the spatial extent of the zones, benefitting from the positive effects of the sector, is yet limited. Accordingly, resulting from other factors, demographic conditions and processes, the spatial pattern and movements of the society as well as the changes in employment also pointed at remarkable differences in borderland areas, both on small and large scales.
5. Conclusions

Borderland areas: an inhomogeneous category

As insisted in the introductory chapter of this present study, the regional policy of the European Union and especially the new approach of macroregional level intervention should not ignore the shifts of regional and local level inequalities. This is certainly important in the case of borderland regions as the reactions of these areas are of decisive importance in the question whether the actual territorial policy and its implementation is appropriate or not. Cross-border cooperation initiatives are often and widely considered as the laboratories of European integration. Indeed, not only institutionalised bodies, but also the presence and volume of spontaneous interactions also refer to the fact whether European integration has a tangible added value in the respective border area or not.

Taking into consideration that physical borders within the Danube Region saw a large degree of opening in the course of the last decade both on physical and administrative terms, even if it was less far-reaching in the eastern part of the macroregion, the changes are seen critically by the normative approach. The lack of positive changes is usually considered as a sign of failure as it refers to a situation where the social, economic and political actors of the respective borderland area were not able to benefit appropriately from the potential removal of the physical barriers. However, blaming local and regional actors for this is considerably misleading: this is a result of the inadequacy of domestic and community policies at the same time. As we attempted to present, and repeatedly insist in this study, borderland areas are very different in their socio-economic conditions; therefore, their opportunities are supremely varied accordingly.

All in all, the most important shift in the border regions of the Danube Region was the increasing concentration of population and economy in space, and border regions only benefitted from this process if they had meaningful central places in the proximity of the border. This may be considered as a short answer for our initial research question, namely what kind of general pattern characterises the spatial reconfiguration which unfolded along the borders in the last decades. Spatial concentration as a process is in general difficult to be handled by cross-border spatial planning alone; nevertheless, the elaboration of appropriate policies is of decisive importance. This study aimed at laying the ground for a debate on why “one-size-fits-all” solution proposal from the EU level cannot be accepted and more generally on the question to what extent EU policies are able to achieve real advancement in the stimulation of cross-border interactions in areas with deep socio-economic concerns. What is for sure that the mapping of local problems and resources should be carried out appropriately and the involvement of the most possible levels of policy and decision making is essential.
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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

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Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

1. Introduction

In this present chapter we aim at providing a possibly comprehensive overview on the institutionalised cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region. This overview is expected to shed light upon the macroregional inequalities of cross-border cooperation both in quantity and in quality. Furthermore, this investigation may reveal some unique characteristics of cross-border economic and social ties.

Similarly to the chapter of case studies, existing cross-border cooperation bodies are to be evaluated and, at the same time, classified according to the institutionalisation of the cooperation initiatives, the intensity of cooperation, the ethnic/linguistic ties and historical unity/shared landscape across the border, the fields of cross-border cooperation, the duration of cross-border cooperation and the number of countries involved in the cross-border cooperation initiatives. However, unlike the analyses, these investigations will not target to offer an in-depth analysis on the history, operation, institutional structure and experiences of these initiatives, but they rather target a horizontal overview on the large number and multiplicity of institutionalised cross-border relations. Due to this large number of initiatives (around 200 ones are listed), a detailed analysis, similar to those of the case study areas would certainly not be reasonable, therefore we opted for the use of basic information instead. This may eventually lead to the exclusion of many aspects which would otherwise contribute to a better established analysis, but it will hopefully result in a more compact and straightforward study.

The scope of this research was largely restricted by the availability of information as well as by the finite capacity for information gathering, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. Information gathering was carried out basically by targeting on-line available sites and documents, published predominantly in English, therefore cooperation initiatives with slight on-line presence and/or the preference of using national language(s) rather than English were poorly concerned. Though, we are aware of the dangers of such an asymmetric evaluation, we assume, based on our experiences from the borderlands around Hungary, that successful cross-border partnerships are generally visible for the international audience, therefore we suggest that the available information in English on cross-border initiatives is one of the reliable indicators for their overall performance.

In the followings, we are making a review on the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region through a multiple categorisation of these initiatives, taking into account the institutional forms, work intensity, linguistic and historical ties, their thematic scope, their duration and their membership. Based on these factors, we intend to make an assessment on these initiatives, therewith aiming at the drawing of different development patterns. Though a prioritisation between the distinct categories is not always immune from subjective aspects, we are trying to provide a more or less standardised evaluation on the initiatives, based on the entirety of the factors taken into consideration, allowing some general conclusions.
2. The institutionalisation of the cooperation initiatives

When evaluating cooperation initiatives, the first and most profound question is what the organisational structure enables for the cooperating partners. This is largely determined by the institutional form of cooperation, the thematic field(s) targeted at the establishment and last but not least the legal embeddedness of the institutional body itself within the relevant legislation (i.e. owned competences). In the forthcoming we are providing a short introduction on the most prevalent forms of cross-border cooperation in the current European context. This introduction structures the most frequented cooperational forms primarily on the basis of the legal environments in which they are embedded; these are: international law, first and foremost the legal frames given by the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (the so-called Madrid Outline Convention) and European Community Law. Moreover, this listing also offers an overview on the evolution of cross-border cooperation initiatives from less toward more institutionalised models.

2.1 Cooperation based on international law

Partnership

The most simple and less institutionalised form of cross-border cooperation is the development of partnership agreements among the local and regional level economic, civil and administrative spheres of the neighbouring regions of the border. Such initiatives can manifest in twin city, regional as well as macroregional partnerships.

Twin city agreements are the most prevalent form of cross-border cooperation in Europe. The reason for this is the relative simplicity of this form. There is no cross-border body at all in this case, but a bilateral cooperation agreement is signed between two municipalities on the joint implementation of projects and investments in which both partners are interested. The common work is based on the more or less regular consultation between the relevant offices of the two municipalities. More recently, in many cases newly established non-profit urban development companies are charged with such tasks. Such a company is usually fully owned by the municipality which outsources some of its development, investment and management activities to the company, thus benefitting from the more adequate and flexible structure of such a corporate form. Usually, the more the twin cities are close to each other, the more the cooperation is active. Quite often, twin towns are also neighbours in the geographic sense, like the twin-towns of Esztergom (HU) and Štúrovo (SK), Komárom (HU) and Komárno (SK), Cieszyn (PL) and Český Těšín (CZ), Giurgiu (RO) and Ruse (BG), Bad Radkersburg (AT) and Gornja Radgona (SI) or Vidin (BG) and Calafat (RO) within the area of the Danube Region.
Another form of the first model is development partnership, which results in network-like not-institutional cooperation. The partnership itself is of consultative nature and usually contributes to the harmonisation of the members’ development goals. Fine examples are the Bodrogközi\(^1\) and the Abaúji\(^2\) Development Partnerships at the Hungary-Slovakia border, both of which are coordinated by the Miskolc-based Vitea Foundation, charged with mentoring and management duties at the same time. (In both cases, the financially weak and less populated local municipalities established EGTC for intensifying their cooperation.)

Partnerships may also be established on macroregional level. Such an initiative is the territorial framework of this current study, the European Union’s Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)\(^3\). Here too, no new institutions have been established, the cooperation of the Member States occurs at a consultative level.

The advantage of development partnerships is that no new institutions are required which later must be „fed” both in financial and in functional terms. Thus, the development of the targeted region may involve all interested parties without charging them with unnecessary additional administrative burdens, requirements and responsibility. At the same time, the parties cannot manage their developments jointly which makes the financing of the projects complicated. Accordingly, this model is usually used in the early stages of cooperation activities.

**Euroregion**

Following the model of the EuRegio established in 1957, it was mostly from the 1970s that euroregions became the most widespread quasi-institutional cross-border cooperation forms throughout Europe. A common feature of these bodies is that they do not establish own joint legal personality but in most cases they include a double coordination model built on parallel structures on both sides of the border. Sometimes, euroregions create an own legal body which is registered on one side but does not have legal capacity on the other. The form was very popular in the 70s along the German borders and from the 90s onwards within the former communist block. Nevertheless, this growth in quantity was in general not coupled with quality therefore the most of the euroregions within the Danube Region are not in operation anymore. Some of them were transformed into EGTCs and few others (the best functioning ones) are still in operation.

In general, the main reason of the weakening of the euroregion model is that this form can at best be understood as a geographic category, a strategic cooperation of borderland municipal and regional authorities, without any legal personality. Therefore, euroregions cannot be considered as independent bodies, in many times, the euroregional form does not open new

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gateways for financing and common management of territorial assets, they are rather quasi-institutional organisations which are enabled to dynamise cross-border cooperation through occasional agreements.

2.2 Initiatives based on the Madrid Convention

The European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, also called as the Madrid Convention was launched by the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1980. The document was supposed to answer the demand on the establishment of institutional forms that, unlike euroregions, may be effective on both sides of the border. The Convention created a new framework within international law for the institutionalisation of cross-border initiatives and provided with useful institutional samples for those wishing to deepen cooperation activities. The Madrid Convention inspired several bilateral or multilateral treaties, such as the Treaty of Bayonne (1995) and the Karlsruhe Agreement (1996) and new models of cross-border institutionalised cooperation.

Working communities

Working communities are usually established for the coordination of large extent cooperation initiatives. The first such body, the Working Community of the Alpine States (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer) was founded in 1972. The Alps-Adriatic Working Community, founded in 1978, has played an important role in the strengthening of the relations between former Western and Eastern Bloc countries, however it lost much of its former significance to our days.

In respect of the Danube basin, the most significant initiative of this kind is the Danube Working Community (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer, ARGEDONAU) which was established in 1990 in Wachau. The working community has 40 members, mainly regional municipalities located near the river from Germany to Ukraine but also states like Serbia and Moldova take part in the activities.

The ArgeDonau aims at enhancing the spirit of cooperation within the territory of the Danube valley, closing the stakeholders along the river to each other and implementing projects to facilitate the achievement of these aims.

The presidency is rotating among the members following a geographic principle. The province of Lower-Austria plays the role of administrative centre.

Eurodistricts

Another institutional form created in the aftermath of the Madrid Convention is eurodistrict. Originally referring to the cross-border hinterland of larger, attractive cities and towns located at the border, this form holds a legal personality which fit into the legal structures of all the
participating countries. Due to this legal embeddedness many of them were successful in transforming into EGTCs in the last of years. The best known example for eurodistricts is the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict founded in 2005 and registered as EGTC since 2010.

**Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (ECGs)**

After the adoption of the Madrid Convention the Council of Europe elaborated three additional protocols based on the subsequent feedbacks, aiming thus to precise some specific issues. The first Additional Protocol (1995) aimed at supporting the establishment of cross-border cooperation areas with own decision-making authority. Protocol No. 2 (1998) laid the ground for the cooperation of non-adjacent larger (transnational) entities. Finally, Protocol No. 3 (2009) created the framework of Euroregional Cooperation Grouping (ECG) for the cross-border cooperation of territorial communities and authorities.

The ECG intends to answer the already mentioned challenge that euroregions had to face, namely that they had no legal embeddedness on the other side of the border, therefore cannot be considered as common institutions. ECG provides with the opportunity to establish common bodies with legal capacity on both sides of the border which can give a new impetus to the “euroregion project”. Nevertheless, no such institution has been established yet.

**2.3 Institutional forms based on Community Law: the EGTCs**

The legal form of EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) incorporated within the community law by the Regulation (EC) 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and entered into force on 1 August 2007.\(^4\) Since then, Member States were committed to adopt the EGTC Regulation within their domestic legislation; as a result, the status of the EGTC form saw a consolidation in the last years throughout the EU. What is more that with the amendment of the EGTC Regulation in 2013 (Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013)\(^5\), partners from one Member State and one non-member country are also enabled to set up an EGTC (beforehand, participants from at least two Member States were necessary).

The novelty of this institutional form lies in the fact that it has an own legal personality acknowledged in all Member States (and in some third states) therefore it is enabled to hire own personnel, run business activities and provide with services. The EGTC law must be adopted by all EU Member States, and approval of such initiatives may only be rejected in specific cases. EGTCs automatically fulfil a wide range of prerequisites of the application for ETC

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\(^4\) [https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/about/Pages/What%20is%20the%20EGTC.aspx](https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/about/Pages/What%20is%20the%20EGTC.aspx)

Programmes; therefore they were supposed to have a predominant role in the implementation of ETC-projects.

From 2007 onwards, four different types of EGTCs have been founded in the EU:

- Most numerous (82%) are classical cross-border regional development EGTCs, considered widely as the new generation of euroregions;
- Another significant type is network EGTC, based on a thematical rather than a territorial proximity;
- A third group is composed by project EGTCs, established for the implementation and the subsequent management of a certain investment. The only known project EGTC is the French-Spanish Cerdanya EGTC. In the Danube Region no such initiative has been launched so far;
- The fourth type is the programming EGTC with two existing examples: the Greater Region EGTC managing the cross-border cooperation programmes in the France-Germany-Belgium-Luxemburg border area and the ESPON EGTC.

The most important difference between EGTCs and euroregions is that this latter one is an entity of rather geographic nature whilst the former one is of legal nature, though the activities of an EGTC also target the support of cross-border cooperation within a well-defined geographic framework. Neither euroregions nor other forms of cooperation, provided by the Madrid Convention, had legal capacity on both sides of the border which could have facilitated the implementation of joint projects. In contrast, as the EGTC is adopted in all Members States, such initiatives have full legal capacity in all these countries, therefore it may provide with a stable legal background for a series of cooperation activities.

A wide range of cross-border cooperation initiatives are listed in Annexe I. As we can see, city twinnings are the most widespread forms of cooperation, even when focusing only at those partnerships which take place in the relative proximity of the borders. Moreover, the form of twin cities looks back at a history of almost seven decades. On the contrary, EGTCs are the youngest forms of cooperation, introduced in 2007. However, this short period already enabled them to gain importance and become the most popular cooperation form in recent years. 32 EGTCs have already been registered which involve actors from one or more countries from the Danube Region and several others are currently undergoing the registration process. The trends suggest an increasing growth in the number of these groupings for the following years; however, the advantages of the EGTC form could have only slightly been exploited until now.

https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRAactivities/Pages/egtc-list.aspx
3. The intensity of cooperation

After the categorisation of the cross-border cooperation initiatives according to their institutionalisation, we tried to assess the intensity of the distinct partnerships based on the information available on them. As mentioned in the introduction, our task was largely limited by a range of factors, mainly by capacities. Therefore, in the measuring of the intensity of the cooperation activities, our research concentrated on the on-line presence of the partnerships. As we suggested in the introduction, we are convinced, that the available on-line information in English on the distinct cross-border initiatives is a reliable indicator for their performance. In this respect, though we are aware of the weaknesses of such an approach, we base this present evaluation on the quality and quantity of on-line accessible information on each of the cooperation initiatives. Annexe II. represents the full listing.

The most intensive cross-border cooperation initiatives are mainly euroregions, on the hand, which often have long traditions of joint work, and EGTCs, on the other hand, which recently started their operation, often coupled with the investment of remarkable financial and human resources, and they are supported by a solid institutional, economic and social background. The most intensive cooperation initiatives are largely concentrated in the western part of the Danube Region, having their seats predominantly in the Czech Republic and Hungary. They usually have their own website regularly updated (approximately on a monthly base) and they have also remarkable experiences after having implemented a series of projects within the terms of the cross-border partnership they comprise. Their efficiency is usually enabled by a permanent professional staff which opens up the opportunity for the necessary tasks to be handled on a daily basis. Generally, the staffs have one to four employees working in full-time. Occasionally, some EGTCs may function with a larger staff, more than four associates, but in such cases, some of them, if not all, are employed on a part-time or project basis. Nevertheless, a significant share of the budget of EGTCs and euroregions are spent on wages, therefore the number of employees is in strong and direct connection with the actual financial conditions of the cooperation, and is largely dependent on the success in tender applications. Smaller cooperation bodies may only have one full-time employee, the director, who can only hire other colleagues for the terms of ongoing projects.

In the case of intensive, but thematically or timely limited cooperation initiatives, the situation is somewhat different. Thematically concentrated cross-border initiatives are often supported by institutional background, such as in the case of Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark (a geological park along the Hungary-Slovakia border targeting the preservation of geological values) is managed by the Novohrad-Nógrád EGTC. In other cases, such as the Raab-Őrség-Goričko Nature Park, the cooperation is managed by the already existing domestic national institutions of the three countries, thus it does not need the creation of new structures. In contrast to this, timely limited cooperation initiatives are largely institutionalised, mainly those based on EU-support. CBC programmes, such as IPA or INTERREG play an important role in the leverage of cross-border networking throughout the whole Danube Region and their role is especially important in the eastern part where initiatives of bottom-up nature are relatively weak.
A mixed level of intensity characterizes a wide number of cooperation initiatives which were initially launched with great enthusiasm and remarkable plans but subsequently lost their dynamism and operate now with low capacities. This category includes plenty of twin city partnerships which are usually stable, but not very dynamic cooperation forms. Stable in the sense that they are legally adopted; and not very dynamic as their capacities and financial resources are limited. Their visibility is also slight as they usually even do not have a distinct management structure and staff. Work is carried out by the staff of the town or city hall besides other daily tasks. Only larger cities can afford the maintenance of an office for external relations; however, they usually have no on-line appearance either. By all means, a basic characteristic feature of twin city partnerships is that the outcomes of the cooperation are not regularly posted on a single on-line platform but appear occasionally in the local public media.

Not only twin cities, but also twin regions appear on our list which usually try to cooperate with the aim of carrying out one or more greater projects (e.g. infrastructural developments); nevertheless, their competences are in general far not enough for the implementation of the project itself. Last but not least we can also find euroregions and EGTCs in this category which yet failed to build up a stable financial and institutional background and according to the few accessible information on their websites, their activities are characterised by significant ups and downs.

The least intensive cross-border regions and initiatives are the ones which have been launched with the total lack of appropriate financial, social and political support. Obviously, twin towns are the most numerous among them as the launch of such initiatives is not costly and there are no legal obligations either on the regularity of cooperation activities. Therefore, many of them are only frameworks with no real content. The same is true for several euroregions and some recently funded EGTCs which show no sign of active operation. In the case of the EGTCs, the inoperability is overshadowed by the suspect that these groupings were only funded to benefit from the financial support which EGTCs are granted from community and state funds though the number of these groupings is yet moderate. Among all these types of cooperation inactive initiatives can largely be found in the eastern part of the Danube Region, among other in eastern Hungary, eastern Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. These are the regions where the harsh economic and social conditions hardly enable the embedding within their region.

All in all, we can say that the intensity is largely dependent on the resources at disposal and the domain of financial resources is only one element of this game. Cooperation initiatives need to have enough human resources, economic and social ties; moreover they have to fit in the labour division of their own region, too. In other words, they must find the tasks and fields in which they have the competence to achieve progress and can generate real added value. Less active projects are often sidelined not only because of their economic weakness, but also because of their lack of ability to find their role within their own regions. This is however largely dependent on other given structures such as governmental, infrastructural and economic ones.
4. Ethnic/linguistic ties and historical unity/shared landscape

Current state borders are relatively new phenomena within the Danube Region and they only rarely fit to other societal borders such as linguistic, ethnic or confessional ones. The similarity of these factors on the neighbouring sides of the border, together with the presence of the common sense of historical and/or geographical unity, often mean some pre-existing connections on which cross-border initiatives can build on. Nevertheless, the contrary is also true: basic differences between the languages of the neighbouring states, the lack of the common historical heritage and a shared regional identity, the weakness of traditional social and economic ties and interactions among people from the distinct states often result in slightly efficient or even inoperative partnerships.

When taking a look at the geographic location of institutionalised cooperation initiatives, taking into consideration the above described work intensity, it is particularly noticeable that the most intensive partnerships are usually backed by linguistic factors. A demonstrative example for this, though barely visible from our data collection, that a very deep and daily level of cooperation is taking place on regional and local level between the respective entities at the German-Austrian border. However, we can find institutionalised bodies here such as the Euregio Inntal, the Inn-Salzach-Euregio or the EuRegio Salzburg - Berchtesgadener Land – Traunstein, local authorities and public service operators do also harmonise their daily work and involve the related tasks on the other side of the border within their activities. A fine example for this is the Transport Association of Salzburg (Salzburger Verkehrsverbund GmbH) which is not only concerned with the management of public transport within the Austrian federal state of Salzburg but also with that of the neighbouring German areas.

Similarly we can find numerous joint partnerships at the Czech Republic – Poland border where the basic similarities between the two languages enable the participating members to stay in contact on a regular and (optionally) on an informal base. A fine example for latter ones is the Tritia EGTC, based in the divided town of Cieszyn (PL) – Český Těšín (CZ) where this closeness in linguistic terms is further supported by the immediate geographic proximity of the Czech and Polish actors, involving partners from the nearby Slovakia as well.

Somewhat different linguistic closeness can be observed along the borders of Hungary. Though Hungarian language is completely different from all neighbouring ones, the significant number of native Hungarians living as minority on the external side of the borders, especially in Slovakia, Romania and Serbia, means an important link between the neighbouring sides. The most active zone is the Slovakia-Hungary border where a significant number of institutionalised partnerships were founded from the 1990s onwards, including 13 EGTCs, few of them have yet managed to make a breakthrough in creating a permanent working environment. Nevertheless, in the emergence of the high density of institutionalisation bilingual actors from Slovakia played an important role. Hungarian is mostly used as working language and this facilitates the daily contact and the more or less regular meetings of key actors, mostly mayors. A similar situation
can also be observed at the Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia borders, however the density of cross-border cooperation bodies is much more moderate due to other sort of difficulties, predominantly administrative and financial ones. Nevertheless, we can find promising recent initiatives on both borders, such as the Gate to Europe EGTC between Hungary and Romania, and the DKMT Euroregion and the Banat Triplex Confinium EGTC at the Hungary-Romania-Serbia triborder area.

By all means, the remoteness of the neighbouring sides of the border in linguistic terms is of key importance concerning the relative sparse number of efficient institutional bodies at the borders along the Lower Danube. This is especially the case between Serbia and Romania as well as between Romania and Bulgaria. The only exception is the Romania-Moldova border which means no linguistic and ethnic fault line therefore they have the possibility to benefit from the common language. The relative intensity in cross-border projects, marked by the activities of the Euroregion Siret – Prut – Nistru, underpins the importance of the linguistic factor.

Not only the language issues but also the historical heritage is supposed to play an important role in the emergence of border crossing partnerships. Borders are and have always been in continuous change and, as a result, they may actually separate areas which formerly belonged together. This is quite often the case within the Danube Region where state borders went through a profound reconfiguration in the 20th century. Many historical regional and local entities were cut through by the newly emerging borders which often resulted in the decline of important economic and social ties between urban centres and their hinterlands.

It was only in the second half of the 20th century and mostly in the 1990s, marked by the entry into force of the Schengen Agreement, that the softening of border policies, together with other processes such as globalization and European integration, enabled a revival for many formerly existing ties. The dissolution of administrative borders within the Schengen Area further enhanced the chances for the actors of borderland regions to find their closest natural partners on the other side of the border. This rediscovery of relevant partners based on historical ties, reinforced by the common sense of community and its destiny, is often coupled with other cohesive forces such as the above presented linguistic/ethnic ties which can also be effective in themselves.

A wide range of historical regions and city districts can be found throughout the Danube Region which hold some kind of historical and geographical identity and remain faithful to it despite the presence of the border. Though, in many cases these borders are rather dividing lines in more instances for example in linguistic terms, the collective memories of always having lived together side by side, coupled with an intrinsic allegiance to the landscape they share (often referred to as Landespatriotismus) seem to restore the formerly existing living areas.

This is the case for example in the Baranya(HU)/Baranja(HR) region at the Hungary-Croatia border where ethnolinguistic patterns are rather separating factors, but the shared landscape and the common interests lay the ground for a great number of bottom-up initiatives, mostly
with the leading role of the two urban centres, Pécs and Osijek. Another similar area is the Neusiedler See (AT)/Fertő-tó (HU) district at the Austria-Hungary border where the landscape around the lake constitutes a common living area for the people of the two countries who basically do not speak the same language, though the number of Hungarians working and/or living at the Austrian side is in continuous growth. The natural environment constitutes the base for the most important cross-border body of the area, Neusiedler See – Seewinkel/Fertő–Hanság National Park, although true bottom-up initiatives are much less characteristic in this region.

Shared landscape is often a cohesive factor when the border is marked by a river. This may seem inappropriate, as border rivers are usually considered as natural barriers and in the Danube Region the relative scarcity in cross-border bridges (compared to Western Europe) does not support the daily connection of the riverbanks either. Nevertheless, real life experiences show that even among unfavourable infrastructural conditions the riverbanks tend to play a significant role in the daily life of the other side. This is certainly the case of urban centres which typically benefit from some kind of labour division between each other. As mentioned above, the Danube Region, especially its eastern part suffers from the relative low number of cross-border bridges. This is especially true for more rural areas while urban centres are somewhat better connected to each other therefore the connections between the two sides are often maintained through these centres which thus function as meeting points for the neighbouring people and symbolic places for cross-border regional identity which laid the ground for numerous existing cross-border initiatives.

This is largely the case in many of the above mentioned places such as in the Cieszyn – Český Těšín area (Tritia EGTC), the region of the Ister-Granum EGTC and in some instances the Baranya/Baranja region (emerging Pannon EGTC along the river Drava), though in this case urban centres are located farther from the border river. Other cases include the Inn and Salzach Rivers with multiple urban centers and cooperation initiatives at the Germany-Austria border (e.g. Euregio Inntal, the Inn-Salzach-Euregio), the Komárno-Komárom agglomeration at the Slovakia-Hungary border, centre of Pons Danubii EGTC, the Vidin-Calafat and Giurgiu-Ruse twin cities and their zones at the Romania-Bulgaria border, and the Prut River area, hosting Euroregion Siret – Prut – Nistru, at the Romania-Moldova border.

Similarly to rivers, mountainous areas may also constitute shared cultural landscapes as these physical geographic entities often mark state borders. Mountainous regions usually constitute a distinct category within their own countries, being considered as remote, isolated and less civilized areas and the inhabitants, the “highlanders”, are usually seen as people who are more confined to their traditions and their local livelihoods than others across the country. This has gradually become an important factor in the emergence of the distinct identity of mountainous areas and together with the revelation of the common interests and challenges concerning these regions, a common ground for cooperation came to be laid. Highland regions such as the Beskids or the High Tatras saw the emergence of cross-border initiatives (e.g. Euroregion
Beskydy or EGTC TATRY, respectively) targeting the most important issues of mountainous location, underpinned by a “highlander” identity.

Areas without distinct natural geographic features may also be seen as shared landscapes feeding a sort of distinct identity. Such a situation can be observed at the eastern and southern borders of Hungary where the Great Plain continues ceaselessly on the Romanian and Serbian sides of the border. Thus, the shared landscape is a generally flat topography which is basically structured by the hinterlands of regional centres, Debrecen (HU) and Oradea (RO) at the Hungary-Romania border, having laid the ground for the likes of Gate to Europe EGTC, and Szeged (HU) and Subotica (RS) at the Hungary-Serbia border, cooperating nowadays in the Euroregion DKMT and Banat-Triplex Confinium EGTC, respectively (even though these above mentioned cities themselves are not official members in these initiatives).

All in all, we can see that ethnic and linguistic ties, as well as historical unity and shared landscape, usually play a significant role in the emergence of partnerships within the Danube Region. No general rule can be found for the borderlands where these factors would likely contribute to the emergence of successful cross-border cooperation initiatives. Instead we made an attempt to point at some characteristic historical and geographical features which obviously had been of importance in the past development of currently existing cross-border bodies. Through this, we pointed at the fact once again that border regions could not be considered as a general category, but they had to be seen as a series of local spaces which had one characteristic in common, namely the presence of a state border, but otherwise they possessed their own historic legacy and geographic position from which they could benefit differently.
5. Fields of cross-border cooperation

In the process of classification the cross-border cooperation initiatives in the Danube Region we turn our attention towards the dimension of 'fields of cross-border cooperation'. We have identified 8 'fields/cluster-areas of cooperation' within the realm of cross-border interaction during our analysis of cross-border cooperation. These fields or cluster-areas were identified through qualitative research approach. Specifically, we scrutinised cross-border documents, plans, programmes, aims, objectives, targets and goals through desk research; subsequently, the result of analysis was a list of common denominators of cross-border cooperation, namely fields which are the most appropriate for cross-border interaction. Simply, we looked at the areas of cooperation, investigated those domains where cross-border cooperation frequently emerges and we constructed a categorisation of fields based on frequency of appearance.

These fields of cooperation may differ, thus some fields of cooperation gain higher attention and they occupy a more central role within cross-border cooperation, while some other fields of cooperation receive less attention and they remain on the periphery thereof. Subsequently, these cluster areas are divided into three categories.

*Table 1: Fields of cross-border cooperation in the Danube Region*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The most central fields of cross-border cooperation</th>
<th>Field of cross-border cooperation with rising tendency</th>
<th>The least central fields of cross-border cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>culture and human relationship, tourism, economic cooperation, nature, infrastructure</td>
<td>crisis management</td>
<td>cross-border research, health care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The field of 'cross-border culture and human relationship' is among the most central fields of cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cultural cooperation aims to create an appropriate environment where different cultures and cultural traits can meet, they can enrich each other and perform cultural exchanges between people. Cultural cooperation involves also cooperation in the field of human relationships, like student exchange or summer youth camps (Euroregion Egrensis). In other words, culture and human relationships are fields with substantial capacity to generate toleration toward the neighbours. We can implicitly deduce that culture is a field where low money/resource input can generate visible results and achievements; consequently, of the term 'culture' as a possible field of cooperation can be explicitly found in every cross-border cooperation plan, strategy and description. This field of cooperation includes cultural cooperation, protection and preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of cultural diversity and colourfulness between regions and people; moreover, it supports music, dance and art performances, sport events and competitions, common picnics, cultural/art exhibitions, concerts, theatre festivals, cooperation among libraries and/or
interconnection of local TV channels in the cross-border areas. Simply, it is a field which mainly promotes neighbourhood.

The next investigated field is 'cross-border tourism' which also lies at the central attention of cross-border regions with an emphasis on its cross-border character, like eco-tourism (e.g. Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn; Euroregion Pomoravi-Záhorie-Weinviertel), village-tourism, gastro-tourism, wine-tourism (e.g. Bratislava County and Burgenland; Haloze and Zagorje), ethno-tourism (Euroregion Nišava), cultural tourism, tourism and wilderness (Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn), development of web-based touristic informational portal with description of touristic centres and/or the establishment of Euroregional Information Centre (Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza Euroregion). Moreover, it promotes the introduction of touristic licenses that authorise to travel within the defined cross-border area (Haloze-Zagorje). The issue of tourism has high priority within the domain of cross-border cooperation and it has its unquestionable place almost in all cross-border plan and strategy. Simply, cross-border tourism is a potential field of CBC which might stimulate either interpersonal, intercultural familiarisation with the neighbour, or economic activity and services which is often linked with the phenomenon of economic development.

The third field within the level of the most central ones of CBC is the domain of 'cross-border economic cooperation' that underlines the importance of economic development, formulation of attractive cross-border economic areas based on entrepreneurship, innovation, and mitigation of the rate of unemployment. Cross-border cooperation within the economic field includes support for sustainable economic growth and economic cooperation/investments, support of competitiveness and for the small and medium sized enterprises. Furthermore, it involves activities like organisation of economic forums, linking of two stock exchanges (e.g. Ruse-Bucharest), job fairs (e.g. Tritia EGTC), work market (e.g. Pons Danubii EGTC), capital attraction into the border area (e.g. Euroregion Košice - Miskolc) and support for development of human resources. To put it in other words, economic field of cross-border cooperation aims to strengthen the economic and social cohesion on the cross-border territory; subsequently, every cross-border cooperation plan includes this field into its strategic priorities.

The next field under the first category is 'nature and cross-border environmental cooperation'. Globalized world has generated a deep anthropogenic pressure on nature and living creatures. Facts like pollution, anthropocene mass extinction, deterioration of the health conditions of societies have had huge influence on environment and society, too. Consequently, a slight change can be seen toward a more nature-friendly behaviour with the aim to reduce environmental burden. This change has its fingerprint also on the realm of cross-border cooperation. It means that numerous projects and cooperation can be found in this field, like environmental protection/renewal of nature, management of natural resources, preservation of ecological balance in the Danube Valley (Arrabona EGTC), solution of environmental problems (Euroregion Drina-Sava-Majevica), protection of natural habitat and the animal migration routes (Euroregion Pomoravi – Záhorie – Weinviertel), cooperation between natural
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

parks, monitoring of butterflies, preparation of butterfly atlas and protection/revitalization of old orchards (Őrségi National Park and Goričko Nature Park); combating with the challenges of global warming and climate change (Bánát – Triplex Confinium EGTC); furthermore, promotion of sustainability and renewable energy together with waste management (Tritia EGTC) are among high topics within the realm of CBC. Moreover, the Geopark managed by Novohrad – Nógrád EGTC, is the first UNESCO labelled Geopark in the world which has a cross-border character from its beginning. It implements numerous cross-border activities in the area of the Geopark, like education, research, infrastructure, tourism, investment and/or business development. Besides nature protection, cross-border cooperation on several places underlines other important environmental topics, like eco-production and promotion of local products and their marketing across the borders (e.g. Ister-Granum EGTC) and energy issues, like use of agricultural by-products and their energetic utilisation (BTC EGTC). What is more, cross-border environmental cooperation across the Drina river, specifically disagreement of the local residents with the plans of international investors to utilise the hydropower of the Drina river, resulted in the formulation and establishment of the Drina Euroregion. Simply, the field of nature is a topic with substantial popularity and support, thus it can be easily found in CBC plans and strategies.

Further important domain of cross-border cooperation is the 'cross-border infrastructural cooperation and traffic management' and its development along the borders, either as cooperation in the field of physical infrastructural projects, like (common) roads, railway, touristic routes, development of water supply/energy infrastructure, or as 'soft infrastructural cooperation' like traffic management along the borders. These projects are promoted with the aim to improve cross-border infrastructural cooperation, to increase transport safety and accessibility, support for low-emission/environmental friendly structure of transport and to increase the efficiency of public transport (Tritia EGTC). Moreover, cross-border cooperation between Ruse and Giurgiu triggered important infrastructural projects, like the project 'Rehabilitating and modernization of access infrastructure to the cross border area Giurgiu – Ruse'; 'Improvement of Pan-European Transport Corridor No 9'. Cross-border bicycle routes are also frequent topics in this domain, e.g. construction of a bicycle route as a result of inter-city planning between cities of Arad and Gyula; as a result of cross-border activity of cycle path network managed either between Subotica and Osijek or by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Besides, other infrastructural projects are also visible like waste treatment infrastructure (Malacky – Gänserndorf), railway development (e.g. Bregovo – Negotin) or better infrastructural conditions in the area of cooperation (Tatry EGTC) and/or harmonisation of ticket system and common bus schedule (Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn, Centroe region or the Euroregion Egrens). Beyond the above mentioned cross-border cooperation, which underline the importance of transport, the Central European Transport Corridor EGTC was established in 2014, involving Poland, Hungary and Sweden with the aim to cooperate in the field of transport, its development and the accessibility along the north-south multimodal transport axis from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea, thus directly crossing the Danube Region.
What is more, new Danube bridge was built between Vidin (Bulgaria) and Calafat (Romania) in 2013, and two other bridges are planned to be built, namely between Silistra (Bulgaria) and Calărași (Romania); and between Svishtov (Bulgaria) and Zimnicea (Romania). In other words, cross-border cooperation in the field of infrastructure is profoundly important because it has a huge and substantial effect on the trans-border mobility.

The field of 'cross-border crisis management', especially in times of natural disasters, is a field of cross-border cooperation which has a rising tendency. That means it is not a field explicitly expressed in every CBC plan and strategy, but its importance in the realm of CBC is clear. Alteration of global climate, global warming, intensification of the power of natural elements and their impacts on nature and/or human habitat, either in the form of droughts, thunderstorm, flood or blizzard, push relevant stakeholders to cooperate across the borders, specifically to elaborate strategic plans and to mitigate the losses and consequences. Several cross-border interactions may be identified within this field, like the common rescue exercise between Bratislava County and Burgenland; fire/emergency services and disaster management (Euroregion Krušnohoří – Erzgebirge; Carpathian Euroregion); cooperation in prevention, rescue service and elimination of disaster consequences (e.g. Euroregion Glacensis; Euroregio Nišava; Euroregio Drina-Sava-Majevica; Sajo-Rima/Slaná-Rimava EGTC), protection and establishment of a common information system (Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava, the water management institutions of Northern Hungary and Eastern Slovakia), mutual help in case of disasters (Euroregion Praděd –Pradziad), joint flood prevention, preparation of a rescue team with appropriate equipment with the ability to manage fast removal of population of the affected area (Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa) and/or common flood protection (Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel). Besides, cross-border cooperation between Ruse and Giurgiu triggered substantial cross-border projects, like 'Common Action for Prevention of Environmental Disasters' and 'Enhancing the operational technical capacities for emergency situations response in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area'.

The first domain of cross-border cooperation within the category of the least central field is the 'cross-border research'. It usually involves cross-border activities, like organisations of conferences (e.g. Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru), workshops and/or publications. The university cooperation is usually performed under the coverage of twin relationships, like dental hygienic cooperation between Alfatar and Baneasa; cross-border cooperation of medical universities and medical practices between Iași and Chișinău; inter-university European Center between Ruse and Bucharest; maintenance of relationships among schools and universities between Baia Mare and Ivano-Frankivsk and/or research cooperation under the coverage of Euroregions, like free university of Ipoly-Ipeľ Euroregion; cooperation under the Euroregion Košice and Miskolc; cross-border cooperation with the aim to undertake common educational projects between schools of Tatry EGTC; education/training coordination across the border (Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa; Euroregion Drina-Sava-Majevica); common dual cross-border vocational education in the field of machinery (Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel). What is more, a substantial research cooperation was
performed between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, namely 'Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River' which resulted in scientific investigation of the Prut River and in a subsequent publication activity of the cross-border research.

The final identified field of cross-border cooperation of the Danube Region is the field of 'cross-border health'. Health policy is considered to be an important and unique policy of nation states which is managed and financed by state systems, thus their alteration and change is very complicated; subsequently, it is a domain of cross-border interaction which is rather limited and it occupies the least central field of CBC. This field contains cross-border cooperation among health and social institutions, like Euroregion Pomoraví – Záhorie – Weinviertel; integration of cross-border health care (Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa; the contract between the Slovak assurance company Dôvera and the Hungarian hospital in Esztergom) and/or common health care rescue training between Bratislava County and Burgenland. This field of cross-border cooperation is very rare, hence it occupies a peripheral position within CBC plans and strategies.

To summarise, the aim and purpose of cross-border cooperation is to establish a coherent space where borders are no longer function as obstacles, but rather they are turned into a possible resource generating development and cooperation. When starting cooperation, the stakeholders are seeking for relevant fields for working together; fields which connect them to each other because of their common or complementary characteristics. Within the Danube region cross-border interaction usually takes place in the above identified cluster fields.
6. Duration of cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

The establishment of the first cross-border euroregion was a cooperation initiative in the German – Dutch border area (Scott, 2000), namely 'Euregio' in 1958, and it involved the following border areas: North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony from Germany, and Gelderland, Overijssel and Drenthe from the Netherlands. The official goal was to propose binational initiatives with the aim to promote solutions for specific economic, social, environmental and/or institutional problems of the region; to support cultural cooperation and communication across the border area, and to deconstruct negative images and stereotypes on both sides of the border (Scott, 2012).

Euregio was followed by the Øresund Committee cross-border cooperation between Denmark and Sweden in 1964. Nevertheless, the European breakthrough of cross-border interaction happened in the 70s. Subsequently, 'cross-border cooperation diffusion' happened and numerous euroregions were established in Western and Northern part of Europe. To be specific, 18 cases of cross-border cooperation were registered in the 1970s and 13 cross-border cooperation were founded in the 1980s. At the same time, strict border regimes in the former communist countries made cross-border interaction immensely limited, bureaucratic and unattractive; consequently, cross-border areas lived side by side without any substantial cross-border communication and/or interaction with each other.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the disintegration of the communist political system opened up new areas and possibilities for cross-border cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, based on Western/Northern European CBC experiences. Subsequently, numerous euroregions were established in the 1990s, in line with the Madrid Convention and its path of eliminating obstacles to transfrontier co-operation. The first euroregions in the Danube Region and Central Europe were motivated by German involvement and mainly with the Czech and Polish co-membership. The following table contains the euroregional cross-border interactions in the Danube Region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of foundation</th>
<th>Name of Euroregion</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer</td>
<td>Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Moldavia, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa</td>
<td>Germany, Czech Republic, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Danube Euroregion 21</td>
<td>Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Euroregion Elbe-Labe</td>
<td>Germany, Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Euroregion Krušnohoří – Erzgebirge</td>
<td>Germany, Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
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<td>Greece, Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Spree-Neisse-Bober Euroregion</td>
<td>Germany, Poland</td>
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</table>
### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of foundation</th>
<th>Name of Euroregion</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Carpathian Euroregion</td>
<td>Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Euroregion Egrensis</td>
<td>Germany, Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina</td>
<td>Germany, Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn</td>
<td>Germany, Czech Republic, Austria</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Euroregion Tatry</td>
<td>Slovakia, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Europaregion Tirol-Südtirol/Alto Adige-Trentino</td>
<td>Austria, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Inn-Salzach-Euroregio</td>
<td>Austria, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>EuRegio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein</td>
<td>Germany, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Regio TriRhena</td>
<td>Germany, France, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Euroregion Glacensis</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza</td>
<td>Hungary, Serbia, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Euroregion Praděd – Pradziad</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Euregio Via Salina</td>
<td>Germany, Austria</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Euroregion Danube-Drave-Sava</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Euregio Inntal</td>
<td>Germany, Austria</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Euroregion Silesia</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Euregio Zugspitze/Wetterstein-Karwendel</td>
<td>Germany, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Superior Prut and Lower Danube Euroregion</td>
<td>Romania, Ukraine, Moldavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>West/West Pannonia Euroregion</td>
<td>Austria, Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Euroregion Pomoraví-Záhorie-Weinviertel</td>
<td>Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Ipf-Ipoly Euroregion</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Vah-Danube-Ipel Euroregion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Euroregion Beskydy</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Euroregion Neogradiensis</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>White Carpathians Euroregion</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Slovakia</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Euroregion Evros-Meric-Maritsa</td>
<td>Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Euroregion Danube-South</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Euroregion Košice – Miskolc</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Euroregion Kras</td>
<td>Slovakia, Hungary</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Euroregion Podunajský Trojspolok</td>
<td>Slovakia, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Euroregion Rhodopi</td>
<td>Greece, Bulgaria</td>
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### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of foundation</th>
<th>Name of Euroregion</th>
<th>Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Euregio Steiermark-Nordost-Slovenien</td>
<td>Austria, Slovenia</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Dobrava Euroregion</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Poland</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Inferior Danube Euroregion</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Romania</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Rousse-Giurgiu Euroregion</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>ARGE Kärnten-Slowenien / Karawanken</td>
<td>Austria, Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Euroregion Danubius</td>
<td>Romania, Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Euroregion Eurobalkans</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Euroregion Silva Nortica</td>
<td>Austria, Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Hajdú-Bihar-Bihor Euroregion</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Belasica Euroregion</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Euroregion Drina-Sava-Majevica</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Euroregion Morava-Pcinja-Struma</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Euroregion Strymon-Strouma</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Ister-Granum Euroregion</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Euroregion Zemplén</td>
<td>Slovakia, Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Mura-Dráva Euroregion</td>
<td>Croatia, Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Muránia Euroregion</td>
<td>Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Euroregion Middle Danube – Iron Gate</td>
<td>Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Euroregion Nišava</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru</td>
<td>Romania, Moldavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Adriatic Ionian Euroregion</td>
<td>Albania, Bosna and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Stará Planina</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Sajó-Rima Euroregion</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Black Sea Euroregion</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Lower Danube Euroregion</td>
<td>Ukraine, Romania, Moldavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Drina Euroregion</td>
<td>Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosna and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Euroregional cross-border cooperation has progressively proliferated cross-border interactions, thus frames and CBC structures were stretched into the whole Danube Region. Graph No. 1 illustrates the number of established euroregions in every year from 1990 till 2012 and it shows the tendency of foundation of euroregions and its fluctuation based on years. It is visible from the graph that there was a rise and fall in establishment of euroregions until 2001 when the peak happened, and after 2001 a relative decline and stagnation is visible. The stagnation can be explained by the new cross-border cooperation tool that was introduced in 2006; subsequently, establishment of euroregions profoundly faded and only three further euroregions were established, specifically the Black Sea Euroregion in 2008, the Lower Danube Euroregion in 2009 and the Drina Euroregion in 2012.
The next profound step in cross-border cooperation was taken in 2007 when the 'European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation' was launched/introduced with the aim to promote more sophisticated and effective cross-border territorial cooperation in the European Union. This new cross-border framework altered the path of CBC and euroregions were mostly substituted by EGTCs. The first EGTC in the European Union was established in 2008, namely Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai; nevertheless, foundation of the Ister-Granum EGTC in 2008, between Hungary and Slovakia, was the second registered EGTC in the EU and the first registered EGTC in the Danube Region. Subsequently, an 'EGTC boom' has happened in the Danube Region since 2008: numerous EGTCs have been established and a rising tendency is still visible there.

Table 3: Foundation of EGTCs in the Danube Region (2008 – 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Name of EGTCs</th>
<th>Member of EGTCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Ister-Granum EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó (Hernád-Bódva-Szinvá)</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Karst-Bodva EGTC</td>
<td>Slovakia, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Abaúj-Abaújban EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Pons Danubii EGTC</td>
<td>Slovakia, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Bánát-Triplex Confinium EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Arrabona EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Rába-Duna-Vág EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Name of EGTCs</th>
<th>Member of EGTCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Novohrad-Nógrád EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>EGTC Gate to Europe</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bodrogkőzi EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Pannon EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>European Common Future Building EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Tříti EGTC</td>
<td>Poland, Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Via Carpatia EGTC</td>
<td>Slovakia, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Tatry EGTC</td>
<td>Poland, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>EGTC Spoločný region limited</td>
<td>Slovakia, Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Torysa EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Svinka EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>European Border Cities EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Mura Region EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Romania</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>MASH EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Tisza EGTC</td>
<td>Hungary, Ukraine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this point, we can separate two kinds of EGTCs in the Danube Region. One kind of EGTCs are embodied by those institutionalised cross-border structures which are fully situated in the geographic space of the Danube Region. Table 3 contains this kind of EGTCs. Second type of EGTCs, which is included in the Table 4, are represented by cross-border frames which are only partly situated in the geographic space of the Danube Region.

Table 4: Foundation of EGTCs partly in/outside of the Danube Region (2008 – 2015)
Source: authors’ compilation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Name of EGTCs</th>
<th>Member of EGTCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>GECT Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau</td>
<td>France, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>GECT Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige – Trentino</td>
<td>Italy, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Gruppo Europeo di Cooperazione Territoriale (GECT) denominato “Territorio dei comuni: Comune di Gorizia (I), Mestna občina Nova Gorica (SLO) e Občina Šempeter-Vrtojba (SLO)</td>
<td>Italy, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>EGTC EFXINI POLI - Network of European Cities for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>European Urban Knowledge Network EGTC</td>
<td>Netherlands, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Name of EGTCs</th>
<th>Member of EGTCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>GECT Euregio Senza Confini r.l. - Euregio Ohne Grenzen mbH</td>
<td>France, Germany, Hungary, Luxemburg, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial Ciudades de la Cerámica, AECT limitada</td>
<td>Spain, France, Italy, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Central European Transport Corridor EGTC</td>
<td>Poland, Hungary, Sweden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, 57 EGTCs were founded in the EU between 2008 and 2015, and we can explicitly state that the Danube Region is very active in this area: the established EGTCs in the Danube Region represent a substantial share within the EU with 24 EGTCs. Furthermore, eight additional EGTCs are partly situated in and partly outside of the Danube Region.

The following graphs visualize the tendency and fluctuation of establishment of EGTCs. It is visible that EGTC have become permanent structure of cross-border cooperation in the European Union: new EGTCs have been initiated every year since its promotion. To be specific, a steady rise of founded EGTCs is visible during the first years; and the highest number of EGTCs in the geographic area of the Danube Region was the year 2013 which was followed by a decrease; nevertheless, the year 2015 once again shows a rising tendency.
A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

Figure 3: Tendency of establishment of EGTCs in the Danube Region (2008 – 2015)
Source: authors’ compilation

Figure 4: Tendency of establishment of EGTCs which are partly in/outside of the Danube Region (2008 – 2015)
Source: authors’ compilation

One can divide two periods of cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region. The first period went through after the transition phase, when cross-border interaction took place mainly within the legal framework of euroregions. This period lasted from 1991 till 2007. The second phase of CBC was triggered by the introduction of a new legal framework, the EGTC in 2007; subsequently, the application of EGTC has become the primary tool in the management of cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region.
7. Number of countries involved in cross-border cooperation initiatives within the Danube Region

When we look at the number of countries involved in cross-border cooperation bodies, it is obvious that the majority of cross-border partnerships are set up as a platform between two/three cross-border regions/states. Sometimes, structures can also be found with five/six or even more involved countries, but it is rather an exceptional case than a rule. The following table lists the established euroregions and it indicates the number of involved countries in the cooperation within the Danube Region, from the beginnings in 1990 when cross-border cooperation was triggered, until 2012 when the new CBC tool was already in action.

Table 5: Number of countries involved in cross-border cooperation through structures of euroregions in the Danube Region (1990-2012)
Source: authors’ compilation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Euroregions with 2 members</th>
<th>Euroregions with 3 members</th>
<th>Euroregions with more than 3 members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ARGE Kärnten-Slovenien / Karawanken;</td>
<td>• Bayerischer Wald –</td>
<td>• Adriatic Ionian Euroregion;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Black Sea;</td>
<td>• Böhmertal - Unterer Inn;</td>
<td>• Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cieszyn Silesia;</td>
<td>• Belasica;</td>
<td>• Carpathian Euroregion;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Danubius Euroregion;</td>
<td>• Beskydy Mountains;</td>
<td>• Drina;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dobrava;</td>
<td>• Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza;</td>
<td>• Muráň</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elbe-Labe Euroregion;</td>
<td>• Danube Euroregion;</td>
<td>• Eurobalkans;</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Egrensis;</td>
<td>• Danube-Drava-Sava;</td>
<td>• Evros-Meric-Maritsa;</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Europaregion Tirol- Südtirol/Alto Adige-Trentino;</td>
<td>• Drina-Sava-Majevica;</td>
<td>• Middle Danube-Iron Gate;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• EuRegio Salzburg- Berchtesgadener Land - Traunstein;</td>
<td>• Eurobalkans;</td>
<td>• Morava-Pcinija-Struma;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• EuRegio Steiermark – Nordost - Slowenien;</td>
<td>• Evros - Meric Maritsa;</td>
<td>• Neisse-Nisa-Nysa;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Euregio Zugspitze / Wetterstein - Karwendel;</td>
<td>• Middle Danube - Iron Gate;</td>
<td>• Nišava;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glacensis;</td>
<td>• Morava-Pcinija-Struma;</td>
<td>• Pomoravi-Záhorie - Weinviertel;</td>
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<td>• Hajdú - Bihar – Bihor;</td>
<td>• Neisse-Nisa-Nysa;</td>
<td>• ReGio TriRhena;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Košice - Miskolc;</td>
<td>• Nišava;</td>
<td>• Superior Prut and Lower Danube;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kras;</td>
<td>• Pomoravi-Záhorie - Weinviertel;</td>
<td>• Lower Danube;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Krušnohoří-Erzgebirge;</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Upper Prut Euroregion</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Euroregions with 2 members</th>
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<th>Euroregions with more than 3 members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Inferior Danube;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inntal;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inn-Salzach;</td>
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<td>Ipeľ -Ipoly;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ister-Granum;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mura-Dráva;</td>
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<td>Neogradiensis;</td>
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<td>Nestos - Mesta;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podunajský Trojpolok;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praděd-Pradziad;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pro-Europe Viadrina;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Rhodopi;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rousse - Giurgiu;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sajó – Rima Euroregion;</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Silesia;</td>
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<td>Silva Nortica Euroregion;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siret-Prut-Nistru;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Hence, it is clear from the Table 5 that euroregions within the Danube Region are dominated by two state structure; although, a large number of euroregions were founded with three states and 5 euroregions were established with more than three states, namely Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia; Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer, including Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Moldavia, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine; Carpathian Euroregion, including Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine; Drina Euroregion with Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and finally Muráňia Euroregion with cooperation between Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia. Subsequently, graph No 5 demonstrates a visual differentiation of euroregions based on the number of involved states.
When we look at the EGTC structures within the Danube Region, it is immediately clear that they are mainly cross-border groupings with involvement of two states. Specifically, 23 EGTCs out of 24 involve two states, while only one specific EGTC involves three states, namely, Tritia EGTC.

![Diagram showing number of EGTCs with different numbers of members]

**Figure 5:** Number of countries involved in the frames of euroregions in the Danube Region (1990-2012)

*Source: authors’ compilation*

**Figure 6:** EGTCs and number of involved states in the Danube Region (2015, December)

*Source: authors’ compilation*
If we look at the structure of those EGTCs which are partly in/outside of the Danube Region, the picture is slightly different since half of them include two states, but half of them involve more than two states.

![Figure 7: EGTCs partly in/outside of the Danube region and number of involved states (2015, December)](image)

*Source: authors’ compilation*

Finally, when we look at deeper structures and the involvement of individual states, we can immediately see that Hungarian membership is dominant within the structures of EGTCs. To be exact, out of 24 EGTCs of the Danube Region, Hungarian members participate in 21. Moreover, if we add the other two EGTCs with Hungarian membership, namely European Urban Knowledge Network EGTC and Central European Transport Corridor EGTC, the total number of EGTCs with Hungarian participation reaches the number of 23. Subsequently, Hungary plays a leader role within the EGTC structure because it is the country which is involved in most EGTC structures, followed by France, with 19 involvement, and Spain with 14 involvement.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

A classification of the cross-border cooperation initiatives of the Danube Region

To summarise, we can state that cross-border cooperation in the Danube Region is primarily driven by involvement of two states, either in the structures of euroregions or within the frames of EGTCs. Cross-border cooperation with more states may be found, but the tendency is clear and unquestionable. Moreover, this part of the paper underlines that Hungary plays a major role in the frames of EGTC because 40 percent of all EGTCs in the EU involve Hungarian members.
8. Conclusion – a classification of the cross-border initiatives of the Danube Region

During our research, we reflected not only the actual and active cross-border partnerships, but we included also those ones which no longer perform substantial cross-border activities because otherwise we could not give an overall picture about the cross-border cooperation.

This chapter tried to classify cross-border activities from several points of view and criteria. The first criterion was the domain of institutionalisation, which showed that more and more intensive forms of CBC have emerged in recent decades. In the followings, partnerships were categorised by the intensity of cooperation, revealing the fact that in this respect the Danube Region has a certain duality in territorial terms. Ethnic and linguistic ties together with historical unity/shared landscape were also taken into consideration, as important factors in the establishment of cross-border partnerships. The multiplicity of such ties usually contributes in different ways to the success of partnerships. The fifth investigated issue was the ‘field of cooperation’. At this point, we identified 8 'cluster-areas of cooperation' which primarily and generally resonate in the field of cross-border cooperation in the Danube Region. The most central fields of CBC are the following ones: culture and human relationship, tourism, cross-border economic cooperation, nature protection and infrastructural cooperation. The field of crisis management has a rising tendency, compared to research and health which play a peripheral role in cross-border cooperation within the region. The next reflected domain of cross-border interaction was the 'duration/year of establishment of CBC' within the Danube Region. CBC in the Danube Region was substantially triggered after the geopolitical earthquake in 1989. A large number of cross-border initiatives have been released under the form of 'euroregion' in the 90s. The peak of foundations of euroregions was in 2001, but after it the tendency slowed down. The foundation of euroregions significantly dropped since 2005, and in 2007 a new cross-border legal framework was introduced by the European Union which once again inspired and ignited the light of CBC in the Danube Region. The last classification of CBC initiatives in the Danube Region was made according to the 'number of countries' involved in the distinct CBC initiatives. It seems that CBC is primarily driven by euroregional cooperation between two or three involved states. More than three states in such structures is rather an exceptional case. This is also true in the case of EGTCs.
References


## Annexes

### Annexe I. List of cross-border initiatives in the Danube Region according to cooperation form

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**EGTC**
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- Ung - Tisza - Túr - Sajó UTTS
- Via Carpatia

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### EGTC
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- Euroregion Eurobalkans
- Euroregion Evros - Meric - Maritsa
- Euroregion Glacensis
- Euroregion Košice - Miskolc / Zemplén
- Euroregion Kras
- Euroregion Middle Danube - Iron Gates
- Euroregion Morava-Pcinija-Struma
- Euroregion Nestos - Mesta
- Euroregion Nisava
- Euroregion Podunajský Trojšpolok
- Euroregion Pomoraví-Weinviertel
- Euroregion Praděd-Pradziad
- Euroregion Silesia
- Euroregion Silva Nortica
- Euroregion Siret – Prut – Nistru

### Twin-cities
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- Čadca (SK) – Żywic (PL)
- Cetinje (ME) – Dubrovnik (HR)
- Cetinje (ME) – Shkodër (AL)
- Dobrich (BG) – Constanţa (RO)
- Dobšiná (SK) – Sajószentpéter (HU)
- Dragoman (BG) – Dimitrovgrad (RS)
- Drobeta Turnu Severin (RO) – Kladovo (RS)
- Dunajská Streda (SK) – Győr (HU)
- Dve Mogili (BG) - Bucşani (RO)
- Dve Mogili (BG) – Calarasi (RO)
- General Toshevo (BG) - Mangalia (RO)
- Gulyantsi (BG) – Corabia (RO)
- Iaşi (RO) – Chişinău (MD)
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Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

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<th>Twin-cities</th>
<th>Other</th>
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### Annexe II. List of cross-border cooperation initiatives in the Danube Region according to the intensity of cooperation

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<tr>
<th>The most intensive CBRs</th>
<th>Intensive but limited to specific fields or by time</th>
<th>A mixed level of intensity</th>
<th>The least intensive CBRs</th>
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<td>Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpen-Adria</td>
<td>Novohrad-Nógrád EGTC</td>
<td>Adriatic Euroregion</td>
<td>Abaúj-Abáujban EGTC</td>
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<td>Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer</td>
<td>Prat River Pilot Centre</td>
<td>Alfatar (BG) – Baneasa (RO)</td>
<td>ARGE Kärnten - Slovenien</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banat Triplex Confinium EGTC</td>
<td>Raab-Őrség-Goričko Nature Park</td>
<td>Arad (RO) – Hódmezővásárhely (HU)</td>
<td>Belene (BG) – Popesti-Leordeni (RO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGTC TATRY</td>
<td>Tourism zone Haloze – Zagorje</td>
<td>Arad (RO) – Gyula (HU)</td>
<td>Berkovitsa (BG) – Dimitrovgrad (RS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUREGIO Bayerischer Wald - Šumava - Mühlviertel</td>
<td>Veliko Gradište (SRB) - Baile Herculane (RO)</td>
<td>Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer (Argedonau)</td>
<td>Berkovitsa (BG) – Knjaževac (RS)</td>
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<td>Euregio Egrensis</td>
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<td>Arrabona EGTC</td>
<td>Berkovitsa (BG) – Merošina (RS)</td>
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<td>Euregio Inntal</td>
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<td>Baia Mare (RO) - Ivano-Frankivsk (UA)</td>
<td>Berkovitsa (BG) – Pirot (RS)</td>
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<td>Berkovitsa (BG) – Zaječar (RS)</td>
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<td>Banskobystrický samosprávny kraj (SK) – Borsod-Abáuj-Zemplén megye (HU)</td>
<td>Biharia Euroregion</td>
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<td>Euregio Neiise-Nysa-Nisa</td>
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<td>Banskobystrický samosprávny kraj (SK) – Heves megye (HU)</td>
<td>Borovo (BG) – Vedea Municipality (RS)</td>
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<td>EuRegio Salzburg - Berchtesgadener Land - Traunstein</td>
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<td>Banskobystrický samosprávny kraj (SK) – Nógrád megye (HU)</td>
<td>Danube Euroregion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Euregio Steiermark - Nordost-Slowenien</td>
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<td>Belogradchik (BG) – Knjaževac (RS)</td>
<td>Drina Euroregion</td>
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<td>Euregio Šumava-Böhmerwald</td>
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<td>Dve Mogili (BG) - Bucșani (RO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUREGIO Via Salina</td>
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<td>Európai Közös Jövő Építő (Europe - Building a Common Future) EGTC</td>
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</table>
### The most intensive CBRs
- EUREGIO Zugspitze/Wetterstein - Karwendel
- Europa Kapu (Europe Gate) EGTC
- Europaregion Tirol - Südtirol/Alto Adige - Trentino
- Euroregion Beskydy
- Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty
- Euroregion Danubius Association
- Euroregion DKMT
- Euroregion Glacensis
- Euroregion Pomoraví-Weinviertel
- Euroregion Praděd-Pradziad
- Euroregion Silesia
- Euroregion Silva Nortica
- Euroregion Siret – Prut – Nistru
- Euroregion Tatry
- Euroregion Tesin Silesia
- Hochrheinkomission
- Inn - Salzach-Euregio

### Intensive but limited to specific fields or by time
- Berkovitsa (BG) – Bâilești (RO)
- Black Sea Euroregion
- Bodrogközi EGTC
- Bratislava (SK) – Vienna (AT)
- Bratislavský samosprávny kraj (SK) – Burgenland (AT)
- Bratislavský samosprávny kraj (SK) – Győr-Moson-Sopron megye (HU)
- Bratislavský samosprávny kraj (SK) – Juhomoravský kraj (CZ),
- Bratislavský samosprávny kraj (SK) – Niederösterreich (AT)
- Bregovo (BG) – Negotin (RS)
- Bytča (SK) – Karolinka (CZ)
- Čadca (SK) – Valašské Meziříčí (CZ)
- Čadca (SK) – Żywiec (PL)
- Carpathian Euroregion
- Cetinje (ME) – Dubrovnik (HR)

### A mixed level of intensity

### The least intensive CBRs
- Euroregion Danube - South
- Euroregion Danube 21
- Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava
- Euroregion Delta - Rhodopi
- Euroregion Drina-Sava-Majevica
- Euroregion Evros - Meric - Maritsa
- Euroregion Košice - Miskolc / Zemplén
- Euroregion Kras
- Euroregion Middle Danube - Iron Gates
- Euroregion Morava-Pcinija-Struma
- Euroregion Nestos - Mesta
- Euroregion Stara Planina
- Euroregion Strymon-Strouma
- Gulyantsi (BG) – Corabia (RO)
- Inferior Danube Euroregion
- Ivanovo (BG) – Chimpati (RO)
- Ivanovo (BG) – Brașești (RO)
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<td>Internationale Bodenseekonferenz</td>
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<td>Cetinje (ME) – Shkodër (AL)</td>
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<td>Ister-Granum EGTC</td>
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<td>Dobrich (BG) – Constanţa (RO)</td>
<td>Karszt-Bódva EGTC</td>
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<td>Ister-Granum Euroregion</td>
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<td>TRITIA EGTC</td>
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<td>Novo selo (BG) – City of Negotin (RS)</td>
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<td>Euroregion Nisava</td>
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<td>Sajó-Rima Euroregion</td>
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<td>Euroregion Weinviertel - Jižní Morava - Záhorie</td>
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<td>General Toshevo (BG) - Mangalia (RO)</td>
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- Zemplén Euroregion
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<td>• Lower Danube Euroregion</td>
<td>• Nikšić (ME) – Gacko (BiH)</td>
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<td>• Moldava nad Bodvou (SK) – Edelény (HU)</td>
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<td>- Považská Bystrica (SK) – Rožnov pod Radhoštěm (CZ)</td>
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<td>- Rába-Duna-Vág EGTC</td>
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<td>- Revúca (SK) – Kazinbarcika (HU)</td>
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### The most intensive CBRs

- Rimavská Sobota (SK) – Ózd (HU)
- Rousse-Giurgiu Euroregion
- Ruse (BG) – Bucharest (RO)
- Ruse (BG) – Giurgiu (RO)
- Sajó-Rima / Slaná-Rimava
  EGTC
- Satu Mare (RO) – Nyíregyháza (HU)
- Satu Mare (RO) – Berehove (UA)
- Senec (SK) – Mosonmagyaróvár (HU)
- Senec (SK) – Pandorf (AT)
- Senica (SK) – Velké Pavlovice (CZ)
- Senta (RS) - Hódmezővásárhely (HU)
- Sighetu Marmaţiei (RO) – Solotvine (UA)
- Silistra (BG) – Călăraşi (RO)
- Skalica (SK) – Strážnice (CZ)
- Snina (SK) – Lesko (PL)

### Intensive but limited to specific fields or by time

- Rousse-Giurgiu Euroregion
- Ruse (BG) – Bucharest (RO)
- Ruse (BG) – Giurgiu (RO)
- Sajó-Rima / Slaná-Rimava
  EGTC
- Satu Mare (RO) – Nyíregyháza (HU)
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### The least intensive CBRs

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- Skalica (SK) – Strážnice (CZ)
- Snina (SK) – Lesko (PL)
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<tr>
<td>• Svishtov (BG) – Alexandria (RO)</td>
<td>• Svishtov (BG) – Zimnicea (RO)</td>
<td>• Tran (BG) – Surdulica (RS)</td>
<td>• Via Carpatia (EGTC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tran (BG) – Surdulica (RS)</td>
<td>• Trenčiansky samosprávny kraj (SK) – Zlínsky kraj (CZ)</td>
<td>• Trenčín (SK) – Uherské Hradiště (CZ)</td>
<td>• Vidin (BG) – Calafat (RO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trenčín (SK) – Uherské Hradiště (CZ)</td>
<td>• Trenčín (SK) – Zlín (CZ)</td>
<td>• Trenčín (SK) – Zlín (CZ)</td>
<td>• Vidin (BG) – Zaječar (RS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Via Carpatia (EGTC)</td>
<td>• Vidin (BG) – Zaječar (RS)</td>
<td>• Vidin (BG) – Zaječar (RS)</td>
<td>• West Pannon Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vidin (BG) – Calafat (RO)</td>
<td>• West Pannon Euroregion</td>
<td>• Žilinský samosprávny kraj (SK) – Moravskosliezsky kraj (CZ)</td>
<td>• Žilinský samosprávny kraj (SK) – Zlínsky kraj (CZ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

A comparison of regions cooperating across borders in the Danube region with a focus on best practices

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Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
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1. Introduction

This chapter aims to summarise and compare the 14 cross-border regions (CBRs) from the Danube region included in this volume. The CBRs are compared in two ways: in terms of the intensity of cooperation on the one hand and in terms of their best practices on the other. Such a comparison is never easy and the lack of data in studies of cross-border cooperation (CBC) has been emphasised as a challenge by many border scholars (Martinez 1994: 5, Weith & Gustedt 2012: 293, Knippschild & Wiechmann 2012). As a result, much research concentrates on deeper case studies to add something more general to the topic. In this project we had the „luxury” to commission and receive a number of case studies of a comparable standard1 from a relatively well-defined macro-region, enabling us to identify some more general patterns of what has been happening in the past twenty or so years in terms of CBC in the Danube region.

A number of challenges to CBC have been recognised in the case studies here and elsewhere (Tosun & al 2005, Loucky & Alper 2008). Thus these are now fairly well-known, including the lack of pre-financing (Kozak & Zillmer 2012) or financing in general; a lack of will, especially by national actors (Bures 2008); a lack of trust (Klein-Hitpaß 2006); a lack of continuity of institutions (Ludvig 2002: 11), projects and actors (Rogut & Welter 2012: 74); mismatching administrative structures (Grix & Houžvička 2002, Lundén & al 2009), just to name a few. While of course remaining critical, in this chapter we made an attempt to focus on and emphasise best practices, of which there are good examples. Whereas all projects and practices are to a certain extent context-specific, the aim is not just to show and try to explain different patterns, but indeed to present some good examples that may perhaps in one way or another be adopted by other partnerships, in or outside the Danube Region.

The chapter is structured in the following way. This introduction is followed by an analytical comparison of the intensity of cooperation. Subsequently, the largest section compares the best practices from each case. We finally round up with some conclusions.

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1 For details on commissioning and designing the case studies and their requirements, please consult Chapter 3 on methodology.
2. The intensity of cooperation

From the case studies it becomes clear that within the Danube Region, Central Europe is more actively engaged in CBC than South Eastern Europe. This is perhaps less surprising given that the Visegrad (or V4) States (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary) and Slovenia joined the European Union (EU) already in 2004. Romania and Bulgaria joined in 2007, Croatia in 2013. Serbia and Montenegro received candidate status a few years ago and Bosnia and Herzegovina is a potential candidate (Europa.eu 2015), but the opportunities of these countries remain far more limited: their limited access to external (EU) resources as well as co-financing on their own, coupled with a recent difficult history explains this overall state of affairs. Nevertheless, the closer we look at the picture the more complex it is. Table 1 summarises the position of the fourteen cross-border regions (CBRs) in terms of the overall intensity of cooperation. The authors of this chapter created the table’s categorisation. It was primarily based on the 14 case studies, but the authors also double-checked information on the continuity of projects, maintenance of webpages, news portals, and so on. We also contacted several actors of CBRs as well as authors of the case studies for specifications etc.

Table 1: Overall intensity of cooperation in 14 CBRs of the Danube region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The most intensive CBRs</th>
<th>Intensive but limited to 1-2 specific fields</th>
<th>A mixed level of intensity</th>
<th>The least intensive CBRs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DKMT</td>
<td>TZH</td>
<td>Vidin-Zaječar</td>
<td>Drina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pons Danubii</td>
<td>Prut (esp. RO-MD)</td>
<td>Pécs-Osijek (Pannon)</td>
<td>Osijek-Subotica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ister-Granum</td>
<td>Őrség-Goričko</td>
<td>Šumava-BW/UI-M</td>
<td>EDDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tritia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: authors’ compilation

The compilation of Table 1 needs further explanation. As already mentioned, the project was mostly interested in best practices, which the authors of the case studies were requested to concentrate on. Such projects turned out to strongly vary in both quantity and quality, even if all 14 CBRs had made at least some achievements. Given that one of the main critiques of subsidised CBC has been that cooperation often tends to discontinue after sources dry out, we were particularly impressed by civilian engagements (cf. Scott & Laine 2012) and initiatives that carried on after (external) funding has ended. At the same time, a number of active projects and initiatives were found that never received any EU funds, a few even no external sources at all.

Which aspects are then among the most important behind the level of intensity in CBRs? We now turn to a number of different factors that may be relevant.
2.1 Ethnic/linguistic ties

It is clear from the case studies that a shared ethnicity and/or linguistic homogeneity tend to strengthen the intensity of cooperation. This is evidenced by the two cases along the Slovak-Hungarian border, where both sides have an ethnic Hungarian majority and contacts are intense with and without external support. Another case in point is the Prut river area, where deep cooperation has been achieved between Romanian and Moldovan researchers and decision-makers alike centred on the (environmental) management of the river. We can mention two cases where the languages used in the CBR are not identical but rather close, with the regional dialects being even more similar. One of them is the Tourism Zone Haloze-Zagorje (TZHZ), where the local dialect on the Croatian side is more similar to the neighbouring Slovenian language than is standard Croatian. The other case is Tritia, where differences between standard Czech, Slovak, and Polish are mitigated by the local Silesian dialects of these same languages. Yet even here, cooperation between the Czech and Slovak sides (where the languages are even more similar) is more intensive\(^2\) than with the Polish one.

Importantly, however, the above does not mean that the reverse is true – i.e. that a lack of a common ethnicity or language necessarily translates into weaker CBC. As the intensive cooperation in the Hungarian-Serbian-Romanian DKMT Euroregion and the Romanian-Bulgarian Euroregion Danubius Association (EDA) testify, a shared language or ethnicity is no prerequisite for successful CBC. At the same time, despite their very similar languages in the Western Balkans neither the Drina Euroregion nor the partnership between Subotica and Osijek is a case of an intensive CBR. Interestingly, the latter cooperation is explicitly based on maintaining contacts between the Croatian minority from Vojvodina and its Croatian “motherland” (see the relevant case study in this volume), but the low level of achievements can of course be attributed to other factors.

In sum, a common language and/or ethnicity appears to make CBC easier to achieve but is of course no sufficient explanatory factor on its own. Hence, we now turn to other aspects with a potential of explaining CBC intensity.

\(^{2}\) Of course, this is most likely also related to the shared history of these two countries.
2.2 Historical unity/shared landscape

Given that a shared ethnicity and language proved to be important for the intensity of CBC, another and partly related aspect is to consider whether CBRs that were historically part of the same political entities have cooperated more intensively in the more recent past.

Most of the borders concerned in the case studies were drawn in the peace treaties following the First and/or the Second World War, and have been stable ever since. However, there are a few exceptions. Czechoslovakia broke up in 1992-1993 and Yugoslavia (gradually) between the years 1991-2006. CBC in the former case is rather intensive and smooth. This is less the case between the former Yugoslav republics, with the Serbian-Bosnian border even remaining questioned by parts of the local population that thus remains puzzled by the very concept of CBC, as the case study on the Drina euroregion reports. Arguably, locals here see formal cooperation as strengthening the status quo: after all CBC is presumed on the very existence of stable – i.e. uncontested – borders (O’Dowd & al 1995, Terlouw 2008: 106). Thus the nature of the break-up – i.e. whether the process was peaceful or not – seems to explain CBC intensity more than the actual age of the state border.

It is also worth considering whether a similar landscape or a geographical structure tends to motivate CBC. This point is raised by earlier observations that territorial imbalances tend to stimulate such contacts, such as between so-called divided cities (Stokłosa 2003) or regions where a larger city is bordering a sparsely populated space as in the case of Szczecin (Balogh 2014). There are some recognisable patterns in the cases from the Danube Region here dealt with.

Several among the most intensive border regions have their hypothetical – and increasingly empirical – central places (Christaller 1966) on the other side of the border: indeed, local inhabitants from the Ister-Granum, EDA, and the Prut regions have been developing more and more contacts with Esztergom, Budapest, Bucharest, and Iași, respectively. The Pons Danubii EGTC is not least based on the cooperation between the two sides of the divided city of Komárom.

On the other hand, most of the remaining and less intensive CBRs are areas with relatively few potential complementarities. In these cases the different sides tend to have a relatively similar geographical structure, i.e. each endowed with a medium-sized city (e.g. DKMT), sometimes even not very close to the border (e.g. Osijek-Subotica or Pécs-Osijek). Similarly, other cases consist of typical peripheral areas with a rural character with no central places that could function as a “natural” meeting point (e.g. Šumava-BW/UI-M or the Drina Euroregion). The two cases of the relatively intensively cooperating nature parks (TZHZ and Őrség-Goričko) are exceptions here as these are exclusively targeted at the joint work of such areas. In sum, in terms of geographical structures it is differences rather than similarities that appear as a motivating factor for intensive CBC.
2.3 Economy/labour market

There has been some debate whether economic differences hinder (Grix & Houžvička 2002) or rather drive (Balogh 2014) CBC. Large inequalities may indeed be a barrier as both sides need at least some resources for cooperation. In the case of the EU and its direct vicinity this problem is significantly alleviated by the various funding channels on the community level. But especially in East Central Europe, the opportunity to use the latter occasionally remains challenged by the limited possibilities of self- or pre-financing by small, impoverished border municipalities and regions. Yet overall, very similar economies will motivate few people to cross the border.

In the Danube region, the level of economic development is rather similar between adjacent countries. Where this is less the case, we see the emergence of for instance the development of a bilateral vocal training of Czech craftspeople partly working in Bavaria (see the relevant case study in this volume). While Slovakia and Hungary have a very similar economic development, pressuring unemployment in southern Slovakia combined with many locals’ knowledge of Hungarian language push them to daily commute across the border for work. But overall, economic differences explain CBC intensity only in a few cases in the Danube Region (in fact, more borderlanders move or commute for work further west3).

2.4 Level of institutionalisation

It has earlier been suggested that the level of institutionalisation is an important factor for explaining the intensity of cross-border cooperation (Sohn & al 2009). Table 2 categorises the fourteen CBRs here dealt with in terms of what type of institution they are currently operating under. Despite its shortcomings, it is assumed that the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) represents the most advanced form of institutionalised CBC (Ţoca & Popovici 2010), gradually followed by euroregions, cross-border nature parks/tourism zones, and twin-cities.

Table 2 shows a number of overlaps with Table 1, with three of the most intensive CBRs being EGTCs. One of the two twin-city collaborations is among the least intensive CBRs and the more intensive one has recently been forming an EGTC. There are exceptions, of course. While TZHZ for instance „only” has the status of a cross-border tourism zone, cooperation there appears to be far more intensive than in a number of euroregions, e.g. Drina or EDDS. Nevertheless, the above suggests that there is a considerable correlation between CBC intensity and the level of institutionalisation.

3 In southern Slovakia for instance, employees in health- and elderly care from as far as Tornal’a are weekly commuting by bus to work in Austria on an organised basis.
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Table 2: The form of institutionalisation of the 14 CBRs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EGTC</th>
<th>Euroregion⁴</th>
<th>Nature park/tourism zone</th>
<th>Twin-cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ister-Granum</td>
<td>• DKMT</td>
<td>• TZHZ</td>
<td>• Osijek-Subotica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pons Danubii, Tritia</td>
<td>• EDDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pécs-Osijek (Pannon5)</td>
<td>• Šumava-BW/UI-M</td>
<td>• Šumaga-Goričko (project-based, no legal institutionalisation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vidin-Zaječar (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EDA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prut (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: authors’ compilation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 The length of cooperation

It can be assumed that CBRs get more mature as they are gaining more experiences. Table 3 presents the fourteen CBRs based on their level of intensity (cf. Table 1), together with their year of establishment. Note that some CBRs were operating under a different – lower – level of institutionalisation in the past, which is indicated in these cases.

Table 3: The intensity of cooperation in CBRs and their year of establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensive</th>
<th>Intensive but specialised</th>
<th>Mixed level of intensity</th>
<th>Low intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• PD 2010</td>
<td>• Siret-Prut-Nistru 2005</td>
<td>• Vidin-Zaječar 2005 and 2006</td>
<td>• EDDS 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• EDA 2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: authors’ compilation

As Table 3 shows, the length of cooperation in the CBRs is not irrelevant. All except one intensive collaborations were formalised at least twelve years ago, while all except one less intensive CBRs are eight years old or younger. The number of cases (14) is of course too low to make general statements, but the pattern is still recognisable in the CBRs of the Danube

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⁴ Where the CBR involves more than one collaboration the number of euroregions is indicated in parentheses.

⁵ The Croatian sections of this CBR could not be parts of this EGTC as Croatia can only use this legal tool as of June 2015 (i.e. after the case study came in). Since then, however, several settlements have joined Pannon EGTC through this tool.
region. Generally speaking, then, the length of cooperation appears to be a significant factor for CBC intensity.

### 2.6 Number of countries involved

Another factor that might be relevant is the number of states from which sub-national units are involved in CBC. The assumption can be made that the more countries are involved, the more difficult it gets to coordinate cooperation. Relatedly, where more than two countries are involved, a third or even a fourth country is invited to join as a sort of counterbalance to a potentially dominating side, as was initially the case in the Euroregion Pomerania (Balogh 2014: 30-31).

There are signs that also in the Danube Region, two sides can cooperate more intensely than three or four (although the reasons have not been elaborated upon as deeply as in the above-cited larger study on the Euroregion Pomerania). Three of the five most intensive CBRs are bilateral, and one of the two trilateral ones, Tritia, is as mentioned above dominated by two sides. There is only one exception here, with the trilateral DKMT Euroregion considered as a truly three-sided cooperation.

In the category of “mixed level of intensity CBRs” the Őrség-Goričko nature park cooperation – which is sometimes trilateral and includes the Austrian side – is more active between the Slovenian and Hungarian parts. In the Prut region, the two trilateral CBRs are less intensive than the bilateral one. The Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel euroregion appears to be particularly torn between the different interests of the three sides.

The least intensive CBRs then include the four-sided Drina euroregion and the trilateral EDDS cooperation. True, the bilateral collaboration of Osijek-Subotica and Pécs-Osijek also belong to the less intensive ones, but/even though these are restricted to cities. In sum, the number of „national” partners rather clearly affects the intensity of CBC.

### 2.7 The size of CBRs

A related aspect to the number of countries involved is the territorial extent of the cooperating entities in question. On the one hand, it can be assumed that the larger the CBR’s territory is the more challenging it gets to coordinate collaboration. On the other hand, a larger area involves more potentially active partners, thereby securing the maintenance – or even very existence – of the cooperation.

In the 14 cases of the Danube Region the pattern seems to strengthen the first assumption. Two of the three least intensive and two of the three modestly intensive CBRs have an outspokenly large territory where one or two sides – and even a few places within these – dominate the cooperation. As mentioned above, in some cases a third partner is involved for
a particular reason. Based on the Pécs-Osijek cooperation, the Pannon EGTC for instance included the Slovenian side to be able to form an EGTC, a legal form that the Croatian side until recently could not adopt (see footnote above). As a result, this EGTC includes half of Transdanubia i.e. western Hungary. While not included in the 14 cases here, another good example of an oversized CBR is the Carpathian Euroregion (parts of which now forming the Via Carpatia EGTC), stretching all the way from Szolnok in the west to Botoșani in the east. At the other end of the scale, four of the five most intensive CBRs are small or medium-sized. In sum, the territorial extent of the cooperating area matters.

2.8 The fields of cooperation

Finally, it is worth considering whether the nature of the targeted field of CBC is important for the intensity of cooperation. Are some fields of society or the economy apparently easier to bring about cooperation in? The case studies do not show any clear pattern. For instance, there appears no clear correlation between the intensity of cooperation and whether so-called ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ issues are dealt with.

Following this analysis of several levels of comparison between regions cooperating across borders, attention is turned to the issue of CBC best practices that can function as incentive and motivation for other regions and cross-border cooperation in general. Specifically, individual best practices are identified in the field of cross-border interaction and are briefly introduced.
3. Summary of best practices

The third part of the chapter attempts to summarise the best practices of the selected cross-border collaborations implemented in the Danube Region. The best practices are summarised within four categories (cf. Table 1). The first category contains those cross-border regions (CBRs) that are the most intensive, i.e. have implemented several successful projects and have a capacity to continue their crossing interaction across the borders. These are the following: the Ister-Granum EGTC, the Pons Danubii EGTC, the Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza, CBC between Ruse and Giurgiu (EDA), and the Tria EGTC. The second category involves those CBRs that implement cooperation within a limited area. In other words, their cooperation is intensive and deep in a limited and specific domain, e.g. the tourism zone between Haloze and Zagorje, CBC in the area of the Prut River, and cooperation between the natural parks of Őrség and Goričko. The third category includes those cooperation initiatives which have demonstrated a mixed level of intensity, e.g. cross-border interaction between Vidín and Zaječar, cooperation between Pécs and Osijek, and the Euroregion Šumava–Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel. The final category describes the least intensive cooperation initiatives, namely, the cross-border cooperation between twinning cities of Subotica and Osijek, the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava, and the Euroregion Drina.

3.1 Intensive cross-border cooperation

The Ister-Granum EGTC is very intensive in performing cross-border interaction and it attempts to link numerous Slovakian and Hungarian settlements into one cross-border institutional and/or development frame. Given the fact that the Ister-Granum EGTCs’ members are rather rural settlements with few urbanised cities, the grouping shows a rural and semi-urban orientation with an emphasis on rural development. It has established several successful cross-border projects between settlements in Hungary and Slovakia. Although, the most important/best practice cross-border project is rural in its orientation and it attempts to promote local products and producers. The basic idea is that the Ister-Granum region is rich in agricultural raw materials processed into products with a very high quality and the region is rich in craftsmen tradition and knowledge with unique crafts products. These products are usually outside of the traditional market chain, thus the route from the producer to the consumer is often non-existent and people are not even aware about local products which are produced and that skilful producers/craftsmen live in the region, thus consuming non-local and often imported products of a lower quality. Consequently, the Ister-Granum EGTC has initiated a project that attempted to search for these local producers/craftsmen with the aim to develop a web of local producers with “information infrastructure”. Local producers and craftsmen were identified across the border (Hungary and Slovakia) and they were individually visited. Afterwards, a database was created, where all the local producers of cheese, milk,
butter, yoghurt, honey, bread, sweets, wine, meat, vegetables, fruits, juice, wine, wafer, soap and many other products can be found. This database was printed in a brochure form and it was distributed among the member municipalities, thus locals have gained a processed information/database about local products/producers and received direct contacts, too. In other words, the Ister-Granum EGTC has performed a best practice cross-border cooperation activity in the realm of rural development and it demonstrated a future capacity to develop it further.

The next investigated cross-border region is the Pons Danubii EGTC, linking seven cities from Slovakia and Hungary. The Pons Danubii EGTC connects only urban entities, thus their attention is rather urban in its orientation. The grouping has implemented several successful projects and two best practice CBCs were identified here. The first best-practice project is called 'WORKMARKET', aimed to deal with the huge unemployment in the region. The project included training courses, surveys of investors/jobseekers, requalification of jobseekers, creation of website, job forums, etc. The project collected statistical data and established a database in order to provide help and information for the investors, employers and jobseekers. This project was an opportunity to initiate cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation within the field of cross-border labour-market cooperation. The project attempted to follow a non-discrimination policy where the employees and the employers have equal opportunities on both sides. Results of the project were the following: communication with 400 businesses; informing the local residents; organization of 2 job forums and preparation of 2 studies (in Hungarian and Slovak languages) about the current labour market and its opportunities for future development. The second best practice CBC of the Pons Danubii EGTC was the 'Media Project'. This project linked the local TV channels into one harmonised TV channel network and it established cross-border cooperation between Hungarian and Slovakian local TV channels. This joint/cross-border platform reinforced information/news exchange between nine settlements that were involved in the project (seven Pons Danubii members and two non-Pons Danubii members from Slovakia, namely Nové Zámky and Svodín). The project produced bilingual video contents and the participants prepared approximately 5 700 minutes of video within the duration of 22 months. Moreover, a central server was established and every video was uploaded there. The PD TV (Pons Danubii television) produced 5 bilingual videos each week. The PD TV could be reached either through online or through Facebook. The project was combined with six cross-border workshops among the media workers/local TV channels where further media and technology knowledge was transferred to the local TV channels and workers. Besides, the PD TV represented itself at three roadshows in order to promote the channel to the wider public. After the termination of the project, the Pons Danubii attempts to maintain the server for further 5 years. In other words, the Pons Danubii EGTC has performed several successful urban driven projects and it has a clear potential also in the future performance of cross-border cooperation.
The following best practice CBC is the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza Euroregion. The Euroregion has implemented several projects that can be identified as CBC best practices. One example is the 'Euroregio magazine'. It was a magazine that presented the achievements, results and progress of the cooperation in three languages, providing direct information to locals. Moreover, a cooperation protocol was signed between the chambers of commerce in 1998 and it organised exhibitions, economic missions and several other events under the label of DKMT. The achievements of this cooperation protocol were the “Euro-regional Partnership for Competitiveness” (2007) and the inauguration of the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development of Historical Banat Region (2009). Furthermore, the Euroregion has underlined the importance of social cohesion and its substantial improvement within its area, thus social cohesion has become the first strategic direction and it is identified as the general objective of the Euroregion. To be specific, tourism is seen as an appropriate cross-border strategy to enhance social cohesion in the region. Moreover, the basic aim is to identify the basic and fundamental elements/components of the Euroregional identity through the involvement of local people, the broadening of their common information horizon, the enhancement of their mutual understanding and the appreciation of the historical-cultural context, potential and cultural heritage. What is more, the Euroregion attempts to raise the awareness about local decisions in the region, the promotion of joint responsibility. This attempt is performed by one of the most important cultural events of the DKMT, namely the 'Euroregional Theatre Festival' with the aim to support a frequent cooperation between theatres of the region. Simply, this Theatre Festival functions as a big forum for those who are ready to cooperate and implement cross-border interaction and it generates a meeting place for various cultures of the region. Besides the Theatre Festival, another important cultural event is regularly organised by the DKMT, specifically, 'The Day of the DKMT Euroregion'. It is usually organised in May every year at the Triplex Confinium memorial at the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border. During that day, there is a dual cross-border performance, which consists of a temporal border opening and a meeting of the DKMT General Assembly. Some other successful achievements of the Euroregion are the following: Protean Europe, a cultural festival of a multitude of artists; a series of economic development trade fairs and conferences organised for experts and entrepreneurs working in the field of agriculture, tourism, security policy, IT and healthcare; development of a four-language news portal, specifically, the Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC) which provides daily updates and it helps the inhabitants of the region to find relevant information; tourist routes which connect the cross-border culture of baths, folklore, secessionist architecture and industrial memorials; joint flood prevention and protection with a rescue team in case of danger and capacity to manage fast evacuation of the population; and the implementation of an international healthcare card aiming to establish international division of labour among the hospitals and healthcare service providers of the region.

The next best practice summarisation looks at the cross-border cooperation between Ruse (Bulgaria) and Giurgiu (Romania), managed by the Euroregion Danubius Association (EDA),
established in 2002. In 2004, it implemented a successful project, namely the cross-border tourist route of churches. Besides the religious tourist route, the CBR between Ruse and Giurgiu has implemented numerous successful projects. One of the most successful cross-border cooperation was the 'Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning' (2011-2012). This cooperation implemented the development of a masterplan and an investment profile of the Ruse/Giurgiu Euroregion area. It was rather a plan than a real/physical performance. The overall objective of the project was to attract new investments and to contribute to the development of the business relations within the Euroregion. It was a unique strategic document with ten planned CBC projects, which was the result of discussions and cooperation between Ruse and Giurgiu. These plans included CBC projects with the aim to establish job-intensive economic growth in the area; a cross-border business incubator with the aim to increase competitiveness of the SMEs; the construction of a new Danube bridge; city train/tram development; the increase of energy efficiency; energy management; a new visitor centre; the establishment of recreation possibilities; and the refurbishment of city centres. Beyond the Masterplan, there are several huge and actual infrastructural and environmental projects within the CBC, like the project 'Rehabilitating and modernization of access infrastructure to the cross border area Giurgiu – Ruse' with almost 5 million Euros; the 'Improvement of Pan-European Transport Corridor No 9' with 6.7 million Euros, while the environmental cooperation includes big projects like 'Common Action for Prevention of Environmental Disasters' with 5.7 million Euros or 'Enhancing the operational technical capacities for emergency situations response in Giurgiu-Ruse Cross-border area' with 5.8 million Euros. What is essentially important to highlight is that this cross-border cooperation shows a profound rising tendency, because the latest cross-border projects represent the biggest financial input in the history of CBC between Ruse and Giurgiu.

The last investigated cross-border initiative within the intensive cooperation category is the Tritia EGTC and its best practice CBC. The cross-border interaction concentrates on four basic pillars, namely improvement of transport network; generation of an environment favourable for employment; innovation and entrepreneurship; tourism; and alternative energy sources. Establishment of the Tritia EGTC was the real impetus to improve the quality of relations between the Czech and Slovakian regions, having signed a cooperation agreement already in 2003. Remarkable successes of cross-border cooperation were achieved in the reconstruction of all roads offering cross-border connections between the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Self-Governing Region. That means nowadays all roads, leading through the saddles of Beskydy Mountains, are reconstructed within the CZ-SK CBC. What is more, future plans contain the reconstruction of other roads in the region, too. Thanks to the improvement of the cross-border road network, intensification in daily commuting is manifest. Besides the project, there are profound future plans of the cooperation, namely there are plans to develop cycling routes within Tritia, development of the Automotive TRITIA and/or concentrating on tourism, hiking, renewable sources of energy and trail. In other words, the Grouping is
intensive, the most intense cross-border cooperation is performed between the Czech and Slovakian part, and hence cooperation between these regions is more intense than the cooperation with the Polish side. However, the cross-border cooperation suffers from a lack of large projects, indeed most recent ones are rather small.

3.2 Intensive cross-border cooperation but limited to 1-2 specific fields

The second category summarises those intensive cross-border collaborations that are limited to one or two specific fields. It includes those cross-border collaborations that are implemented within a limited and/or a specific area, i.e. the cross-border interaction is rather deep in a specified domain. The first example of cross-border best practice within the second category was implemented by the Haloze (Slovenia) and Zagorje (Croatia) tourism zone. Before the establishment of the zone, a survey was conducted on both sides of the border where the local actors were asked about the future cross-border cooperation network, which highlighted a bottom-up involvement. One of the most important best practices in cross-border cooperation is the tourist license. These are granted for the visitors, subsequently, they can easily travel between the defined cross-border territories without undergoing more complex procedures. Moreover, two projects can be identified, one is the Entrepreneur zone Haloze–Zagorje, which was a direct follow-up of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje, with the aim to prepare and implement project proposals conducted by the municipalities. Beyond these projects, the 'Wine Road Klampotic' was established, and it was a bottom-up initiative, specifically for family farms in the region, with the aim to establish a tourist destination by integrating their local wine products. Establishment of the tourist zone has generated a significant development in the area and within the region. What is more, the tourism zone was also used as framework for other additional projects conducted by the municipalities in the area.

The next intensive, but limited cross-border cooperation activity was performed between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. This cross-border cooperation showed a huge success, nevertheless, it was categorised as 'limited' because of its narrow thematic scale, namely the Prut River biodiversity. The most extensive cross-border cooperation success was achieved in the project named 'Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River'. Duration of the project was from 2007 to 2013. This case of cross-border cooperation can be explicitly identified as a best practice; experience and cross-border cooperation know-how could be applied in other countries, too. Object of this cross-border project was the Prut River, its qualitative and quantitative biological life, its molecular condition with impact on biological life and aquatic culture. The project carried out fish sampling, scientific investigation of heavy metals in the water, monitoring of chemical migration in the River, etc. Subjects of cooperation were five actors from Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The cross-border cooperation was a scientific and research teamwork
that monitored the Prut River and its biodiversity; it investigated possible improvements and restoration of the Prut aquatic resources. Moreover, the project prepared various emergency plans in case of massive anthropogenic and/or natural incidents. The findings of the scientific and academic cross-border cooperation were successfully disseminated and distributed, thus generating a significant public awareness around the topic of the Prut River and its aquatic life. To be specific, the project was advertised through TV channels and broadcast news. Furthermore, the project fruitfully cooperated with the press, too. The press was invited at every major project event like opening, conference, exhibition, roundtable and/or presentation of the findings. Furthermore, the cross-border scientific research resulted in 14 scientific publications, and public authorities also directly benefited from the scientific cross-border cooperation because all the findings, emergency plans and methodology for mitigating the harmful effects were directly distributed to them. One of the principal strengths of the Prut River cross-border cooperation is that it links people with very similar ethnic and linguistic traits, thus enabling cultural and other forms of cooperation. The scientific cross-border project was an open project that involved master and PhD students, too, and their scientific capacity, creativity, and young eager. The significant strength of the cooperation is that during the project a substantial dissemination and advertisement were achieved, which raised the awareness of public authorities and ordinary citizens about the Prut River and its aquatic biodiversity. What is more, the research information and experience is available and it makes further cooperation and/or research possible in the future. One of the main future plans is to continue the cross-border research, monitoring, risk analysis, simulation, molecular dynamic and cooperation in various other scientific research activities of the aquatic environment and life. In other words, the cross-border cooperation performed an intensive and deep interaction; however, its range was very limited.

A frequent interaction between Hungary and Slovenia and a less extensive interaction with Austria resulted in the trilateral natural park cooperation, which is the final cross-border cooperation and best practice within the 'limited' category. The area has been involved in many cross-border projects, either in wider trans-European cooperation, like 'Transeconet', which emphasised the protection of areas and biodiversity, the management of ecological networks and natural/cultural heritage; or 'Green Belt Initiative', where Goričko was the partner and it underlined the management of the former site of the Iron Curtain which has been converted into preserving unique wildlife and biodiversity since its fall. Beyond these projects, three other projects may be identified as best practices. First is the 'Landscape in Harmony'. The aim of this initiative was to support the sustainable use of nature, the spread of environmental friendly methods/techniques in agriculture, the protection and preservation of biological diversity, the monitoring of vegetation on 60 000 hectares and the monitoring of butterflies on 90 000 hectares. The monitoring resulted in a butterfly atlas and a geographic information system database was prepared. Simply, this cross-border cooperation was a reaction to several anthropogenic problems, like intensive agriculture, the use of fertilizers
and/or the contamination of drinking water. The most important output of the project was the model of sustainability, which reflected the sustainability of economic and societal possibilities of the cross-border region. The second cross-border project that may be described as best practice was 'Upkač', which ended in 2014. This project attempted to preserve/revitalise the old orchards, protect rare animals and herbs, promote local production, local processing of fruits and reintroduction of fruit biodiversity. Finally, the 'Craftsman Academy' can be considered as third best practice. This was a project that had a continuation, too. The cooperation wanted to preserve folk crafts since there are only few masters to carry on the craft knowledge. Consequently, a craftsman academy was established with the aim to preserve the old knowledge and to create an innovative form of training in the field of crafts.

3.3 Mixed level of intensity

This category involves those cross-border collaborations whose activity can be described as mixed in their level of intensity. The first case is the cooperation between Vidin (northwest Bulgaria) and Zaječar (eastern Serbia), which is a relatively recent phenomenon, based on people-to-people actions, starting in 2004. Two euroregions were established which manage cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania. The strength of this cooperation is that it has performed many successful projects, contribution to tourism development, investment and modernization into water infrastructure and/or support of competitiveness of SMEs. Therefore, there are several cross-border projects that may be identified as best practice examples. To be specific, a project called, 'Beekeeping Without Borders' can be considered as best practice. The project aimed at joint workshops, building of public awareness, diffusion of sustainable, organic beekeeping and good beekeeping practices across the border. Importance and success of this project is the fact that this CBC had a continuation and the 'Beekeeping Without Borders II' was also implemented. Moreover, there are two other projects which can be attributed as 'best practices', namely 'Transdanube: sustainable Transport and Tourism along the Danube', and 'Stará Planina'. The former was a transnational/trans-European project in which 10 European states were involved, including the Regional Administration of Vidin Region and the Regional Agency for the development of Eastern Serbia. It concentrated on cross-border transport opportunities through sustainable means of cross-border transport, development of cross-border bicycle routes, promotion of environmentally sustainable tourism and creation of a catalogue about cross-border tourist destinations. To be specific for the Vidin – Zaječar area, the project involved two offers, the first was the cultural/historical tourism called “On the road of legends” and it involved three fortresses in Vidin, Kula, and Zaječar; the second was the transport offer for sustainable mobility in tourism at cross-border level. The second best practice CBC, 'Stará Planina', emphasised the establishment of a professional network database about infrastructure,
agriculture, environment and tourism. Moreover, a sub-database was collected about available experts and their expertise; about planning documents; and a database of research papers/studies concerning the region. This database is available to the wider public online.

The following cooperation within the third category is between Pécs (Hungary) and Osijek (Croatia). This cooperation is considered as limited because Croatia is the youngest EU member state and the harmonization of the EGTC standards are still in process, hence the cross-border legislation is limited. Nevertheless, there is an observable cooperation between the two cities and the EU structures have played an important financial instrument in this issue. What is more, a large number of potential future partners have already indicated their interest to be involved in cross-border cooperation and interaction. It is important to note that the cross-border cooperation is slightly based on cross-border institutional frame and the interaction is driven by occasional and/or long-term partnership of public and private bodies. One of the principal projects was the development of Pécs–Osijek–Antunovac–Ivanovac biking route. Another project was the networking of multimedia cultural centres in support of cross-border cooperation. Besides, the Pannon EGTC has also been established and it is seen as an important instrument and frame of the institutionalised cross-border cooperation in the future. The entry of Osijek and several other municipalities into the EGTC structure can improve the balance of the Grouping and Osijek can be capable of relieving Pécs from responsibility. In other words, cross-border cooperation between Pécs and Osijek has a potential capacity for future development.

The final case within 'mixed level of intensity' is the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel. This cross-border formation implemented several projects that can be separated into large projects and smaller projects. The former includes the following projects: the Czech-German vocational education class for the field of machinery which emphasised a common dual cross-border education of young students under a joint training in order to achieve professional qualification; tourist infrastructure around Dragon Lake with regard to flood protection. Furthermore, a website of three regions was developed, namely the South Bohemian Region, Upper Austria and Lower Bavaria in two languages. This website offers useful information for the visitors about the touristic attractions and museums, moreover, this website includes a valuable categorization of museums according to specialization, and thus the visitors and tourists may easily choose a museum to visit. Beyond the large projects, numerous smaller projects were implemented, too. For example, ‘Wild as an Animal III’, a local project which tried to improve tourism through wild animals and through and appropriate marketing, hence there are events, programs and exhibitions based on wild animals; project of green buses with the aim to improve the regional public passenger transport, the elaboration of common bus schedule, the harmonization of ticket systems and the reduction of the number of cars. What is more, reinforcement of trilateral structure of fire departments was a project that attempted to manage the exchange of experience and joint training with the aim to improve coordination and communication between fire departments
in the case of cross-border catastrophes and operation. Finally, the project of exhibition on education and craft was implemented, which aimed to transfer knowledge, know-how, methods, and craft profession among high school students.

3.4 The least intensive cross-border cooperation initiatives

This part reflects best practices of those cross-border regions that perform rather weak or the least intensive cross-border interaction. Cross-border cooperation between Subotica and Osijek is the first reflected CBC in this category. Cooperation between these cities is driven by the Croatian ethnic element. Cross-border cooperation between Subotica and Osijek has not established any special institution which manages, directs and supervises the cross-border interaction of the sister towns. Nevertheless, they have performed several successful cross-border actions, for example, the cross-border peace route between several cities, and part of this project was the installation of straw bikes along the bike routes of Osijek and Subotica. Important to underline that the peace route is the third cross-border peace route in the world as a part of the cross-border cooperation and reconciliation project, with the aim to learn about indigenous culinary specialities and to promote long-term sustainable development of the Danube. The primary idea was to create a network of bicycle routes and connect the border regions of Croatia, Serbia, and Hungary. Moreover, other cross-border interactions were also initiated, like the cooperation in the field of waste, its management and recycling with the involved partners from Zagreb, Subotica, and Osijek; regional partnerships concentrated on intercultural exchange, consolidation of democracy and support of dialogue in the Western Balkans; the project of the Regional Centre for education, prevention and physical rehabilitation of persons affected by stroke and multiple sclerosis; or the project of promotion of European values and support of the EU enlargement in the Western Balkans under the title Balkans and Europe Together.

The following case of best practice is given by the Euroregion EDDS, established in 1998. The Euroregion has implemented several successful examples of development projects. The implemented projects aimed to improve the situation in the fields of environment, environmental protection, ecology; entrepreneurship and economy; cultural heritage and history; information infrastructure; tourism; and the protection against natural disasters. Moreover, a magazine was established in 2000 with the title 'Our Europe', however, the magazine was abandoned in 2002. Moreover, the Euroregion implemented numerous projects, like cross-border cooperation in management and protection against disasters with the aim to establish common information system and protection; sustainable development of small family farms with the idea to boost rural economy and development of the region; network of plants in order to initiate a cross-border cooperation and network between growers, harvesters and sellers of herbs, thus ensuring a functioning cross-border market for their products; digital history, i.e. boosting the competitiveness of the region, tourism and its
cultural heritage through use of modern technology; cooperation in cultural tourism and many others. However, these implemented projects profoundly differed in finance options, budget and scale. Most of the projects concentrated on information sharing and network creation and only few projects focused on physical investments and encounters/exchanges of citizens, which were among the basic goals. Although, the biggest implemented project was the formulation of a joint spatial development strategy of the Danube Region based on the Donaudatenkatalog. The basic aim was to strengthen the Danube as an important European corridor, to support competitiveness and growth in the regions and to develop comprehensive development strategies for the Danube area and regions. This cross-border project was selected as best practice because of its financial input of 2 million Euros.

The Drina Euroregion is the final best practice cross-border cooperation in the fourth category. It is the youngest representative of this specific type of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans and in this study. The principal best practice of the Drina Euroregion was a bottom-up initiative. Specifically, the confluence of the Drina River represents the largest unused hydro energy in Europe. Consequently, several foreign investors attempted to utilise and to exploit the river’s hydropower capacity, nevertheless, the local residents disagreed and articulated a list of 12 demands in order to protect the Drina River, its tributaries and they underlined a need to start an organised management activities, harmonization of water management, creation of a spatial plan of the region and to protect the biological life of the River, especially the protection of predatory fish. In other words, the Drina Euroregion was a result of the resistance from the below, thus it gave a potential legitimate power to the Euroregion. However, this potential power from below was not appropriately applied and a domestic based utilisation of hydropower has not been implemented yet. The Euroregion implemented several projects, like ‘Bridge over the Drina’ which emphasized people to people interaction and cross-cultural activities; ‘Home of Diversity’ with importance on social cohesion and promotion of ethnic/cultural diversity in the border region; support of entrepreneurship and the young. Most of the implemented projects were performed on the Serbian-Bosnian border and a smaller number of projects were performed on the Montenegrin-Bosnian border, however, there were no identified cross-border projects on the borders between Serbia and Croatia and between Bosnia and Croatia. The unequal distribution of projects between members may be caused by historic bounds and ethnic ties. Simply, the Drina Euroregion and its activities are unevenly distributed and it demonstrates significant shortcomings within successful future cross-border cooperation, thus it was clearly branded within the weak cross-border cooperation category.
Conclusion

This chapter first categorised the 14 cross-border regions (CBRs) from the Danube region dealt with in this volume, which can be found in Table 1. It is shown that generally speaking, the Central European cases are more intensive in terms of cross-border cooperation (CBC) than the ones in the south-eastern parts of the macroregion.

The lion’s share of this section made an attempt to explain this varying level of intensity based on different factors, briefly summarised below.

A shared *ethnicity and/or language* clearly appear to benefit the intensity of cross-border cooperation, which is in line with Brunet-Jailly (2005: 645). At the same time, this does not necessarily go both ways, as in the Danube region we have several active CBRs without such common traits.

A *historical unity* – i.e. a shared history of belonging together – of the different sides seems to matter relatively little for the intensity of CBC. More important, especially in the cases of recent break-ups (in the last appr. 25 years), is whether the dissolution was peaceful.

A similar *geographical structure* (i.e. landscape) is almost a “disadvantage”, as differences on the two sides drive CBC activities more than similarities. This means that for instance territories where a rural space borders a larger city tend to have more CBC and flows, as evidenced elsewhere (cf. Balogh 2014).

Given their similar *level of economic development*, this aspect helps little to explain varying CBC intensity in these cases studies of the Danube Region. Yet where differences between the two sides are relatively large, there are indeed signs of an emerging common labour market. But even these tendencies are partly overshadowed by commuting for work further away.

The *level of institutionalisation* then is more important, with more active CBRs forming more advanced forms of CBC, and/or vice-versa. This has been observed in the western parts of the continent, too (Sohn & al 2009).

Similarly, the *length of cooperation* is not at all irrelevant for CBC intensity. Several older collaborations have also upgraded their formal ties (to EGTCs or euror regions). Note that this volume focused on the relatively more intensive CBRs. There are of course examples of “dormant” collaborations even among EGTCs (Nagy 2014).

The *number of countries involved* as well as the *territorial size* of CBRs both matter. Some CBRs are either too large from the beginning or grow out of proportion to maintain sensible cooperation, at least for the majority of involved partners.

Finally, our cases do not reveal any pattern whether some *fields of cooperation*, i.e. the topical targets, make collaboration more intensive or easier to bring about.
The other main part of the chapter aimed to summarise the best practices of the 14 cross-border regions. The goal was to investigate cross-border interaction, evaluate the environment of CBC, and to select those collaborations which have had added value and which could have possible diffusive elements for other regions. The summarised best practices varied on a wide range; from rural development (like promotion of local food) through tourism, cultural cooperation, academic investigation of biological life, exploration of wildlife, infrastructural development, to urban initiatives. In the end, a number of these best practices can serve as good examples and useful incentives to other cross-border interactions.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
A comparison of regions cooperating across borders in the Danube region with a focus on best practices

References


CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Ister-Granum EGTC

Written by the
Institute of Spatial Planning
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1. Introduction

1.1 The best example for cross-border cooperation

Almost two hundreds of cross-border cooperation was identified on the Slovak territory during the research phase of this study. These cross-border interactions are performed through different methodologies, like European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), Euroregions, twin cities, partner cities and regional partnerships. These forms of cooperation include all borders in Slovakia. The most widespread type of cross-border cooperation are twin cities, respectively, partner cities. They generate almost 50% share from all types of cross-border cooperation. Nevertheless, the case study has not decided to investigate the partner city cooperation, but it searched for an institutionalized form of cooperation. Hence, the following cross-border cooperation was found as suitable candidates for case study research:

- Ister-Granum EGTC Ltd.,
- Pons Danubii EGTC,
- Arrabona EGTC Ltd.,
- Rába-Duna-Váh EGTC Ltd.,
- Euro-region Weinviertel – Jižní Morava – Záhorie,
- Novohrad-Nógrád EGTC.

Subsequently, the basic aim of this case study is to investigate the one specific institutionalized cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary, specifically Ister Granum EGTC. Together 16 EGTCs are located within the area of the Slovak republic. Thirteen of them (approx. 81%) are operated between Hungarian and Slovak border area. Thus we decided to make a case study of the Ister-Granum EGTC, operated along Slovak-Hungary border, the oldest EGTC in central Europe (and the 2nd oldest EGTC in European Union). Therefore we assumed that this organisation should have the most experiences on cross border projects and also we were sure that it has made a huge variety of activities for the development of settlements on both sides of the border. Another reason why we chose this EGTC for a case study is for its size. Ister-Granum includes more than 80 municipalities and operates on a large area. Hence we were curious about the possibility of management of such a huge organisation that can be functional and useful for so many municipalities.

The methodological approach of this case study involves desk research and personal interviews. The former included the identification of textual and visual materials relating to cross-border cooperation, i.e. investigation of cross-border cooperation, its history, ongoing and planned activities as well as published documents, manuals and other materials. The latter methodological approach was personal interview with the Director of the Ister-Granum EGTC, namely Péter Nagy.
Case study is separated into several sub-chapters, where each part describes certain aspect of cross-border cooperation. The readers may find sub-chapters like development of cross-border cooperation, geographical confines and determinants of the region, organisational structure of the EGTC, main activities, description of financing and budget issues, analysis through SWOT approach, future plans and finally an enumeration of unique features of this Grouping.
2. Development of the cross-border cooperation

2.1 History and the process of its establishment

Ister-Granum EGTC has its seat in Esztergom, Hungary. Its name refers to the European intellectual heritage as it uses Latin names: the Danube River is referred as 'Ister', while the Hron/Garam River is referred as 'Granum'. The cooperative framework of the Ister-Granum EGTC is generated through cooperation of two border towns, one on the Slovak side and one on the Hungarian side of the border, to be explicit, Štúrovo and Esztergom. The relationship between Esztergom and its twin town Štúrovo has a long tradition.

Esztergom and Štúrovo were connected by Bridge across the Danube River, nevertheless, the Bridge was destroyed in the World Wars, which deeply limited and hampered the cross-border interaction along the Slovak/Hungarian borderline. Before the reconstruction of the Bridge, the physical connection between the two cities was carried out by ferry across the Danube, but this connection was deeply ineffective. The origins of the real and vibrating cross-border cooperation dates back to 2001 when the Mária Valéria Bridge was reconstructed and it was opened as a linking space between Štúrovo and Esztergom. This reconstruction generated possible municipal and business cooperation, intensified interaction between various civic associations, schools, libraries and other institutions. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the increased cross-border cooperation is not solely a direct result of cooperation between Štúrovo and Esztergom, but the cross-border cooperation encompasses the region and the surrounding villages too.

There are more than 100 towns and villages on both sides of the border and this prepared the ground for establishment of the first cross-border groupings of municipalities in the region. Firstly, the Ister-Granum Euroregion was established as a civil association, registered on both sides of the border, in accordance with national legislative requirements. Activities performed by the Euroregion were initially focused on smaller (soft) projects, like organizing various conferences, preparation of information materials (e.g. Catalogue of organizations) and first projects between Hungary-Slovakia (Operational Programme SK-HU). Hence, possibilities for implementation of joint projects (in the form of co-operation as civic associations) were limited.

Euroregion was organized as a non-legal (civil association) entity and it continued to exist until the year 2008. Due to practical issues, the President of the Ister-Granum Euroregion initiated the process of establishing an organization that would ensure legal personality for the Euroregion. The idea of establishing a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Ltd. was to ensure, that the cross-border cooperation is in line with European legislation as well as the limitations of the Euroregion as non-legal entity can be overcome. The most pressing shortcoming was, that the cooperation faced several obstacles regarding the implementation of EU funded projects.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of Ister-Granum EGTC

The idea of setting up cross-border groupings of local authorities (EGTC) was formulated at the meeting of the European Commission in 2008. It allowed the creation of new forms of cross-border cooperation, as well as new opportunities for the implementation of joint cross-border projects. And, on 6th of May 2008, the Ister-Granum EGTC was founded in the presence of Luc Van den Brande, the President of the Committee of the Regions. The registration process of the EGTC was finalised on 29th of November 2008 when the announcement was published in the Official Journal of the EU.

The Ister-Granum EGTC was the second European grouping of territorial cooperation in the EU and it was the first EGTC in Central Europe. Subsequently, vast majority of the Ister-Granum Euroregion members accepted the proposal and joined the newly created EGTC. The founding members of the organization were cities and municipalities in Hungary and Slovakia. Key actors within the initiative and establishment were the city of Esztergom (Hungary) and the city of Štúrovo (Slovakia). The Ister-Granum EGTC was registered in Hungary and Esztergom has become headquarter of cross-border cooperation, and Gyula Ocskay became its first Director.

Working language that all members understand and use in everyday communication is Hungarian. On the other hand all the documents, brochures and public materials are printed in three languages, namely Hungarian, Slovak and English. The website\(^1\) is also formulated in these three languages. Positive factor of this type of cross-border cooperation is the fact that it has a highly functioning organization structure. Area covered by the Ister-Granum EGTC is quite large and contiguous what provides possibilities for implementation of numerous development projects. Despite of high number of members (86 municipalities) and despite of different political opinions that are presented by each city, town and municipality, the EGTC is capable of organising joint meetings and making common decisions.

A profoundly important aspect within the Ister-Granum cross-border cooperation is the Danube River and the Mária Valéria Bridge. Thus, it is highly important to give a short introduction about the Bridge which determines ‘the life and death’ of this cooperation.

\(^1\) http://www.istergranum.eu

Figure 1: Mária Valéria Bridge
The twin cities were connected by the Mária Valéria Bridge from 1895 which was destroyed twice, in 1919 and in 1944. The Bridge was rebuilt in 2001 as the last of the bridges that were demolished in the World War II. Vehicle traffic across the Bridge has grown 40 times and passenger traffic has grown 11 times. Consequently, the border crossing point of Štúrovo/Esztergom has became the most frequented one at the Hungarian-Slovak border.

**Figure 2:** Mária Valéria Bridge destroyed during the First World War (1919)

**Figure 3:** Mária Valéria Bridge destroyed during the Second World War (1944)
Rebuilding of the Mária Valéria Bridge was a decisive moment after 45 years. It has been stimulating civil relationships, it has strengthened shopping tourism and it has helped to reduce unemployment on the Slovak side. The number of daily commuters was more than 6,000 people in 2008.
3. Determination of geographical confines

The Ister-Granum EGTC area is contiguous which includes 86 municipalities from both sides of the Slovak-Hungarian border. Population of the Grouping is close to 190,000. Two third of its population lives on the Hungarian side of the region. The development of the area is substantially determined by the influence of the Hungarian capital city which is situated 50 km from Esztergom.

3.1 Natural Conditions

3.1.1 Land use

This subpart is going to describe the natural conditions and land use of three counties where the member municipalities of the Ister-Granum EGTC can be found, namely Nitra Self-governing region (SK), Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) and Pest County (HU).

Nitra Self-governing region is one of the least developed region in Slovakia. Regarding the level of development, the region is differentiated to a more developed north and a laggard south. Development pole of the region is localized in triangle of towns Nitra, Zlaté Moravce and Levice. Typical feature of the south-eastern part of the region is a combination of agriculture with limited industrial activity and with low rate of diversification. The process of transformation in the last decade of the 20th century caused a significant decrease of the crucial industrial activity (food processing, ship construction, electrical engineering, production of synthetics, etc.). Some of the key industrial activities were renewed again, however, the previous employment rate has not been reached yet. Besides the economic problems, demographic depression is another negative feature of the southern, laggard part of the region.

In Komárom-Esztergom County, the percentage of agricultural land is relatively low (56.2%), a major part of which is used as arable land (81%). The share of grasslands that are found in distant patches in the area is 15%. Vineyards cover 1.17% of the land, included mostly in Ászár-Neszvény wine sub-region whose total area is 1494 hectare and it is a part of the North Transdanubian wine region. Moreover, the town of Bábolna in Komárom-Esztergom County is home to a world-famous stud farm.

Pest County, which is located on the left side of the Danube River, has a lot in common with countries on the other side of the river in Transdanubia territory. This discovery is interesting despite the fact that agriculture has a much higher economic importance for Bács-Kiskun County than for Pest County. Unlike in counties of Transdanubia territory the quality of soil for agriculture is not appropriate for farming. The cause of this condition comes out from the location of Homokhátság which is mostly a sand territory (large parts of both examined counties are situated there). On the other hand Homokhátság also includes large areas of high natural values where natural friendly land use is encouraged. A key importance within agricultural
activities in this area is horticulture. For example Kesckemét’s apricot alcoholic beverage is produced from local apricots. Also each wine sub-region has its own wine route association for promotion.

3.1.2 Air quality

Regions are characterised by different state of environmental burden, which are negative effects of anthropogenic activity and which limit the quality of life. Share of population living in damaged environment or in strongly damaged environment is approx. 57%. In the Nitra County, share of population living in damaged environment or in strongly damaged environment is approx. 67% (88,683).

The quality of air in the region is affected by long distance transmission of pollutants and by emission from major sources located in the region. Chemical industry (fertilizers production, rubber chemicals), food-processing industry, power industry and automobile transport are the main air quality polluters.

Komárom-Eszérgom County is one of the most industrialized regions of Hungary and this has a significant mark on air quality. The region is situated in a mountain range rich in minerals and natural resources (bauxite, coal, kaolin, industrial sand, limestone, dolomite). These natural conditions and closeness of Budapest, as major consumer of industrial goods, and the Danube as transport corridor were the basis of the industrial image of the region.

The county, surrounding the capital city Budapest, is a relatively unindustrialized region that serves as the site for logistics, commerce and suburban homes – these have relatively low air pollutant emissions, thus the overall grade of air quality is good.

3.1.3 Water management

There are 54 water courses relevant for water management. The most important are lower reaches of the major Slovak rivers (Váh, Hron, Ipeľ) with its inflows and number of water canals. The whole southern border of Nitra Self-governing region is influenced by the Danube River.

According to the data of the Slovak hydro meteorological institute, the average quantity of natural sources of ground water in the region is 146,700 l/s and the usable quantity of ground water is 76,198,4 l/s. The highest quantity of usable ground water is located in counties of Komárno and Šaľa.

The most important sources of ground water are located within alluvial sediments of the rivers like the Danube, Váh, Nitra, Žitava and Hron. Many of the resources were polluted by agriculture and by inappropriate management of sewage. Pollution caused that the resources are not usable as potable water resources.
3.2 Settlement Structure, Human Resources and Economy

3.2.1 Human resources and demographic situation

Significant changes have been remarked in the evolution of demographic structure which deeply influence either economic or social situation of the region. The long term tendencies are: deceleration of the population reproduction and decrease of natural increase of population. The process of population ageing is continuing, thus the average age in the region was 39,04 and the ageing index was 148,33 in 2006.

The number of population in Komárom-Esztergom was 315,036 in 2008, this is the second smallest county in population in the Hungarian Danube region. From 2001 to 2008, the demographic structure of population changed by -0,7 %. This loss was such a strong that immigration could not compensate the natural loss.

The population of Pest County was 1,176,550 in 2008. The natural growth from 1990 to 2008 was -1,73 %, a slight decrease. The change of population from 2001 was +8,0 %, this means that there was a serious growth in population.

3.2.2 Educational structure

Educational structure of the adult population of Nitra Self-governing region is average (in terms of Slovakia) with significant share of inhabitants with only elementary education or without education degree (31 %). The share of inhabitants with university degree is 8 %. In comparison with average figures of the Slovak Republic, the region is worse mainly in share of inhabitants with secondary school and university education.

Komárom-Esztergom County has higher educational indicators than the average values of among Hungarian Danube regions. Thus its economy is based on well-educated labour force. Pest County has average values of educational structure among Hungarian Danube regions. The reason for this is the fact that Budapest, the educational centre of the nation is close, its economy is based on educated labour force, and the Budapest schools are accessible for most of the people, but institutes of higher education are missing in the region itself.

3.2.3 Development trends

Current state of settlement structure is a result of the effects of natural as well as civilization conditions. The settlements are spread across the lowland and modest upland with dominant agriculture. The particular settlements are distributed evenly around core settlement centres. This character of the settlement structure is disrupted only by linear settlement structure along the rivers. The basic conditions for settlement structure development are determined by natural conditions, mainly agriculture, development of transport infrastructure (roads and railways) and industrialization.
Development of the county was originally based on the primer resources (coal, bauxite). Nowadays the key factor of development is the location and position of the region. A successful industrial transformation took place in the region’s capital city of Tatabánya, and generally cities and sites lying next to highway M1 are developing dynamically. From human point of view, the region is in good position, but the urban areas in the mountainous areas of Vértes hills experience negative changes in the employment structure of the area.

Pest County surrounds the capital of the Budapest; therefore it became the area of massive suburbanisation in the past 20 years. The population shows a dynamic growth, but the local infrastructure cannot be developed in the same pace. This means that the human resources are in a good state, the growing population is young and well qualified, but possibilities of commuting are getting worse. One of the most important objectives of settlements of Pest County is to create local workplaces. Development trends show that the Western, especially North-Western and in some ways North-Eastern small regions are developing faster than those of the North, East and South of Pest County.

3.2.4 Agglomeration axis

The first stage development axis connects the first group settlement centres with the first level settlement core areas in the country and comparable centres outside state borders. It includes at least one road communication link and one speed railway communication link. The second stage development axis connects the second group settlement centres and second level settlement core areas with the first group settlement centres and the first level settlement core areas, including at least one road communication link and one railway communication link of supra-regional importance, or one highway. The third stage development axis connects mid-sized centres with the third level settlement core areas and other evaluated settlement centres with other second group settlement centres.

In geographical point of view, one of the unique agglomerations of Hungary developed in the Northern region of Komárom-Esztergom County, where the cities of Komárom-Almásfüzitő-Dunaalmás-Neszmély and Súttő-Lábatlan-Nyergesújfalu practically grew into one city.

Development axes are determined by physical geographical facilities of the region: first and the most important development axis links Budapest and Győr and crosses the region 70 km long. The second development axis escapes Budapest and runs between Komárom and Esztergom on the North. The third and less important development axis runs along Komárom and Székesfehérvár and crosses the rural countryside of the county.

Pest County itself is practically the agglomeration area of Budapest. The area of commuters is naturally bigger than Pest County, but the official agglomeration is smaller with 82 settlements of the NUTS 3 region. The satellite cities are weak in their functions, most of them are only bedroom suburbs. Development axes are connected to transportation corridors that are the highways of the region.
3.2.5 Economy

Regional Gross Domestic Product in purchasing power parity showed a positive significant increase by 60.7% (2008/2001). Economic active population is important potential and value-creating factor of economic development of the area. During the period between 2001 and 2008, number of economic active population slightly increased.

In 2008, several counties and their employment structure were monitored. The monitoring demonstrated that a significant part of the population worked in the tertiary sector, either in Nitra County (56%), or in Komárom-Esztergom Country (44.49%) or in Pest County (63.9%). During the monitoring, significant increase of employment was identified within the public administration, defence, building industry and financial businesses. Increase of employment in sectors like public administration and defence was caused by establishment of the self-governing regions and by devolution of certain competencies from state administration to self-governing municipalities. A slight decrease was recorded in the building industry in 2008 due to economic crisis. Furthermore, Regional Gross Domestic Product in purchasing power parity in Pest County showed a significant increase by 36.6% (2008/2001). Economic active population is important potential and value-creating factor of economic development of the area. During the period between 2001 and 2008, the rate of economic active population showed a slight increase. Another positive factor for further economic development of the region is the slight increase of the employed people.

| Table 1: Chosen indicators of CDR Štúrovo - Esztergom - Visegrád |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Regional GDP per capita in PPS as a share of EU 27(25) average (%) | 42.7  | 50    | 60.57 | 59.97 |
| Labour force participation rate (%) | 56.81 | 55.73 | 58.1  | 58.63 |
| Unemployment rate in region (%)      | 12.1  | 10.73 | 10.4  | 6.37  |
| Number of employed in tertiary branch (%) | 52.48 | 53.07 | 54.61 | 55.87 |
| Share of college and secondary school educated inhabitants (%) | NA    | 50.7  | NA²   | 51.77 |
| Tourism - average guest nights | 3.3   | 2.8   | 2.56  | 2.43  |
| Tourism - foreign visitors per 1000 inhabitants | 110.48| 96.72 | 108.44| 123.26|


² Data on the indicator “Share of college and secondary school educated inhabitants for 1996 and 2005” were not available.
3.3 Population difference

Territory of the Ister-Granum EGTC is relatively evenly distributed on both sides of the border. However, there are certain differences. To be specific, only two towns over 5,000 inhabitants can be found on the Slovak territory, while there are 4 towns over 5,000 inhabitants on the Hungarian side of the border. That means there is an unbalanced structure of population between the Hungarian and the Slovakian part of the EGTC, subsequently, this unbalanced structure is reflected in the total coverage of the EGTC. More than two-thirds of the EGTC population is situated on the Hungarian side of the border, while the Slovak side represents only less than a third of the population. However, the number of municipalities that are members of the EGTC is relatively balanced, i.e. 46 municipalities on the Hungarian side and 40 municipalities on the Slovak side of the border. Population of the Slovak part of the EGTC is more fragmented than the Hungarian and the municipalities have a relatively small population (up to 500 inhabitants). In order to understand the population difference better, we added a table (no. 2) which reflects the top five cities/towns.

Figure 6: Territory of the Ister-Granum EGTC
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Table 2: Population of top 5 cities and towns on the Slovak and Hungarian territory of the Ister-Granum EGTC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of the Ister-Granum EGTC</th>
<th>Number of inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bátorkész/Bátorové Kosihy</td>
<td>3 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Köbölkút/Gbelce</td>
<td>2 229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Párkány/Štúrovo</td>
<td>10 666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szőgyén/Svodín</td>
<td>2 533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zselíz/Želiezovce</td>
<td>7 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak part</td>
<td>25 970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esztergom</td>
<td>28 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lábatlan</td>
<td>4 934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyergesújfalu</td>
<td>7 469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahitótfalu</td>
<td>5 486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tát</td>
<td>5 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian part</td>
<td>126 480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>179 751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 7: Overview of population (top 5 cities and towns on the Slovak and Hungarian territory of the Ister-Granum EGTC)

4. Organisational and institutional structure, operation

4.1 Structure and description of organizational units

The organizational structure is defined within the Statutes of the Ister-Granum European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation Ltd. Actual organisational model of the EGTC was defined during the process of establishment in 2008.

For successful and useful operations of the Ister-Granum EGTC, the organisation structure consists of: political level (function of decision making), executive level (executive function and management) and administrative & technical level. The Professional committees are responsible for expert advisory and coordinative support.

Organisation structure\(^3\) is divided into following units:

- The General Assembly,
- Executive Chair,
- Deputy Chair,
- Senate,
- Director,
- Committees:
  - External Relations Committee,
  - Human Resource Policy Committee,
  - Economic and Asset Management Committee,
  - Environment Protection Committee,
  - Industrial and Transport Committee,
  - Cultural and Tourism Committee,
  - Supervisory Committee,
- Work organisation.

In following paragraphs each organisational unit of the Grouping is briefly described. All information about competences of each organs of the Ister-Granum EGTC is taken from its Statues. The Statues are available on its website and a direct link to it can be found among references.

The General Assembly of Ister-Granum EGTC consists of all member municipalities. It possesses many important competences which are described in following lines. First of all, among essential competences belongs the activity that it adopts the Convention and the Statues of the Grouping. These are the most important documents for the EGTC because they represent approved terms and conditions of operation of the EGTC by all members. Furthermore the general assembly adopts the annual budget and approves the level of membership fees; it

\(^3\) Source: Statutes of the Ister-Granum European Grouping for Territorial Co-operation Ltd
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decides on the admission of new members and expulsion of a member; it elects, appoints and removes the Director; it elects the members of the Senate, special committees and the Supervisory Committee; it approves the conclusion of contracts that are made by the Group with one of its members, its Director, the members of the Senate and the Supervisory Committee, it enforces claims against the Director, the members of the Senate and the Supervisory Committee; it decides on resolution on the revocation of the EGTC without a registered legal successor; it approves organisational and operational regulations and any other questions that are classified in the Statutes or by the applicable legislation.

The Executive Chair prepares and leads the meetings of the General Assembly and between the meetings it directs the activity of the Senate. In addition it can make recommendations for a new member to the General Assembly; it represents the general assembly on the internal meetings as well as in front of external organisations; it directs the work of the professional committees and makes recommendations to the chair of the committee. Moreover it concludes contracts and exercises the contractual rights on behalf of the general assembly.

The Deputy Chair collaborates with the Executive Chair of the General Assembly in directing the general activity of the general assembly and substitutes the Executive Chair in case of its absence. It also communicates and exchange information with the professional committees, it initiates and maintains contact with different organisations and institutes and it initiates tender project to the Director.

The Senate comments on works of the other organisational units of the EGTC. Elaborated opinions deliver to the professional committees, to the General Assembly and to the Director. Another important senate’s competence rests in organising and convening the general assembly.

The Director represents a full legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management unit of the EGTC. It can individually conclude contracts which amount are less than 5 million HUF or the equivalent in EUR. The director also coordinates the implementation of the approved tasks and objectives of the EGTC and provides information to the Senate, the General Assembly, the Professional Committees and the Work Organisation. Other competences are classified in Ister-Granum's Statutes.

The Professional Committees assists to the General Assembly with their qualified expertise. They maintain contact with professional and scientific organisations. They also initiate and make preparations for conferences and workshops. Head of one professional committee is The Chair of the Committee. The chair of the committee leads committees meetings, signs its decisions and submits those decisions to the involved organisations.

Organisation structure is stable and no changes have been done in structure units.
5. Composition of the working organ

The highest decision making body of the EGTC is the General Assembly of Mayors, which meets twice a year. The General Assembly, as the supreme authority, is responsible for political decisions as adopting the Convention and statutes, amending or supplementing the Statutes, adopting the annual budget and reports, admission of new members, election of the Director and members of the Senate, approval of the organisational and operational regulations and others. According to the current statutes of the EGTC, the General Assembly elects two chairs for the period of two years.

Preparation of the decisions is the task of the Senate which is composed of eight members, and this body decides on far-reaching matters between the meetings of the General Assembly. Members of the Senate are the Executive Chair and Deputy Chair, and 6 further Mayors (3 from Hungary and 3 from Slovakia) elected by General Assembly for two years.

Operational work is carried out by the Director. Director is elected for two years by the General Assembly, and it is either the Mayor of Esztergom, or the Mayor of Štúrovo. The Director coordinates the implementation of the tasks in accordance with the objective of the Grouping, moreover, the Director performs legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management of the Grouping, provides information to the Senate, to the General Assembly, to the Professional Committees and to the Work Organisation, and finally the Director represents the Grouping toward the two member states, toward the European Union and toward the institutions of a third country, etc. Furthermore, a supervisory board is also elected by the General Assembly. The role of the board is to perform a controlling and supervisory function of the EGTC.
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6. Main activity areas/profile

6.1 Current projects and associated areas

Prior to 1989, cross-border cooperation at the local level practically did not exist. Such cooperation was possible only at national level, but it missed any local/regional character. However, the situation around the closure of the borders began to gradually change and the administrative boundaries between countries started to fade away which generated a hopeful prospect for future cross-border cooperation at the local level after 1989.

'Evaporation' of state borders was achieved when both countries entered into the EU structures in 2004, but the entrance into the Schengen Area was the real 'borderless' breakthrough in 2007. Therefore, the only physical barrier in the region of the Ister-Granum EGTC represents a natural "border", namely the Danube River.

The primary reason for establishment of the Ister-Granum EGTC was to enhance regional importance and overall position of the cross-border area between Slovakia and Hungary. The background of this establishment was the successful implementation of common projects on both sides of the border and the enhancement of cross-border cooperation.

The Ister-Granum EGTCs is active in various types of projects that are created on the basis of members’ needs and possibilities to gain financial contributions or funding schemes. The main focus of the EGTC was based on promotion of cultural heritage, local traditions and attractions in involved area.

Table 3: Overview of the projects implemented and source of the funding is listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of the project</th>
<th>Call</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening of the regional civil sphere (2002/2003)</td>
<td>MATRA-KAP (Kingdom of the Netherlands in Budapest and in Bratislava)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information map signs of Esztergom and the euroregion (2003/2004)</td>
<td>Regional Operation Program (Central Transdanubian Regional Development Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating the euroregional institution system (2004)</td>
<td>Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of the connections of civil organisations of the Euroregion (2005/2006)</td>
<td>National Civil Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Subject of the project | Call
--- | ---
Designing of the bridges over the River Ipoly (2006/2007) | INTERREG IIIA
Fish ladders on the river Ipoly (2005) | INTERREG IIIA
KOMP- Cultural, educational, multi-ethnic programme (2006-2008) | INTERREG IIIA
Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations (2009-2010) | URBACT II


The Ister-Granum EGTC applies for funding of developmental projects through various EU programmes, but mainly they focus on Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013. Since the establishment of the EGTC and in compliance with its goals of cooperation, the EGTC members have actively participated in its work and they have substantially participated in definition of the project proposals. That means the process requires close cooperation of all members and exchange/communication of project ideas.

There are many examples of successful developmental projects, jointly implemented by the Ister-Granum EGTC. Very successful project is the endeavour to support and promote local products of the region and to make people aware about these healthy, local products. This project can be immediately and explicitly identify as best practice CBC performance. The basic idea of the project is that the urban and rural sphere is separated from each other. However, there is a substantial point which interdependently link them to each other. To be specific, the rural space generates local food and local products as a ‘market offer’, while the urban space has a huge 'market demand' for local food and products, hence they supplement each other.

The real task of the project is to interlink those spaces and to distribute information among them. Subsequently, a database was collected among the rural producers and a brochure was printed out about local products/food and local producers, and it was distributed within the space of the Ister-Granum EGTC. This is a project which terminates 2015. Moreover, the Ister-Granum EGTC is also active in the field of tourism, infrastructure, economy and entrepreneurship.

One of the very successful and long-term achievements is the Ister-Granum Order of Knights of Wine, which was initiated in 2004. This order unites wine-makers from Hungary and Slovakia and it establishes a network among them. What is more, the main purpose is to create a cross-border wine route which is based on local people and their local wine.
The Ister-Granum EGTC helped to trigger various cultural events, e.g. festival of the amateur theatre groups started in 2002 and folk festival was organised from 2002 till 2008 which was the annual showcase of the various ethnic, cultural performers and craftsmen of the region. Furthermore, more and more events took up the name ‘Ister-Granum’, like soccer cup, aviators’ day and the competition of drawings. From 2006 The bilingual “Civil Newsletter” was published quarterly, started in 2006 and ended in 2010, which was sent to the 1,100 civil organisations located in the euroregion. Furthermore, many tourist publications were published and lot of studies were made about the border area and cross-border issues. Unfortunately, several events were cancelled.

Another cross-border cooperation project was “Enterprise – Logistic Zone”. The project was aimed on developing relations between industries and logistics on both sites of the border. The Ister-Granum EGTC in 2013 has established a working group which task was to create an integrated investment plan for the area. The plan should represent a tool with objectives and steps for improving the spatial development in both border areas.

Among actual cross-border cooperation projects, on which The Ister-Granum EGTC is currently working on, is a project called The Local Product. The aim of the project is to focus on networking of local farmer markets and to create and promote a local product brand – “Ister-Granum”.

Another recent project relates to renewable energy. The aim is to establish The Centre of Economical Energy that would provide information for citizens about possibilities of economical and efficient use of energy. In addition the centre should also provide information about the possibility of insulation and many other energy efficient useful tips.

Besides, the organisation also focuses on building infrastructure for cyclists. As an example of a cycling type project, there exists an intention to build a high-quality cycling route around “Kováčovské kopce”.

Figure 8: Presentation of activities implemented on the EGTC territory
7. Management, budget (incomes/expenses)

7.1 The cross-border cooperation's economy

According to the Statutes, the cooperation is a legal person under the law of the EGTC. It can acquire rights, assume obligation, acquire movable and immovable property and be a party to proceedings before courts and other authorities. Therefore, the cooperation has its own budget and own budget plan.

The revenues of EGTC budget are based on the following pillars:

- Membership fees of each municipality in the sum of 20 HUF (about 0.07 Euros) per capita;
- Funds from the budget of the Ministry of Interior of Hungary - this is dedicated for all EGTCs located in Hungary and the given fund is divided equally between them (revenue from this source represents approximately 30 000 EUR for the Ister-Granum EGTC).

Members of the Grouping shall contribute to the running costs of the Grouping. Subsequently, members pay a membership fee by 31st March of each year. The start-up capital of the Grouping is the total amount of the membership fees paid in cash following the start of the operation. Establishing the amount of the membership fee shall fall within the competence of the General Assembly. To conclude, the annual budget of the Ister-Granum EGTC is around 70 000 Euros.
8. SWOT-analysis

This chapter of the case study attempts to summarize the research and investigation about the Ister-Granum EGTC through SWOT analysis. That means its functionality is analysed through four layers, namely, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths (S)

- Good cooperation within the EGTC. The Ister-Granum EGTC is active in several areas of interests what is reflected in developed and future projects;
- Flexibility in additional employment in use of managers and experts on individual projects;
- Historical relations in involved cities, towns and municipalities;
- Long term experiences in cross-border cooperation (since 2000 as Euroregion);
- Good perception of the Ister-Granum EGTC by the local citizens;
- Multisource funding provides financial stability;
- High educational level of the employees with long-term experiences;
- No language barriers;
- High potential for close cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism, economy, health services, marketing of local products, etc.;
- Coordinating management of integrated projects in the region;
- Easier administration by EU funded projects.

Weaknesses (W)

- Different conditions and opportunities in individual cities;
- Political influence on the performance of the organization;
- Pre-financing of projects may cause difficulties for the Ister-Granum EGTC;
- Difficult decision making process (relatively high number of member involved).

Opportunities (O)

- New project calls for EU funds for the period 2014-2020. New investment period will bring new possibilities for new development projects;
- The possibility to apply for subsidies from the regional development agencies in Slovakia;
- The EGTC involves lot of members, it covers large area and this generates a substantial potential for implementation of development projects, nevertheless, the same issue, namely lot of members can cause difficulties too;
- Know-how exchange among members.
Threats (T)

- Different approaches of state administration in Slovakia and Hungary. Local cross-border cooperation can be influenced by national level approach;
- Strong dependence on external financial sources (financing of the Ister-Granum EGTC is formally diversified, but in reality there is a huge dependence on one specific source);
- Competition created by a large number of similar cross-border groupings in the region which can reduce the success of project calls;
- Future negative economic situation of members can limit the amount of money for organisation's functionality, i.e. endurance of world economic crisis and negative demographic trends may deeply alter the amount of membership fees;
- The EGTC involves lot of members and those members have different ideas and imaginations about future tasks and roles, hence the too huge diversity may cause disagreement on meta level, and it may decrease the flexibility of decision making process;
9. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

The EGTC has an ambition to create joint institutions to support development activities inside the Grouping’s territory. Following paragraphs provide a brief overview of Ister-Granum’s intentions. More information can be found in the EGTC’s official website and a direct link to it can be found in references.

The purpose of Regional tourist destination management organisation is to promote and create joint marketing activities for the whole EGTC’s territory as an independent, unified tourist destination. The aim of the Grouping is to create more pleasant and tourist friendly destinations that would attract more visitors to its area. The project obtains several activities such as starting joint public relations or creating joint tourist packages.

The main intention of the EGTC in a project called Common Energy Agency is to establish own energy agency with two offices on both sides of the border. The task of these offices lays in consulting and convincing municipalities and organisations in the EGTC’s area to frame their energy consumption on renewable energy resources.

The activity of Cross-border service providing system to the NGOs started in the euroregion in 2008. Currently the network consists of 6 offices which objective is to help to local NGOs in matters of legal and financial possibilities.

Integrated Health Systems is a project, which history is dated to 2005 when the hospital of Esztergom started to receive patients from Slovakia in accordance to an agreement with a Slovak insurance company. The intention for future development of this project is to advance it and provide to citizens from both sides of the border a more rational outpatient care system.

The aim of the project called Ister-Granum EXOP. Business Support System is to create an office that will provide information, support and will network small and medium enterprises which operates inside the EGTC’s territory with organizations that operates beyond the territory. In addition another objective of this project is to establish two exhibition sites.

The intention of project “Integration of public transport” is to create an integrated cross border public transportation system which will provide transport services for citizens from both sides of the border. The project includes coordination of the timetables of existing transport providers and establishment of new lines.

Project Ister-Granum news agency presents a joint news agency for municipalities from both sides of the border will provide information about the EGTC and Europe without borders to citizens in bilingual languages through radio transmission, television and weekly newspaper.

Regional solidarity-development fund is a new tool of joint development that the Ister-Granum EGTC is trying to create. The reason of establishing a fund is in Ister-Granum’s ability to gain additional financial sources for supporting small projects inside the Grouping’s territory.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

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Contributors to this fund should be member municipalities and bigger companies located in the region.

EGTC promotes road infrastructure and the importance of connecting Northern and Southern Europe (Infrastructure Helsinki corridor) through Esztergom. This would increase the quality of infrastructure, as well as intensity of economic flows.
10. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation

Unique feature of this grouping can be found in the common history of the whole area. This aspect is reflected in common culture, traditions, language, shared values and mutual understanding. Moreover, long term cooperation and lot of members, involved in the Grouping, can benefit from the exchange of experiences and know-how. EGTC also supports information process of funding opportunities and provides administrative support in preparation of EU project and cross-border projects applications.

Uniqueness of this EGTC is in several characteristics. Firstly, it is in its size. The Ister-Granum EGTC includes 86 municipalities, with approximately 190,000 inhabitants. The ability of coordination and achieving a compromise between so many members is stunning. Secondly this Grouping was established in 2008 which makes it the oldest EGTC in Central Europe and the 2nd oldest EGTC in the whole European Union. Therefore it was one of the first that was ever established without a possibility to “imitate” the pattern of establishment and a possibility to know or avoid newcomer’s obstacles.

Specific feature of this cooperation is also in its history. Founding cities of the Grouping, Esztergom and Štúrovo, belonged at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century under the Administration of Esztergom County. This historical relation between these cities and the surrounding municipalities has also influenced the language between citizens. The strong relation between these cities has been shown in the ability of reconstruction the Mária Valéria Bridge after its destruction in the First World War and also after the Second World War. Therefore the Mária Valéria Bridge has become a symbol of these cities and presented a key factor in creating the Ister-Granum Euroregion in 2003, the predecessor of the Ister-Granum EGTC.

Afterward, the Euroregion prepared in 2005 a development program which became one of the most important documents of the organisation and created the starting platform for deeper cooperation in the form of EGTC as well.

Member municipalities can exchange experiences and know-how between themself. That knowledge is specific for this particular area, because several members were or still are members of other microregional associations, or they are partners for regional development agencies, or in other associations. That gives to the EGTC additional sources of contacts, information channels and potential funding sources.
11. Summary

Main aim of this case study was the investigation of cross-border cooperation performed by the Ister-Granum European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation Ltd. It integrates large number of settlements on the both sides of the borders. Organization structure consists of the following units: the General Assembly, Executive Chair, Deputy Chair, Senate, Director, Committees (External Relations Committee, Human Resource Policy Committee, Economic and Asset Management Committee, Environment Protection Committee, Industrial and Transport Committee, Cultural and Tourism Committee), Supervisory Committee and Work organisation.

Members of the Ister-Granum EGTC are active in the field developmental projects and in the process of application for funding through various existing EU programmes. But mainly it focuses on Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013. Since the establishment of the EGTC and in compliance with its goals of cooperation, the EGTC members actively participate in the process where they clearly define and identify proposals and ideas. This requires close cooperation of all members and exchange of project ideas.

There are many examples of successful development projects jointly implemented by the Ister-Granum EGTC. The project, which focuses on local products, is very successful and it supports the local producers, local markets, it tries to build up an awareness and attractiveness of local products among the local citizens, thus supporting either the local economy, or the local cohesion of the region, or the health condition of the local citizens. What is more, the Ister-Granum EGTS aims to support other fields too, like the field of tourism, infrastructure and economy and entrepreneurship.

To conclude, the EGTC is active in various types of projects that are created on the basis of needs and possibilities in order to gain financial contributions or funding schemes. The main focus of the Ister-Granum EGTC is based on promotion of cultural heritage, local traditions (festivals) and attractions in involved area.
12. Bibliography


### 13. Annex

#### 13.1 List of associate settlements

Table 4: Overview of the members of the Ister-Granum EGTC

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Members of the Ister-Granum EGTC</th>
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Crossing the borders
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
2016

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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Pons Danubii EGTC

Written by the
Institute of Spatial Planning
(Slovakia)
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Pons Danubii

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1. Introduction

1.1 The best example for cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation is one of the most actual topics which resonate within Europe and especially within the framework of European regions. That means phenomenon of cross-border cooperation is a topic which should be and/or must be studied in order to reflect the newest trends and to understand the life of the regions in Europe. Subsequently, this paper aims to investigate the one specific cross-border cooperation, namely the Pons Danubii EGTC, seated in Slovakia which covers the Slovakian-Hungarian cross-border region.

First of all, there is a need to give a brief introduction about the legal framework of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. It is a separate legal entity with full legal capacity, it can act independently, thus enabling the EU member states, regional authorities, local governments and public institutions to establish cross-border, transnational or interregional cooperation with institutions of similar profile from other member states. An EGTC is an organization jointly owned by authorities from at least two EU member states. These can be local or regional authorities or even member states. The grouping is a separate institution, has its own budget, it can sign contracts, acquire property and be party to legal proceedings.

The object of this case study is the cross-border cooperation implemented by the Pons Danubii EGTC. The study gives a profound picture about the region, about its historical formation; moreover, it informs the reader about the organizational structure of the EGTC, about its activity and future plans of the cross-border cooperation, and finally it evaluates Pons Danubii through SWOT analysis.

There are several reasons why the Institute of Spatial Planning has chosen Pons Danubii as the best practice cooperation. The meaning, scope and institutionalized form of cooperation put Pons Danubii above other forms of cross-border cooperation, like Euro-regions or twin cities. Another reason of selection is that the Pons Danubii EGTC is a European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, thus the EGTC is a legal entity with capacity to enable regional and local authorities and/or other public bodies from different member states and to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. In addition, the EGTC is unique in the sense that it allows public authorities of different member states to cooperate and/or to deliver joint services without requiring formal international agreement ratified by the national parliaments. Furthermore, the attractiveness of Pons Danubii (next to other EGTCs based in the Slovak Republic, like the EGTC Karst-Bodva or the EGTC Via Carpatia Limited) lays in the fact that despite of its low number of members (7 member cities and towns), its institutional net covers approximately 120 000 inhabitants. Another astonishing fact about Pons Danubii is that it has applied for 12 projects in total amount of 12 million Euros since its establishment in 2010.
The Pons Danubii EGTC is analysed through methodology of interviews, where information was gathered through direct contact with the Director, Zoltán Bara. Moreover, the case study reflects various accessible materials related and relevant to the Pons Danubii, like its official documents, reports and media articles, hence the case-study partly applies desk research methodology. The following part describes the geographical confines of the region and it gives a geographical introduction about the selected cross-border region and cooperation.
2. Determination of geographical confines

This part of the case study informs the reader about the natural conditions of the region, economy, settlement structure, human resources and about the members of the Pons Danubii EGTC.

2.1 Natural Conditions

Komárom-Komárno Cross-Danube Region stretches from Nové Zámky to Tatabánya over Komárom-Komárno border towns. Dominant towns of the region are the following: Tatabánya (County seat), Nové Zámky, Komárno, Komárom and Tata. Almost whole area on the Slovakian side is located on the Danube upland (Podunajská pahorkatina) and the Danube plain (Podunajská rovina). The Hungarian territory of the region belongs to the Little Hungarian Plain (Kisalföld), the area around Tata and Tatabánya is between the hills of Gerecse. The most important side rivers of the Danube River are the rivers, like Váh (SK) and Átál-ér (HU). The southern parts of the region are rich of water resources; consequently, several thermal springs are located in the region, like Patince, Komárno, Komárom and/or Tata. The main part of the region is covered by high-quality agricultural soil, hence the region is one of the most productive agricultural centre of Slovakia. Moreover, the region is one of the hottest territories, where the average year temperature is 10,2 °C.

Typical feature of the northern (Slovakian) part of the region is a combination of agricultural production with limited industrial activity. The process of transformation in the last decade of 20th century caused a significant decrease of the crucial industrial activity, e.g. food processing, ship construction, electrical engineering, production of synthetics, etc. Some of the key industrial activities were renewed again; however, their capacity and ability to employ the local citizens have not reached the level previous to the economic/market transformation.

There are several water courses relevant for water management. The most important are the lower reaches of the major Slovak river Váh with its inflows and number of water canals. The highest quantity of usable ground water is located in County of Komárno. In the Hungarian part of the CDR, carstic water plays the most important role in potable water supply. The carstic water comes from the hills of Gerecse in the Southern part of the CDR. Consequently, sensitivity of carstic water against pollutants calls for careful attention in water distribution and its profound protection.
2.2 Brief Characteristic of the Members

Komárno is a town in Slovakia at the confluence of the Danube and the Váh rivers. Historically, it situated on both sides of the Danube, but after the First World War, it was separated into two cities, connected by the Elizabeth Bridge. One of the most interesting and also the most visited monument in Komárno is the fortification system. The construction of the extensive fortification system of Komárno started during the Napoleonic wars but the events of the 1848/1849 revolution interrupted the work. Komárno as the last bastion of the Hungarian bourgeois revolution played an important role.

In 1938, the Vienna Arbitrage resulted that the town was incorporated into Hungary, but after the Second World War, it once again became a frontier-city of Czechoslovakia. At the moment Komárno is a busy frontier town of the Slovak Republic with 38 thousand inhabitants.

Hurbanovo is another Slovakian city. It is a town and large municipality in the Komárno District in the Nitra Region. In 1948, its Slovak name was changed to Hurbanovo, named after the Slovak writer, Jozef Miloslav Hurban. The town was first mentioned in 1329. It is an agricultural center with 11,000 inhabitants. Its fortress belongs to an important monument, which played a less important role in the history than other regional fortresses. Furthermore, the Holy Trinity Column can be found in the city which was built in order to commemorate the victims of cholera.

Komárom is a cultural, tourist and commercial centre on the right bank of the Danube with a population around 20,000 inhabitants. History of Komárom and its fort system were influenced by the Turkish and Napoleonic war. The fort itself is contiguous building which includes 14 separated wings of buildings with 640 rooms. Useful area is more than 34,000 m² and buildings cover 39,000 m². The total circumference of the fort system is nearly 15 km.

Tata is the next Hungarian member of the Pons Danubii EGTC. It is located in the valley between the Gerecse and Vértes Mountains, some 70 km from Budapest. Tata was first mentioned in 1221. During the Ottoman occupation, the castle of Tata was an important fortress. It was captured in 1529 and it had numerous different owners in the next decades until it was burnt down by the Habsburgs.

The next member settlement is Kisbér. The town was first mentioned in 1277. Kisbér was home to the 15,648-acre (63.33 km²) Imperial-Royal Stud where the thoroughbred racehorse was bred. Kisbér raced in England, where he won the country’s most prestigious race, the Epsom Derby, in 1876. He was then sent to Paris where he won France’s most important race, the Grand Prix de Paris. The horsing tradition is still strong and visible in the city. The Kisbér Horsing Association organizes horse-jumping and equipage-driving competition every year. One of the most memorable buildings of Kisbér is the Batthyány palace. The baroque style building was reconstructed in classicist style in 1840. In 2005, the new Cultural Center was named after Albert Wass.
Finally, Oroszlány is a city in Hungary, in Komárom-Esztergom County. It has a population of 20,487 residents. The main tourist attraction of the town is the 18th century Camaldolese monastery of Majk. During the communist era, rapid industrialization took place and Oroszlány became one of the most important coal mining regions of the country. However, it came to an end, all the mines have been closed down with the exception of the only running Márkushegy coal mine in Pusztavám.

Table 1: Area extent and population of every member city and town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of Pons Danubii</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area extent in km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Komárno</td>
<td>36279</td>
<td>102,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurbanovo</td>
<td>8041</td>
<td>59,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolárovo</td>
<td>10747</td>
<td>106,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak part</td>
<td>55067</td>
<td>269,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komárom</td>
<td>19048</td>
<td>70,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>23726</td>
<td>78,16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiskér</td>
<td>7532</td>
<td>70,86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oroszlány</td>
<td>18139</td>
<td>75,86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian part</td>
<td>68445</td>
<td>295,07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>123512</td>
<td>564,643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximate number of inhabitants in involved areas (2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>123512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak part of the area</td>
<td>55067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komárno</td>
<td>36279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurbanovo</td>
<td>10747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kőbánya</td>
<td>68445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian part of the area</td>
<td>19048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komárom</td>
<td>23726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>7532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kőbér</td>
<td>18139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population share (2013)

- Slovak part of the involved area: 55%
- Hungarian part of the involved area: 45%

Figure 2: Overview of population

Extent of member cities and towns in km²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area extent in km²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total area extent</td>
<td>564,64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak part of the area</td>
<td>269,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komárno</td>
<td>102,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurbanovo</td>
<td>59,94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kőbánya</td>
<td>106,82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian part of the area</td>
<td>295,07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komárom</td>
<td>70,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>78,16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kőbér</td>
<td>70,86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orsolény</td>
<td>75,86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Area extent in km²

- Slovak part of the involved area: 52%
- Hungarian part of the involved area: 48%

Figure 3: Overview of area extents
At present times, the Grouping does not plan to undertake any territorial expansion. The only potential city that could enter into this Grouping is Nové Zámky (Slovakia). However, due to different political opinions there is no intention of extending the current number of member cities.

### 2.3 Settlement Structure and Human Resources

There is a natural decrease of the population in the territory of Komárom-Komárno CDR on both sides of the border. In the Slovakian part, a fast outmigration process has been strengthening the decrease of the population, while in the Hungarian part of the CDR, there is solid immigration in the last years.

The demographic situation on both parts of the region is unfavourable. Significant changes in the evolution of the structure of demography, which are reflection of economic and social situation of the region, have been remarked. The long term tendencies are: deceleration of the population reproduction, decrease of natural increase of population.

Settlement structure is a result of the effects of natural as well as civilization conditions. The settlements are spread across the lowland and modest upland, with dominant agriculture. The particular settlements are distributed evenly around core settlement centres. The basic conditions for settlement structure development in the Slovakian part of the CDR determined by the natural conditions were affected by civilization conditions – mainly agriculture,
development of transport infrastructure (roads and railways) and industrialization. The development of the county was originally based on prime resources, e.g. coal or bauxite.

The educational structure and the level of education in different social groups in the two sides of the CDR are similar. In the Slovakian side, significant share of the population either have only elementary education or they are without educational degree, while only a small part of the population have university degree. In comparison with average figures of the Slovak Republic, the region is worse mainly in share of inhabitants with secondary school and university education. The Hungarian part of the CDR has higher average values of educational structure among Hungarian Danube regions. Moreover, the education system of the region has been transforming towards the needs of labour market. The region has two institutes of higher education; there are one non-state college in Tatabánya (Edutus College) and a state university for Hungarian minority in Komárno (Selye János University). Both institutions are launching new technical and IT educational programmes according to the needs of local companies.

Agriculture, industry and service sector are also important in the CDR’s labour market. Important industrial parks operate in Komárom and Tatabánya, where more than thousands of employees work for international companies from Hungary and also from Slovakia. Services sector, financial institutions, retail chains and other service providers give job opportunities for the local citizens. Nevertheless, economic crisis has deeply influenced the employment rate of the region and it has profoundly affected the cross-border labour migration. Several industrial companies in the region, and also in the Hungarian part, e.g. NOKIA, dismissed and limited their activity, hence they ceased to provide job opportunities for the local citizens. Subsequently, the level of unemployment in the Slovakian part of the region reached 20% in 2011, while the level of unemployment reached 7% in the Hungarian part. That significant difference in the rates of unemployment between the regions is influenced by the industrial background in Tatabánya which seems to be more “crisis-proof” even in the harder years of the economic depression.

2.4 Economy

Regional Gross Domestic Product in purchasing power parity during the monitoring period showed a positive increase by 60.7% (2008/2001). Economic active population is important potential and value-creating factor of economic development of the area. During the period between 2001 and 2008, the number of economic active population recorded a slight increase. In 2008, most employees worked in the tertiary sector, specifically 56% (SK) and 45% (HU), especially in commerce and market oriented services. During the monitoring period, significant increase of employment in the sector public administration and defence, building industry and financial businesses was recorded. After the beginning of economic crisis in 2008, the economic performance of the CDR region dropped rapidly, in year 2009 the regional GDP indicator
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diminished, the unemployment started to increase, especially in the Northern, Slovakian part of the CDR.

The best expression of the activity structure is the indicator of gross added value by branches based on statistical and administrative data sources. We analysed this indicator during the period from 2001 to 2007 within particular region. In the Slovakian part of the CDR, the highest share of gross value added in 2007, reached the sector of industry (21,4%), electricity, gas and water supply (17,6%) and wholesale and retail trade (16,9%). The main increase was reported in sector wholesale and retail trade and electricity, gas and water supply. In the Southern part of the CDR Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities are the second most important categories of employment with 30% of total employees. Among the Hungarian Danube Regions, this rate is a relatively low proportion. The sectors of Public administration and defence, compulsory social security; education; health and social work; other community, social and personal service activities; private households have a share of 17%, the lowest proportion among Hungarian Danube regions.

According to NACE classification, the largest Average Monthly Salary has been achieved in the following sectors: financial intermediation, electricity, gas and water supply and retail trade. There is a significant difference between level of wages in the region of Bratislava and rest of the Slovakian regions. The income level of the cross-border region is relatively similar: an average gross nominal monthly salary was 690,23 € in the region of Nitra in 2008, which is the third lowest value in comparison with other regions in the Slovak Republic, while average gross nominal monthly salary in was approximately 600 € in the region of Komárom-Esztergom in 2008. This value is much above the average in comparison to other regions in Hungary, and it is the second largest, if we compare it to the Hungarian Danube Regions. Furthermore, the economic crisis has substantially affected the incomes of the households, causing rise of unemployment, wage-rationalization by the companies.

The CDR's dominant agricultural potential can be found in the Northern part. The agricultural land area takes over 70% of the Northern (Slovakian) part of the CDR. The region is one of the leading producers of agricultural crops such as wheat, barley, corn, peas, sugar, tobacco, sunflower seeds and it is the largest producer of cereals, sugar beet and grapes. Animal production is focused on rearing of poultry and pigs. The Southern region of the CDR is originally a highly industrialised region, 26% of its area is being covered by forests, while the mountainous area is rich in primary resources (e.g. brown coal). Mainly limestone and dolomite are being exploited at the present times. The former bauxite and coal (100 million tons) occurrences are still being exploited, but their utilization is not economic and environmentally hazardous.
Turning to the question of unemployment, there is considerable difference in the change of unemployment rates in Slovakian and Hungarian part of the CDR. The unemployment rate indicator in the Slovakian part decreased from 23,1 (2001) to 8,8 % (2008), however, after the economic crisis this ratio reached again 20 % in 2010. The unemployment rate indicator in the Hungarian part reported no change from 2001 to 2008. In 2008, the employees worked mainly in the tertiary sectors, especially in retail trade and real estate business. The significant portion of workforce was employed in the industry sector as well.
3. The development of the cross-border cooperation

3.1 History and the process of its establishment

This part of the case study attempts to give a brief and quick insight into the development of the cross-border cooperation in the selected region. Pons Danubii, as an EGTC, was officially registered on 16th of December 2010 and it was the 15th EGTC in the European Union. The decision to establish the Pons Danubii EGTC was a bottom up initiative and it was made as a joint agreement of all the members. The main initiator of the cross-border cooperation establishment was the Mayor of Tata, namely, József Michl, who was the most active participant during the whole formation process.

The aim of the grouping is to facilitate non-discrimination and to provide equal opportunities for all the local institutions on both sides of the cross-border region, to enable and support the development of economic and social cohesion in the municipal territory of the settlements. It aims to reach this goal through implementation of programmes in the form of territorial cooperation co-financed by the European Union.

Actual members of the Pons Danubii EGTC are the following cities from Hungary and Slovakia: Komárom (HU), Tata (HU), Kiskerbér (HU), Oroszlány (HU) and Komárno (SK), Hurbanovo (SK), Kolárovo (SK). However, an important regional city, Nové Zámky (SK), has decided not to join to the Pons Danubii EGTC because of the initial dilemmas about the questions: which city will be the leader of the grouping and where will be the office of the EGTC.
4. Organizational and institutional structure, operation

4.1 Structure and description of organizational units

The organizational structure of the cooperation consists of:

- **General Assembly** - consists of Mayors of member cities and towns
- **President** – nowadays it is the Mayor of Komárno
- **Vice President** – (s)he is elected by the General Assembly
- **Supervisory board** – it is elected by the General Assembly
- **Director** – it is Zoltán Barra
- **Secretariat** – it is responsible to the Director

In following paragraphs is each organisational unit of the Grouping briefly described. All information about competences of each organs of the Pons Danubii EGTC is taken from its Statutes. The Statutes were obtained via email request.

**General Assembly** is the highest organisational unit of the Grouping. It consists of all member cities and towns and it elects the President and the Vice President. Among its main competences belongs the ability that it approves Statutes and Conventions of the Grouping, which are the most important documents for the EGTC. Another significant competences rest in following tasks: it approves budget, long term program, every year operation plan and the annual report of the activities and management, it decides on the use of profits and payment of losses. It also decides on the cancellation, fusion or splitting of the Grouping and it decides on proposals to change the facts entered in the register. Furthermore it elects the President and the Vice President of the Assembly, it elects and dismisses the Director and determines the conditions of his employment, it votes and dismisses members of the Supervisory board and it elects and removes the auditor on the proposal of the Supervisory board.

**President** convenes meetings of the General Assembly where proposes The Rules of Procedure. (S) He represents the Grouping in relation to third parties in matters of the EGTC. Among his/her most important rights and obligations also belongs: (s)he takes care of the proper settlement of funds provided by members of the Grouping or third parties, controls their management and use, controls expenditure accounts, issues the authorization to conduct financial operations, approves proposals of conceptual, strategic contracts with third parties and their conclusion prior to signature by the Director, cooperates in the implementation of the decisions of the Assembly, monitors the performance of the orders as well as activities of the Director and the Vice President, cooperates with the Director on behalf of the Assembly, submits employers rights and controls activities to the Director. In addition the President performs other tasks entrusted by the Assembly or the Statutes.
Vice President substitutes the President in his/her absence. Vice Presidents rights and obligations are: (s) he cooperates with the President in relation to the management of the general activities of the Assembly, initiates and maintains contact with various organizations and institutions, develops international professional relations to deepen the professional activities of the Grouping, initiates parallel proposals for the Director and moreover, (s) he provides other tasks set by the Assembly or the Statutes.

Supervisory board is a control unit of the Grouping. Its main activities are: it reviews the annual accounts, annual report and the concept of the budget and it also submits its opinion to the Assembly. Moreover it controls the accounting and processing of other documents, warns the Assembly on the identified shortcomings and makes suggestions for their removal and submits to the Assembly a proposal for the removal of the Director. In addition it participates through its members at the meeting of the General Assembly with an advisory capacity and warns the Assembly on violated legislation, Articles of the Statutes of the EGTC.

Director is statutory authority who acts on behalf of the Grouping. Among his/her main rights and obligations belong: (s) he coordinates the implementation of the objectives of the EGTC, represents comprehensive legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management of the Grouping. The Director also coordinates enlargement of the EGTC, develops and prepares necessary documents, is responsible for bookkeeping of the Grouping in accordance with the legislation and prepares decisions in exclusive competence of the Assembly. Furthermore (s) he develops and implements the monitoring and controlling of the Grouping, monitors the degree of indicators performance contained in the projects, depending on their objectives. In addition the Director represents the cooperation within the acceptance of contractual rights and obligations in accordance with the Statutes and legislation, builds partnership, business interests in favour of the Grouping, manages personnel affairs, process agreements related to the admission process, negotiates employment contracts and agreements on work performance and related acts. (S) He also provides other tasks set by the Assembly, the Statutes or the legislation.

Secretariat ensures smoothness operation of the Grouping and provides tasks in accordance with the guidelines of the Director. Among significant tasks and responsibilities of the Secretariat belongs: it assembles budget of the cooperation, ensures compliance with legislation in the financial sector and in the field of accounting, it processes whole financial management of the EGTC and handles administration of the Grouping. Moreover it keeps a register of members and other relevant records, prepares meetings of the Assembly, provides technical and financial plans approved by the Assembly, performs financial and accounting operations of the Grouping and keeps records. In addition it oversees the cooperation economy in accordance with its budget, ensures the use of funds in accordance with the law and keeps records, provides substantive and administrative activities of the Grouping and registers a resolution approved by the authorities of the EGTC and methods of their implementation.
Since the establishment of the Grouping, the organizational structure has not been changed. The Director of the Pons Danubii EGTC is Zoltán Bara. He lives in Komárno, Slovakia. The working language of the Grouping is Hungarian. Use of the Hungarian language as the primary working language of the Grouping is determined by historical aspect of the cross-border region, specifically its linguistic and ethnic structure is dominantly Hungarian. Nevertheless, all the documents and brochures are published and printed in three languages – Hungarian, Slovak and English. Also the website of the Grouping is available in three languages.
5. Composition of the working organs

5.1 Description of employees

The total number of employees depends on the number of projects. It has 4 employees for full time job: three employees work in Komárno and one works in Tata. All of them are citizens of the involved cities. Moreover, the Grouping may hire additional professional experts in order to manage specific parts of the project.
6. Main activity areas/profile

6.1 Current projects and associated areas

The EGTCs is active in various types of projects that are created on the basis of members’ needs and possibilities to gain financial contributions. The aim of the Grouping is to enable and support the development of economic and social cohesion of the territory. Furthermore, the aim of the Grouping is to follow a non-distinction policy: local actors must have equal opportunities on national and cross-border level, thus it works with the issues like unemployment, mobility, information exchange and promotion of attractiveness of the involved territory.

The cooperation is involved in several activities:

- establishment of a regional web portal and e-Content development;
- production and broadcasting of general and thematic television programmes covering cross-border issues;
- ensuring bilingual flow, design and distribution of special publications;
- establishment of a Media Office supporting information flow, establishment of an information transmission system;
- delivery of marketing campaigns promoting ICT use with special attention paid to the disadvantaged population.

There are three substantial projects which were managed by the Pons Danubii EGTC. The next part of the paper analyses these projects, namely WORKMARKET, media project and information leaflets.

6.1.1 Workmarket

One of the principal projects of the Pons Danubii EGTC is the Labour Market Project: WORKMARKET (HUSK/1101/1.6.2). It was launched at the beginning of 2014 in Komárno (SK)/Komárom (HU) region. The project was implemented by the Pons Danubii EGTC on both sides of the border. The partner institutions are the following institutions: J. Selye University and the Labour Office in Komárno.

The initiative received funds from the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-Border Co-operation Programme (2007-2013). The total budget of the project was € 201 360 and it was divided in the following

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way: 5% own contribution, 10% state contribution and 85% ERDF contribution. The finances were divided into three parts. The Labour Office in Komárno received € 60 000; J. Selye University get € 74,000 and the Pons Danubii EGTC covered the costs of the project from the remaining funding of € 67 000.

**Table 2: Expenses for project WORKMARKET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget of the Pons Danubii EGTC (EUR)</th>
<th>Budget of J. Selye University (EUR)</th>
<th>Budget of Labour Office in Komárno (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total budget (100%)</td>
<td>67360</td>
<td>74000</td>
<td>59700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF contribution (85%)</td>
<td>57256</td>
<td>63155</td>
<td>50754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State contribution (10%)</td>
<td>6736</td>
<td>7430</td>
<td>8955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own contribution (5%)</td>
<td>3368</td>
<td>3715</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Director of Pons Danubii pointed out that the labour market in the region faces challenges and the implemented project has had a significant importance to the region. He also added that surveys will be conducted as well as databases and statistics are to be prepared in order to provide help for investors, employers and jobseekers. The training courses were designed on the basis of the current challenges and needs. Two job forums took place in autumn, one in Hungary and one in Slovakia. Mrs. Mária Poláčková, the Director of the local Labour Office, pointed out that they were happy to join the initiative since unemployment is one of the biggest problems in the region. The office was involved in the project in the following ways: offering requalification and training courses in order to help jobseekers to find new jobs. General courses will also be available in the framework of the project. The J. Selye University will focuses on monitoring the first phase of the project. An online survey is also being conducted and 1300 entrepreneurs are to be surveyed from Hungary and Slovakia. These surveys will find out the needs of businesses/jobseekers and the training programmes will be designed in accordance with those needs.

Facts and figures about the Workmarket project:

- 1 website designed for job seekers and employers
- 2 studies in Hungarian and Slovak languages on the current state of the labour market and development opportunities
- getting in touch with 400 businesses
- informing 250 000 people
- training programmes for 200 jobseekers
- 2 job forums organised in Hungary and Slovakia
- organization of 10 study trips
- total budget of the project is €201 360
The project is a new opportunity for the partners to establish cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. It will help them to reach their common goals in the field of cross-border labour-market cooperation. The projects' aim is to follow a non-discrimination policy so that employers and employees have equal opportunities in their own country and on both sides of the border.

6.1.2 The Media Project

Implementation of the media project started on 1st January 2013 and it lasted for 22 months. The project facilitated cultural development and the development of tourism. The reason for this is that the e-Content created the framework of the project which is available not only for people in the cross-border region but also for anyone else in the world. The main idea behind the project (HUSK/1001/2.5.2/0019) was to provide more information for the residents about the region. This was reached by the means of an online television channel. In other words, a large number of interesting events took place in the regions which were worth to be presented to the partner citizens, thus the Media Office ran by the Pons Danubii EGTC helped people to get to know and be aware about the importance and significance of the cross-border region and cross-border cooperation.

The project associate the local TV channels and it reinforced information and news exchange on a joint platform. This exciting initiative was launched by seven members of the grouping (Komárno, Komárom, Hurbanovo, Kolárovo, Tata, Oroszlány and Kisbéri) in cooperation with the town of Nové Zámky (Slovakia) and the village of Svodín (Slovakia). Komárno became headquarter of this project. This decision was influenced by the fact that the city lays in the centre of the region and because of its bilingual character, consequently, Komárno proved to be an ideal location for the production of bilingual video content. The Media Office was set up during the first weeks of the implementation in the Media House in Komárno. The equipment and the amenities of the Media House provided ideal conditions for editorial work and for the completion of related tasks. The meetings were held on the premises. The presence of other editorial offices in the Media House guaranteed that the PDTV had an access to the latest news in the region. The staff of the PDTV consisted of four full-time employees: a project manager, a Hungarian and a Slovak editor, and a system administrator and coordinator. There were three other people who took part in the completion of the tasks, to be specific, one in Nové Zámky and two in Svodín. The project managers had regular meetings 43 times.

At the first stage, a web platform was set up. The video contents were uploaded to this website. All project partners could broadcast equal slots on the main page. The sequence of video

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Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.
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Contents changed randomly. Most of the contents were subtitled so that they were available in Slovak and in Hungarian alike and some of them were even dubbed.

The staff of the PDTV produced five bilingual videos each week, which amounted to a total of 440 videos in 22 months. The total length of the videos content was around 4,000 minutes. Reportages produced by local television channels were also broadcasted by the PDTV. These local TV channels produced two videos a week, hence 176 videos were produced in total with a combined length of 1,700 minutes. All videos were uploaded to a central server. This central server played a major role, because it was not only a storage space for the PDTV programmes, but the participating local TV channels could download and broadcast the videos produced in other towns.

As a result, the project contributed to the increased permeability of the former borders. The short programmes on the channel, available both in Hungarian and Slovak language, covered a variety of local events. They were mostly news reports about cultural and other social events, but they also dealt with renewable energy sources as well as with the impacts of climate change.

The project drew people’s attention to the importance of environmental consciousness and to the need to preserve natural beauties of the region. The online television channel is available on the following website, http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/webtv/hu/. In order to keep a long-term contact with the viewers, the web portal can be followed on Facebook (facebook.com/PonsDanubiiWebtv) also.

After the termination of the project, the Pons Danubii EGTC will attempt to maintain the existence of the website for further 5 years.

Table 3: Expenses for THE MEDIA PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HUSK/1001/2.5.2/0019</td>
<td>Crossing borders by information in the Pons Danubii border project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total project budget</td>
<td>270 980,64 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 230 333,54 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget of the Pons Danubii</td>
<td>209 090,64 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 177 727,04 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget of the town Nové Zámky</td>
<td>28 940 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 24 599 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget of the town Svodín</td>
<td>32 950 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 28 007,50 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.
Facts and figures about the media project:

- cooperation of the Pons Danubii EGTC with 9 local TV channels from 9 settlements;
- 1 central editorial office with 7 employees;
- 616 bilingual programmes with a combined length of 5,700 minutes;
- around 650,000 website visits were registered during the project;
- 3 new web portals and e-content development;
- 1 regional database, 1 audio and video recordings;
- 1 annual multimedia reports.

Media project workshops and roadshows³:

The project was officially launched on 18th of April 2012, in Tata. Several municipal representatives and members of the local media teams also attended the event. There were 61 guests who represented 33 institutions. The opening ceremony took place at the municipal hall of Tata.

Six workshops were organized in the framework of the project. The first one was held on 8 and 9th of November 2012 in Nové Zámky. Another workshop took place in Svodín on 26th of April 2013. The number of attendants was around 20 and 27. The remaining 4 workshops were organized by the Pons Danubii EGTC. The third one took place in Komárno on 29 and 30th of April 2013 with 22 attendants and in October 2013 the media representatives met three times.

Moreover, PDTV organized three roadshows in order to promote the channel among people. These took place at popular festivals so that a large number of people could see them. The stand of the Pons Danubii EGTC could be visited at the Komárno-Komárom Days Festival in April in 2012 and 2013 too, where the PDTV was promoted with videos, printed PR materials and free gifts. The third Media Roadshow was held on 17th of October 2013 at the national Tourist Destination Management Conference in Tata. What is more, PDTV newsletters were sent out to local media in order to draw attention to the project. Brief information in three languages was also designed, in which the participants and the main aims of the project were described. The project was also promoted with a roll-up as well as in TV commercials and radio advertisements. Moreover, there were numerous printed media appearances. All partners made free gifts, which were distributed at a number of events in order to promote the project.

The closing conference of the project took place on 30th of October 2013 in Komárno in the great hall of the Officers's Pavilion.

³ Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.
How the media project can be linked to other initiatives?

While producing video materials, special attention was paid to the production of content that can also be used in the long run. These are videos that do not necessarily cover the latest events but introduce and promote the values of the region. Several films focusing on gastronomy and tourism were produced, which were later used in the framework of other initiatives as well.

Furthermore, QR map of a town was designed for the first time in the region which involved information about the local space. With the help of this new tool, the town centre of Komárno is promoted and introduced in a new and modern way. 22 QR codes help the visitors to receive more valuable, fast and useful information about the town's sights. The codes can be easily scanned with smart phones. After scanning the specific QR code, information, pictures and videos are displayed on the screen about the specific sight/place in three languages. Visitors can scan the codes right on the spot and get useful information, including the PDTV videos.

Another interesting project of the Pons Danubii EGTC was Komárom-Komárno-Kolárovo Cycle Path.4

The application for grant to finance the construction of cycle path between Komárno and Kolárovo was submitted by the Pons Danubii EGTC in partnership with the Fort Monostor Non-Profit Ltd. in Komárom, Hungary. According to the plans the new section will be built between the river Váh and the town of Kolárovo. It will be 17.324 kilometres long. Another 2.2-kilometre-long new section will be constructed around the forts in the neighbouring Komárom, Hungary. 85% of the investment, around €2.6 million, will be covered from the EU funds in the framework of the cross-border cooperation programme. 10% will be financed from state subsidies and the municipalities will have to provide 5% in the form of own contribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Expenses for project KOMÁROM-KOMÁRNO-KOLÁROVO CYCLE PATH</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pons Danubii</strong> (Lead partner)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total budget (100%)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ERDF contribution (85%)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>State contribution (10%)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Own contribution (5%)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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In the framework of the project, new sections of cycle path will be built both in Komárno and Komárom, which means that the paths will be connected to the Vienna-Budapest section of the

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4 Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.
Atlantic-Black Sea EuroVelo 6 route that is the main aim of the project. The project was elaborated in accordance with the development plans of three towns and in line with the cycle path development plan.

It is also aimed at the reconstruction and further improvement of the existing cycle paths. The reason for this is that the low quality of some of the existing routes hinders dynamic tourism development in the region. The quality of the routes must be improved in order to generate appropriate tourist environment for bicycle tourism. The beauty of the nature along the Váh and the Danube rivers provides a unique cycling experience for all.

6.1.3 Information leaflets

Specific type of project was implemented with the aim to promote and inform through leaflets. Leaflets were made in three languages – English, Slovak and Hungarian, thus every citizen of the region can have an easy access to information. Most leaflets contain QR codes, which can be used by smartphone or tablet and they provide complete information about various attractions, interesting places and objects in the area. During the next few pages, three leaflets are presented to the readers about the local wineries; about local cultural and tourist attractions in Komárno; and about tourist cycle routes of the region.

This leaflet gives information about tasty and savoury wines that are produced in the region bounded by the cities of Komárno, Štúrovo and Strekov village. Unique soil composition and the traditional methods, which are used in the production process, originate a unique quality and taste of these wines. The leaflet gives brief information about the most important wine cellars of the region. This information is important because local wine production has its centuries old tradition and history, thus local wineries may generate capacity for tourism.
Figure 5: Winery in the Komárno region (Leaflet)

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Winery in the Komárno region. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC.
The second leaflet provides an overview of 22 attractions, cultural sites and places of interest for visitors of Komárnó. All these places are clearly marked on the map, which is a simple and transparent way of orientation in the streets of Komárnó. Among the most significant attractions are the New fortress, the Old fortress, European courtyard, the Evangelical Church, the Danube museum, the Statue of Franz Lehár, the Elisabeth Bridge and the Jókai Theatre.
Figure 7: Cycle paths in Komárno and its surroundings (Leaflet)
Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Cycle paths in Komárno and its surroundings. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC.

The last leaflet published by the Pons Danubii EGTC provides information about tourist cycling routes in Komárno and its wider surroundings. 17 cycle paths are marked on the map with their brief description. Each route is identified by its unique number, level of difficulty, place of its beginning/end, overall length and a list of attractions and objects of interest that are located on the route. Therefore, this leaflet provides a complete overview for all bicycle lovers.
7. Management, budget (incomes/expenses)

7.1 The cross-border cooperation's economy

In the Pons Danubiis Statutes is stated that the cooperation is a legal person under the law of EGTC. It can acquire rights, assume obligation, acquire movable and immovable property and be a party to proceedings before courts and other authorities. Therefore, the cooperation has its own budget and own budget plan.

Individual projects are financed through own contribution and from the taken loans. After completing the project, funds are reimbursed by the European Union. The time gap between the outlay and reimbursement usually takes one year which might cause some financial problems, nevertheless, the organization has managed to operate with surplus which helps to overcome the gap between own contribution and reimbursement.

Incomes of the cooperation consist from:

- deposits and membership fees (membership fee is 0.50 EUR per capita);
- incomes from economic and business activities after taxation (incomes from events, advertising activities and own activities);
- donations or contributions from individuals and legal entities;
- heritage;
- financial support from the State;
- funds received through grants;
- contribution of funds;
- other incomes.
8. SWOT-analysis

This chapter aims to summarize the research and investigation of the case study. The recapitulation of the acquired and obtained information is done through SWOT analysis, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are enumerated.

Strengths (S)

- Functional organization of the grouping, the Pons Danubii EGTC is active in several areas of interests what is reflected in developed and future projects.
- Ability to find a consensus among member cities. It is an enormous advantage of this EGTC because of its low number of members, hence communication and exchange of information and/or interests between the stakeholders is faster, clearer and easier.
- Flexibility in additional employment, use of managers and experts on individual projects. The organization is able to quickly hire specialists for unique project parts.
- Agreed scheme by individual members is € 0,50 per capita. This amount provides significant part of the budget and it secures the organizations performance without difficulties.
- All employees have university degree and years of experiences. Employees of the organization are well educated professionals and specialists.
- Historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic relations in involved cities and towns. Common historical feature makes the communication and negotiations between partners much easier.
- All information materials about the EGTC outputs, like brochures, leaflets and articles on the website are written in three languages (English, Slovak and Hungarian). It is thoughtful for both nationalities and potential tourists to provide them with the same quality and amount of information.

Weaknesses (W)

- Different conditions and opportunities in individual cities. Each city and town that is a member of the Pons Danubii EGTC has its own investment plan and development visions.
- Political influence on the performance of the organization. It is natural that every voted representative wants for his settlement the highest possible investments.
- Dependence on external financial sources. The development depends on contribution from European funds and other sources.
- Problematic perception of the grouping’s name by the citizens. The name of the Grouping, Pons Danubii, is in Latin language and it means 'bridge over the Danube'.

Nevertheless, it would be much easier and more understandable for the local citizens, if the name of the Grouping was in English or in Hungarian language.

- Problematic perception of the groupings by the Slovak authorities. According to the Director of the EGTC, perception of the EGTC is different in Slovakia and in Hungary. The problem lays in the fact, that the Slovak authorities have fewer experiences with these kinds of co-operations than the Hungarian ones.

**Opportunities (O)**

- New project calls for EU funds for the period 2014-2020. New investment period will bring new possibilities for new development projects.
- The possibility to apply for subsidies from the regional development agencies in Slovakia.
- Potential expansion of the Grouping by the city of Nové Zámky. With membership of Nové Zámky, the Grouping’s budget will be profoundly extended.

**Threats (T)**

- Different approaches of state administration in Slovakia and Hungary. Their future non-cooperation would bring unnecessary obstacles for the EGTC.
- Competition from a large number of similar cross-border groupings in the region which can reduce the success of project calls. The number of EGTCs and other forms of cooperation on Slovak and Hungarian cross-border region is high.
- Higher number of members can lower the flexibility of the decision making process. Actual number of members is convenient. In case of its progressive expansion, the cooperation and communication will be more and more difficult because more voices have to be heard.
- Future negative economic prognosis of members can limit either the cross-border cooperation or the financial possibilities of the Grouping. Thanks to the persistent world economic crisis and negative demographic trends, the amount of membership fees will progressively decrease.
9. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

This chapter attempts to inform the reader about the future plans and goals of the Grouping. The Pons Danubii EGTC plans to undertake several future plans and projects in the area of tourism. These ambitions are the following, construction of cycle path between the city of Komárno and the village of Čičov, it will expand the existing cycle path network in the area. The new cycle road will provide new possibilities for relaxation and recreation either for the local residents or for other visitors and tourists. The next plan is the cycle paths across Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Topoľníky and Kolárovo, Building cycle route between Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Topoľníky and Kolárovo will extend the existing cycle network. Importance of this project is that the implementation of this project will link all the large Slovak cities of the region with cycle routes. The third future cycle plan is the promotion and development of tourism in the whole area. One of the main goals of the Grouping is to be engaged in tourism, i.e. to make the region attractive and to attract tourists. One possibility for achieving this goal is the establishment of a tourist organization, which would present attractions and interesting sights in each member city and town for all potential tourists.
10. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation

Unique feature of this Grouping lays in common history. This aspect is reflected in common culture, traditions, language, shared values and mutual understanding. That's the reason why the Pons Danubii EGTC works properly and can achieve agreements despite of different political opinions.
11. Summary

The object of this case study was the cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary. Specifically, the Pons Danubii EGTC was chosen as a valuable example of cross-border cooperation which needs to be profoundly investigated as a valuable source for important information about cross-border cooperation, cross-border projects/programs/activities. The aim of the case study was to offer knowledge through SWOT approach.

Unique feature of this Grouping is determined through the common history of the region, and it substantially contributes to its effective functioning and management. This aspect is reflected in common culture, traditions, language, shared values and mutual understanding. The aim of the grouping is to facilitate non-discrimination and to provide equal opportunities for all local institutions on both sides of the border region. Their further goal is to enable and support the development of economic and social cohesion in the municipal territory of the settlements.

Pons Danubii EGTC is one of the most active Groupings and it has organized and initiated several successful cross-border projects. The most important projects are the following: workmarket with the aim to reduce unemployment and help to people to find suitable employment, budget was 201,360 EUR; media project with the aim to link the local medias and TV Channels and it established a Pons Danubii TV, the budget of this project was 270,980.64 EUR; Komárom-Komárno-Kolárovo cycle path with the aim to construct a cycle route and to incorporate this region into a wider cycle network, the budget of the project was 2,595,486.84 EUR; publishing of information leaflets with the aim to inform the local people and tourists about local wineries, cycle routes and tourist attractions in Komárnó and its surroundings.

Projects for the nearest future are: a cycle path between Komárno and Čičov; Cycle paths across Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Topoľníky and Kolárovo; Promotion and development of tourism in the whole area.
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Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Winery in the Komárno region. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC.


13. Annex

Figure 8: Pons Danubii EGTC organization structure
Source: Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.
Crossing the borders

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1. Introduction

Euroregions play an essential role in the current regional policies of the European Union, aimed at developing cross-border cooperation and reducing the frontiers’ administrative barriers through addressing various challenges in terms of economic and social development, environment, public health, safety, security and mobility.

The key role of euroregional actions include economic policy, spatial planning, transport or even environmental issues, mainly depending on the general frame provided by the national authorities (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010).

The European Frame-Convention on the Cross-Border Cooperation of Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980) enhanced the possibilities for cross-border cooperation following the euroregional pattern, as well as the constitution of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). Overall, this had an important role in fostering cross-border cooperation in Europe. The evolution of the European model concerning the value of the regions was marked by the Maastricht Treaty (1992), thus giving a hope that the regional dimension will play a very important role in the process of European integration. Currently, there are Euroregions created between member states of the EU, and between members and non-members of the EU (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010). The EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 revealed the necessity of adopting additional organisational actions, as well as new instruments in order to achieve efficient cross-border cooperation between EU and non-EU countries.

Euroregions lying at the country’s borders are implementing three macro-regional strategies promoted by the European Council: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region.

The Euroregions emerged through intense Western European cross-border collaboration had as triggering factor trans-frontier polarisation. On Romania’s western frontier, the established three cross-border cooperation initiatives show distinct particularities (Săgeată, 2014):

- The bipartite Bihor–Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion between Romania and Hungary (inside the EU framework) is based on the Oradea–Debrecen cooperation axis. It is an outcome of the fragmentation of the Carpathian Euroregion, which is too large and shows little viability.
- The tripartite Danube-Kris-Mureș-Tisza Euroregion (DKMT) between Romania, Hungary, and Serbia relies on the Timișoara–Szeged–Novi Sad cooperation axis. It includes an approximately equal territory from all three states and despite the fact that the Euroregion is based on the EU’s external border, it stands out as functional cooperation.
- The bipartite Middle Danube–Iron Gate Euroregion between Romania and Serbia also lies on the EU’s external border. The homogeneous natural potential and the imperative necessity to preserve the rare and endemic ecosystems are the driving forces and factors that make the cooperation viable.
DKMT Euroregion reflects the relationships between the involved countries, namely, Romania and Hungary, as EU members, and Serbia as a candidate country for EU membership, through the economic dynamics of the three countries on one hand and the EU integration factor, on the other. This cooperative attitude guarantees the further development of economic cooperation in the cross-border region. The example of DKMT reveals the role of euroregions in developing own projects in cross-border cooperation also outside of European and international programmes.

This case study attempts to enlighten the importance of euroregions and their cooperative attitude and tendency in Europe. The study investigates the geographical confines of the region; the development of cross-border cooperation, its organisational/institutional structure, its activity and future plans. Moreover, the case study identifies the uniqueness of this cooperation and evaluates the selected Euroregion through a SWOT analysis, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are highlighted.
2. The development of the cross-border cooperation

Economic development in the border regions reflects the particularities of the involved countries. The Romanian-Hungarian area is mainly an important agricultural zone, to which other economic branches, especially secondary sector, are added; for example industrial machinery, processing of raw materials from local quarries (e.g. sand, gravel, and clay), and production of bricks, roof tiles, and concrete structures. On the Romanian side, the secondary sector is particularly developed in economic branches like construction, textile manufacturing (Timiş County), production of soft beverages (Oradea) and beer-making (Satu Mare). Recently, the packaging industry, which aims to prepare goods for shipment to the western markets, has greatly developed (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

In the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border area, there are three border crossing points by road and one by rail which create favourable conditions for a large number of businesses and enterprises to be opened on both sides. Moreover, the area has a high agricultural potential pending full exploitation, thus there is a significant availability of labour force, i.e. Romanians (mainly belonging to the Hungarian ethnic group) who find employment across the border in Hungary or there is a common cross-border commercial commuting as a result of the low prices of products in Hungary. However, there are several factors slowing down the economic development of the area, such as: centralisation of states and bureaucratic procedures, oversized trade sector, high percentage of roads in need of modernisation, differences in educational and health care systems. In some economic sectors, such as transport and telecommunications, in which Hungary has a clear advantage, the different policies and priorities of the governments end up fostering strategic competition (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

In the Romanian-Serbian cross-border area the economic structures point to rather interdependence than competition. The agricultural sector is predominant in the Romanian border area. In the industrial sector, the metallurgical and chemical industries stand out along with prefabricated constructions, textile products, detergents, and food. Recently, the electronics and technology sectors have been gaining ground. Small and medium-sized enterprises account for a little over than 40% of the total number of enterprises. Within the tertiary sector, branches like tourism, banks and trade stand first, especially in the Caraş-Severin County. On the Serbian side, the agricultural sector experienced a drastic loss of workforce after the Yugoslav Wars (1991-1995). The industrial sector employs about 30% of the workforce and the trade sector about 9%. The main employment fields are construction, education, transport, postal services, communication, social services, catering, and tourism. The greatest increase in employment was registered in the construction sector. Following the NATO bombings (1999), Serbia’s transportation network was profoundly affected within the study area as well. However, it has maintained its waterway transportation potential and two main harbours in Novi Sad and Pančevo. On the Romanian side, the transportation network
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includes over 1,000 kilometres of railway (together with Bucharest-Timişoara-Jimbolia and Bucharest-Timişoara-Stamora Moraviţa international lines), the European motorways E4 and E70 (Trieste-Belgrade-Porţile de Fier), four border crossings, the Timişoara international airport, access to the system of channels along the Danube and Bega rivers and Moldova Veche, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, and Orşova harbours (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011; Sâgeată, 2014).

Thus, the economic state of the Romanian-Serbian border region has a high level of training of human resources and urbanisation, relatively low unemployment rate and great investment potential in the agriculture, tourism and services. On the other hand, as a consequence of the Yugoslav Wars, several economic imbalances occur such as: the closing down of several cross-border micro-businesses due to the embargo, illegal trafficking, shrinking population (especially in Romania), and the reduction of industrial production due to the economic re-organisation.

The Hungarian-Serbian cross-border area reveals some discrepancies in terms of economic development and transport infrastructure on the side of Hungary, even though the municipalities located in the Serbian border area are among the most developed ones in all of Serbia. The main causes of these disparities are related to the socio-economic transformation experienced by Hungary over the past almost twenty-five years, such as privatisation in the 1990s and modernisation of the Hungarian industry relying on foreign investments and investors.

In the primary sector (threatened by the ageing of population in the countryside), Serbia employs 29.5% of the workforce in wine and dairy production, whilst in the secondary sector, the relative majority of the workforce (43.8%) is employed in the light as well as the mining industry. In the tertiary sector, retail (large shopping centres) are to be mentioned on the Hungarian side, and on the Serbian side there is transport (4.7%) and tourism (1.5%), which are both related to the exploitation of thermal resources (three spas, the most important in Kanjiza) and to hunting activities (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

An important aspect of the cross-border area is commuting for commerce (e.g. for shopping and gas supply in Hungary) and/or private services (e.g. for dental care, less expensive in Serbia). In terms of infrastructure, there are good connections in the transport sector linking Belgrade to Budapest through the motorway and along the navigable rivers of Danube and Tisza. One of the recent infrastructure projects within this cross-border area is the construction of the road connecting Ásotthalom and Backi–Vinogradi, which opens a new border crossing point between Hungary and Serbia (2007-2013 Hungary Serbia IPA CBC¹). Some of the future projects are aimed to build new transport lines, to reopen of the Szeged-Timişoara railway crossing through Vojvodina, and to recognise the Tisza River as level IV European navigable line.

After the fall of the communist regime, the democratic leadership of Romania and Hungary gave new momentum to the endorsement of agreements and documents on cooperation and

¹ http://www.territorialcooperation.eu/frontpage/show/20211
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partnership, especially in the cross-border area. As a result, starting from 1991, a set of agreements were signed aimed at establishing an “open skies” regime and to open new border crossing points, extradition and the protection of investments as well as the abolition of double taxation. Following the new agreement on air traffic (1995), on September 16th 1996 a framework treaty on the mutual understanding, cooperation, good neighbourly relations, and the renewed exchange of information was endorsed. Subsequently, a series of other agreements were implemented between 1996 and 1999, e.g. cooperation on public records, fight against terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking, privatisation, development of military relations within the framework of the Vienna 1994 Document - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), notification in the event of nuclear incidents, environmental protection, establishment of a joint peace-keeping force and cooperation in the fields of education and research (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

On the Hungarian-Serbian border, there is a long-standing tradition of bilateral agreements ever since the beginning of the 1960s. The agreements involved the regulation of the movement of people and goods by road and rail, and of the control and demarcation of the borderline. In 1996, a protocol was signed that opened a new border crossing between Djala and Tiszasziget and also included the modernisation of the existing border crossing points, followed by an agreement on cooperation and reciprocal assistance in customs issues signed in 1998. Several agreements and documents on international partnership have been signed at all levels at the Romanian-Yugoslav/Serbian border. At the national level, the following stand out: the framework treaty of friendship, border relations, and cooperation between the two countries (Belgrade, September 19th 1996); the agreement on collaboration in the fields of research and technology (Belgrade, November 28th 1995); and the Programme of cooperation in education, science and culture for 1998-2000 (Bucharest, March 20th 1998). Moreover, a broader intergovernmental framework is to be taken into consideration, namely, the Sofia Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans which was signed on 7th of July 1996, involving several countries: Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Italy, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as the representatives of the European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Central European Initiative (CEI), United Nations (UN), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

At regional and local level, the bilateral cooperation agreement between Timiş and Csongrád Counties (signed in 1992) set the context of the cooperation protocol “Danube-Mureş-Tisa” (signed in 1997). Furthermore, the structure became “Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa Regional Cooperation”, following the entry of the Romanian counties of Arad, Hunedoara, and Caraş-Severin. Vojvodina administrative district adjoined through the protocol signed on May 23rd 2001. This cross-border cooperation initiative was followed by the bilateral cooperation
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between Satu-Mare and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Counties (2000), and other regional and local level partnerships.

Thus, the landmark of the establishment of Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa (DKMT) Euroregion dates back to 1992, when a collaboration protocol was signed between two counties. This event took place on September 10th, when the President of Csongrád County (Hungary), István Lehmán, visited Timiş County (Fig. 1). This document established the further economic, scientific, and cultural relations between the two administrative units. Two years later, in 1994, following the model of the Euroregion “Carpathia”, the authorities from Timiş and Csongrád Counties agreed on a protocol for the “Cooperation region Danube-Mureş-Tisa”.

Figure 1: The spatial and temporal evolution of DKMT

In March 1994, Timiş County council requested the agreement of the Local Public Administrative Department for the establishment of “DMT Euroregion”. To this, other counties had joined: Bács-Kiskun, Jász-Nagy kun-Szolnok and Békés Counties (Hungary), Arad, and Caraş-Severin (Romania), and the Independent Province of Vojvodina from Serbia (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at that time). The protocol set as main cooperation objectives the to create a climate of trust that would facilitate the social and economic development of the involved regions; to foster functional bilateral collaborations (between cities or institutions, especially between Romania and Hungary); and symbolic manifestations (economic or cultural days). Nevertheless, there were some difficulties hindering the development of this Euroregion, such as the different understandings of the individual, political and economic practices in the three border regions; the absence of an institutional framework for DKMT; and the disadvantageous status of Vojvodina at international level (due to the embargo on Yugoslavia). The public administration and the leaders of political parties agreed that cross-border

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2 http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/doc/typespace/frontier/images/BiotMichal6.gif
cooperation was a beneficial factor in achieving the economic development of the region (Crețan, 2006).

Following the request of Békés County, the indication of the Criș river basin was introduced in the title of the Euroregion. Accordingly, the name of the Euroregion became: “Dunăre-Criș-Mureș-Tisa” (DCMT in Romanian), Dunav-Kireš-Marоš-Tisza (in Serbian) and Duna-Kőrös-Maros-Tisza (in Hungarian). Furthermore, the member countries had established that the international name of the Euroregion must be Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa, abbreviated as DKMT. The official Protocol of this cross-border structure, signed on 21st of November 1997, in Szeged, identified as the focal aim and objective of the Euroregion “widening the relationships between local communities and regional authorities in the fields of economy, education, culture and sport, as well as cooperation for integration into the modern processes in Europe”.

The main target of DKMT is to enhance the economic and social development of the area by attracting international funds for regional projects and to access jointly resources that the national governments cannot provide for the area, especially under PHARE CBC (1996-2003), Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro (tri-lateral) Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2004–2006, Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, Romania-Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, but also through the Pact for Stability and other sources (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010).

Throughout its existence, the membership of DKMT Euroregion has changed from a maximum extent in 1997 (four Romanian counties, four Hungarian counties, and one Serbian province) (Fig. 2) to its current shape (two Hungarian counties, three Romanian counties, and one Serbian province), thus the Euroregion has passed through different administrative and structural changes. Three of the member counties, Hunedoara (Romania), Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, and Békés (Hungary) withdrew from the Euroregion between 2003 and 2009. Subsequently, DKMT currently stretches over 60 000 km² and gathers a population of 4.5 million inhabitants.

3 http://cjarad.ro/activitate/cooperare-parteneriate/3-euroregiunea-dkmt.html
2.1 The institutionalisation of DKMT

The head institution of the DKMT Euroregion is the Forum of Presidents that is composed of the Presidents of the County Councils in Hungary and Romania, and the President of the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The leadership of this institution is provided in turn, for one year. However, due to the mandate of the county council presidents (four years), formal relations are replaced by personal ones. A conclusive example in this sense is the Declaration of the Presidents of DKMT Euroregion, a supporting document of Vojvodina’s citizens, elaborated later, in the spring of 1999 (Creţan, 2006).

The progress of DKMT is shown in "Euroregio" magazine, which publishes the results and achievements of this Euroregion in three languages. The official language of the DKMT cooperation is English, and the languages used for meetings are Romanian, Hungarian, and Serbian. Cooperation should proceed as a result of the work of the specialised committee,

coordinated by a President (among the nine members of the Presidential Forum), in the following fields: economy, infrastructure, tourism, territorial development and environmental protection, socio-human issues, and European integration.

Due to the bombing launched by NATO forces on Pančevo, Novi Sad, and other economic centres of Vojvodina, DKMT suffered a significant slowdown in the years 1999-2000. During the crises in former Yugoslavia, Romanian and Hungarian support was limited to sheltering the refugees.

In the development of DKMT Euroregion an important role is played by the Strategic Plan for Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Cooperation, a document that is presently used to support further projects. The establishment of the euroregional Development Agency under the name „Society for Public Utility” (registered in 2003), based on the provisions of the Hungarian law, was an important step in the development of DKMT. Thus the decision-makers in the area considered that they stepped into a new cooperation phase, the cooperation stage, after having gone through the information exchange and the intensive information stages. Representatives of the Chambers of Commerce were constantly invited by the administrative bodies of DKMT to the meetings of the Forum of Presidents (since November 2003, the General Assembly) with the aim to ensure continuity in promoting economic development. In turn, the chambers of commerce signed a cooperation protocol in 1998 and organised economic missions, exhibitions and other events under the label of DKMT. The most recent achievements are the “Euro-regional Partnership for Competitiveness” (2007) and the inauguration of the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development of Historical Banat Region (2009) (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010).

The establishment of the DKMT Euroregion requires that strategic objectives are set on a dual geographical scale: at DKMT Euroregion level through cohesion and opening to Europe, and at EU level, into which the Euroregion is to be integrated. The Strategy identifies the objectives of three spheres (sectors) for the further development of DKMT (Fig. 3)\textsuperscript{5}:

- a multi-cultural Euroregional model in the human sphere;
- the Southeastern gate of the European Union, through the recognition of shared interests and an economy based on cooperation;

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\textsuperscript{5} Strategic Plan Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa, Szeged, 2000.
Moreover, the Strategy identifies several priorities and measures to be undertaken. The first strategic direction, i.e. increasing social cohesion in the DKMT Euroregion, has a general objective to identify the fundamental components of the Euroregional identity through the involvement of the local population in actions and processes aimed at the broadening of common information horizons (intended to bring about a better and deeper mutual understanding); the use of existing historical-cultural potential and cultural heritage, the better use of the tradition of co-existence of the various ethnic communities and a shared past; raising awareness of the Euroregional component of local decisions, promoting joint responsibility in the preparation and adoption of decisions that have a Euroregional impact; tourism as a way of enhancing social cohesion in the region. Thus, the proposed projects of the first strategic direction endorse:

- the establishment of a Euroregional news agency: an information centre and news agency focusing on the relationships in the border region and on increasing the effectiveness of the Development Agency;
- cultural events: music and other related activities aimed at bridging cultural differences and overcoming linguistic obstacles;
- publications on the geography and local history of the Euroregion: fostering knowledge of each other’s cultural, geographical or natural heritage;
- Euroregional photo album: providing an overview of the region along with its natural and cultural heritage, mainly architectural heritage of the ethnic groups in the region;

![Figure 3: The 4 “i’s” (information, innovation, infrastructure and interrelationship) for the integration of DKMT (Source: A Strategy for the Danube–Kris–Mureş–Tisa Euroregion)](image-url)
• development of e-democracy: seen as one of the most powerful and most flexible media targets providing information on the DKMT region;
• Euroregional youth centre: aimed at providing younger generations the variety of communities in the neighbouring countries in the Euroregion;
• cooperation in health care: improving the provision of hospital care for residents in the border regions;
• promotion of the Euroregion with regard to opportunities provided by tourism: marketing particularly suitable for the introduction of those spectacular attractions in the Euroregion that constitute the region’s image;
• preparation of a tourist map of the Euroregion (1: 300 000) having the following structure: natural resources for tourist industry purposes, protected natural areas, monuments and tourist centres, means of transport and accessibility of sites, technical and material resources in tourism (lodging capacity, leisure and treatment facilities, locations for recuperation);
• other components promoting tourism, recommended cross-border theme itineraries and regionalisation of the Euroregion for tourist industry purposes; tourist industry-related mobilising events (for the young, old-age pensioners and civil organisations).

Upgrading major road networks, promotion and harmonisation of cross-border development initiatives represent the second strategic direction. This initiative will be achieved through the following measures:

• developing components of the cross-border road infrastructure (e.g. rehabilitation of run-down cross-border roads and railways);
• providing support for the construction of new frontier stations and re-classification of the existing ones;
• fostering support for the development of air and water traffic in the region;
• encouraging the development of inter-modal traffic (RO–LA, RO–RO), terminals and logistic systems;
• offering support for the integrated development of modern telecommunications in the regions; improving access to attractive tourist destinations.
• According to the Strategy, some of the proposed projects refer to the following:
  • rehabilitation of the Budapest–Kelebija–Belgrade rail line which is a branch of the current Orient/East-Med Corridor;
  • rehabilitation of the Smederevo–Belgrade–Pančevo–Kikinda–Triple Border Point–Deszk-M43 road as well as the Kikinda–Jimbolia–Timișoara road included in the expressway category;
  • construction and development of the (Vienna–Budapest)–Szeged–Nagylak–Arad–Timișoara rail corridor (Lugoj–Bucharest–Constanţa); rehabilitation of the Timișoara–Moravica–Vršac–Belgrad rail line;
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- completion of the (Oradea–)Szeged–Subotica–Bácsalmás/peage railway/Baja–Rijeka, railway line;
- rehabilitation of the railway Újszeged–Makó–Nagylak–Arad;
- rehabilitation of the road and the railway Szolnok–Hődmezővásárhely–Sînnicolau Mare–Timișoara;
- rehabilitation of the road and railway bridge Magyarsanád–Cenad (H–RO);
- rehabilitation of the railway Sombor–Ridica–Baja (SCG–H);
- border crossing at the tree-border point–Kübekháza–Rabe–Beba Veche (H–SCG–RO);
- Nakovo–Comloşu Mare (SCG–RO);
- development of the Sarkad–Kötegyán–Salonta road and railway frontier stations (H–RO);
- construction of the Körösnagyharsány–Cheresig road and railway frontier station (H–RO), Lőkösháza–Curtici road border station (H–RO), Geszt–Ateaş road frontier station (H–RO), Elek–Grăniceri road frontier station (H–RO);
- building up the logistic system of the DKMT region; development of logistics centres – Szeged, Baja, Békéscsaba–Gyula, Novi Sad, Arad, and Timișoara;
- rehabilitation of the Begej/Bega Canal, Szeged port (on the river and artificial watercourses);
- rendering the river Kris navigable – upgrading of the Bőkény Dam;
- granting the River Tisza the status of an international waterway;
- construction of a dam at Csongrád in the interest of the safe navigability of the river;
- provision of the initial conditions of passenger traffic with destinations abroad;
- development of e-administration for enterprises;
- an internet-based system supporting continuous training for SMEs;
- introduction of a tourist card and an information system;
- developing elements of e-administration;
- setting up a system of tourist signs along the Danube, the Tisa, the rivers Kris, and Mureş;
- coordination of cross-border timetables (of bus and train services) via the internet;
- development of the trans-border cycling paths along the Danube, Kris, Tisza, and Mureş.

The third strategic priority refers to facilitating interregional economic relations and the region’s gateway role by means of the following measures:

- encouraging the utilisation of regional R&D products, especially in the SME sector, and the development of a cross-border innovation-transfer system;
- setting up a business information base instrumental in establishing the cross-border cooperation of enterprises, obtaining external resources and the efficient use of these resources;
- development of the supplier network, the co-ordination of the capacity of SMEs and larger enterprises/major investors;
- tourism industry-related cooperation between individual SMEs and between individual NGOs.
- Some of the proposed projects bring up the following:
- establishment of cross-border industrial parks, incubation units and innovation centres for enterprises;
- assistance with networking; support for the establishment of spin-off companies complementing universities;
- establishment of a seed production innovation chain; manufacturing rape-methyl-acetate (biodiesel) in the Euroregion;
- organisation of the international seminar “Initiatives for enterprises and local development in cross-border regions”;
- cross-border career practice and guidance for university and college students;
- raising awareness of history, culture, and especially business knowledge in higher education and at post-graduate courses;
- support for cooperation between chambers of business and commerce;
- establishment of a cross-border regional portal with capacity to provide economic information;
- an establishment of a system of SME information points in the DKMT region;
- financing the establishment of a Euroregional network of business and convention centres;
- working out and implementing joint incentive programmes aimed to attract investments;
- setting up a consultation forum of chambers;
- thematic business databases in electronics and the automotive industry;
- establishment of an e-market for enterprises in the DKMT Euroregion;
- designation of thematic itineraries (e.g. industrial tourism, visits to listed buildings, wine and gastronomic tourism, folklore, monuments and memorabilia from the belle époque, thermal, wellness and health tourism).

Joint nature conservation and environmental protection is identified as the fourth strategic dimension of the Strategic Plan. This strategic level includes joint protection and stewardship by cooperating in the management of the natural resources of the Euroregion and of cross-border environmentally protected areas; cooperation between the representatives of authorities of environment protection, environmental sciences and civil organisations; joint
development of small-scale environmental infrastructure (waste utilisation and sewage treatment) and development of eco-tourism. Some of the proposed projects refer to⁴:

- the joint development of the protected areas of the Selevenj Forest (SCG) and the Körös Brook (SCG–H);
- a project for the joint development of the protected areas of the Mureş Valley;
- a research on the exchange of experiences in improving drinking water quality;
- the reconstruction of the Horgoš–Martonoš catchment canal;
- the organisation of periodical conferences promoting on-going cooperation between experts on environmental protection;
- rowing along the rivers in the Euroregion (the rivers Kris, Mureş, and Tisza).

The aims of the cooperation are focused on developing and broadening the relationships among local communities and local governments in the fields of economy, education, culture, science, and sport; and on helping the region to be part of the process of European integration. Accordingly, the objectives of the DKMT Euroregion are: (i) cooperation that benefits all parties and established along the principles of democracy and European development policies in an atmosphere of mutual trust, (ii) the best possible utilisation of regional potential through cooperation and (iii) transforming, through increased, diverse and institutionalised cooperation, the Euroregion into an economic, political, cultural, scientific and innovation hub in Central East Europe in a Europe that is closing ranks as a response to the challenge of globalisation.

In order to meet these objectives, major tasks to be performed by the DKMT must also be identified. Hence, the DKMT must improve its competitiveness and the absorption capacity of the region by encouraging cross-border cooperation; support the implementation of coordinated development programmes that can improve the quality of life and the standards of living in the region and put an end to a peripheral existence arising from the border location, thereby laying the foundations for permanent and dynamic economic growth in the region; in accordance with the provisions of the Balkan Stability Pact and in other EU core documents, facilitate and promote – while preserving the legacy of multi-cultural diversity – the democratisation of the region. Moreover, the DKMT must foster, besides the institutionalised relations, personal contact between people from different regions; deepen democratic mechanisms; break down the existing and destructive prejudices amongst the people; and finally cease latent hostilities (A Strategy for the Danube–Kris–Mureş–Tisa Euroregion⁶).

Following the reforms, DKMT Euroregion was constructed as a two-part structure, one as an open consultative political forum, and the other as an operative working association with a registered legal-economic status. The second structure is a tool for cooperation across the

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⁶ Strategic Plan Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa, Szeged, 2000
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Borders and it was approved by the EU in 2006 - Banat–Triplex–Confinium Limited Liability EGTC (BTC-EGTC). The aim of the reform was to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation within and beyond the EU (Soós, 2012).

The Banat–Triplex–Confinium Limited Liability EGTC, initiated by the local governments of Mórahalom and Jimbolia, started on 10th of December 2006 because of the structural problems associated with the DKMT Euroregion. Subsequently, 37 Hungarian and 37 Romanian municipalities have joined; additionally a few self-governments from Vojvodina and municipalities from Bácska and Banat (would) take part. The cooperation was officially established on 11th of January 2011. The EGTC was established on the basis of the 1082/2006/EK EGTC legislative regulation of the European Union. The focal aim of the EGTC is to implement and develop cross-border cooperation programmes and projects co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, and/or the Cohesion Fund7, thus providing complementarity in terms of cross-border cooperation and financing with DKMT Euroregion.

The difficulties around the establishment of the EGTC shows the common problems along the peripheral borders of the EU: the EU’s EGTC regulation cannot be applied directly to non-EU countries in spite of the fact that the willingness of cooperation is present and ready. There are some conditions to be fulfilled in order to turn the local governments of Vojvodina into members of the EGTC. Moreover, it is necessary to involve interested partners from third countries and to pass a law in their national legal system that can permit the establishment of the EGTC. The non-EU member third country (Serbia) should conclude a cooperation arrangement because they can empower their authorities with that document to shape cooperation beyond borders (Fejes, 2013).

However, the existing differences between the border regions in terms of structural, political (e.g. clear definition of Vojvodina’s politico-institutional position within the Republic of Serbia; or membership and non-membership in EU/acquis communautaire), and economic divergences could turn into potential internal problems that can become obstacles in the efficient cooperation within DKMT. Beyond the political and economic differences, other factors may also represent potential negative issues with impact on the social and economic development of the Euroregion, namely the demographic imbalances (e.g. low population density, ageing of population, increased migration, etc.), the high number of employees in agriculture, differences in the educational and health care systems, the insufficient development of macro-regional and micro-regional transport infrastructure (mainly in Serbia and Romania). Moreover, the low level of coordination among the involved actors, the lack of communication and visibility (e.g. no functional country secretariats, outdated websites, reduced availability to communicate results and activities) could also negatively influence the

effectiveness and management of the DKMT Euroregion. Consequently, the political, economic, social, administrative, structural and/or managerial obstacles have deeply touched the cooperation, thus in the change/reduction of the number of the members.

Currently, due to the withdrawal of three member counties (Hunedoara, Romania; Jász-Nagy kun-Szolnok and Békés, Hungary), the socio-economic potential of DKMT Euroregion relies on three Romanian (Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Arad) and two Hungarian counties (Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun), as well as one Serbian province (Vojvodina).
3. Determination of geographical confines

Ever since the 14th century, both Romania and Serbia were under Ottoman rule. The province of Walachia, north of the Danube, became autonomous following the Treaty of Adrianopolis ratified between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (1829). In 1859, Walachia joined the autonomous province of Moldova, and in 1864 they formed Romania. Serbia had become an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire in 1817. The Russian-Turkish war (1877) led to Serbia’s independence, ratified with the Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878), while Romania’s independence was ratified a few months later at the Congress of Berlin. The border between the two countries was defined along the Danube, tracing the eastern section of the current boundary. Until the First World War, both Transylvania and Vojvodina were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During this period, the border between Hungary and Serbia run along the Sava and the Danube, north of Belgrade. In 1991, when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke up, the border with Romania was maintained, even without an official agreement. Although the border demarcation on the Serbian side is rather disarrayed, there are no disputes on either side (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

Currently, the Serbian municipalities directly bordering Hungary are Sombor, Subotica, Kanjiza, and Novi Knezevac, all belonging to the autonomous administrative district of Vojvodina. On the Hungarian side, the municipalities of Mohács, Bácsalmás, Szeged, and Baja belong to Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád counties. In the border area, 2.7% of population is registered on the Serbian side (291,123 out of 10,640,000 inhabitants), and 2.2% on the Hungarian side (221,450 out of 10,044,000 inhabitants). The ethnic structure of the population is 38.3% Hungarian in the four Serbian municipalities, where there is also a small Croatian minority (3%). The Romanian municipalities directly bordering Hungary belong to Satu-Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș Counties. The main cities are Satu-Mare, Oradea, Arad and Timișoara. The Hungarian provinces located in the border area are Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád with Nyíregyháza, Debrecen, Békéscsaba, and Szeged as main cities. The Romanian municipalities bordering Serbia are Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Mehedinți Counties. The foremost cities acting as border prefectures are Timişoara, Reșița and Drobeta-Turnu Severin. The municipalities on the Serbian side are located in the provinces of Vojvodina (northern, central and southern Banat) and central Serbia (Braničevo and Bor). The main cities are Kikinda, Zrenjanin, Pančevo, Požarevac and Bor. The ethnic composition of the population reveals a Romanian majority on the Romanian side (83% in Timiș County), and a Serbian majority in the Serbian (80% in central Serbia and 57% in Vojvodina). There are also Hungarian (17%) and Slovak (3%) minorities in Vojvodina (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

Within DKMT, the border between Romania and Hungary spreads out south of Csanádpalota locality (Hungary) as far as south of Nădlac in Romania, whence it overlaps with the River Mureș along 22.3 km to Beba Veche (Romania). The Romanian-Serbian border is demarcated between
Vojvodina Province in Serbia, and Timiș and Caraș-Severin Counties in Romania along Rabe (Serbia) and Beba Veche (Romania) localities towards Bela Crvka (Serbia) and Naidăș (Romania).

The border between Serbia and Hungary spreads along an east-northeast direction over 166 km. The borderline starts on the Danube River, near the junction with Croatia between the cities of Mohács (Hungary) and Batina (Serbia) and extends until it reaches Romania, 5 km southwest of Kiszombor (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

Cooperation in the border areas was supported by a variety of rationales which included similarities in the culture, language and history of the region; a willingness to join to the European processes; and the chance for faster economic growth. On the other hand, the differences in the public administration structures, the different national and political interests and the shortage of the financial sources were barriers of the cooperation (Fejes, 2013).

The Romania-Hungary border area is one of the most active in the central and southeast European region. The two countries have developed strong cross-border ties, at local and regional level, as they are included in two of the most active and developed euroregions of Europe: the Carpathian Euroregion and Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza (DKMT), which are currently the most successful Euroregions in the Balkan-Danube area (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

The protocol for the establishment of the DKMT Euroregion was signed in Szeged, Hungary, on November 23, 1997. At that moment, it was considered by the Presidents' Forum as the most appropriate structure for the coordination of activities. In the meantime, other specific structures of cooperation, between chambers of commerce, universities, cultural institutions, etc. appeared. Given that the DKMT Euroregion has changed its structure several times over its existence, in its largest extent (in 1997), it included four Romanian counties (județe), four Hungarian counties (megyék) and the Vojvodina Autonomous Region in Serbia. In terms of the size of its territory and its three main ethnical components (Romanian, Hungarian and Serbian), the Euroregion is fairly well balanced. The macro-territorial axes have three urban cores: Timișoara, Novi Sad and Szeged.

However, some difficulties are to be encountered in the cooperation with Serbia due to some structural, administrative and political mismatches. Moreover, while the Romanian-Hungarian frontier represents an internal EU border, which is highly permeable, the Serbian frontier, perceived as a line between the EU and the former Yugoslav space of much political instability and organised crime, is relatively hardly penetrable.

The region stands for trilateral cooperation among administrative units of Romania, Hungary, and the Republic of Serbia, which despite being very different in terms of territorial size, population, and economy, are nevertheless engaged in promoting the socio-economic development of the entire region. It is one of the most viable and functional structures of cross-border cooperation at Romania’s frontiers because, on the one hand, its three sectors are approximately equal in size, and on the other hand, have a minority presence on either side of
the borders. Not negligible either is Serbia’s future integration into the European Union, which will make DKMT an EU internal Euroregion (Săgeata et al., 2010; Săgeată, 2011).

The three compartments of the Euroregion are clearly polarised by their major cities: Timișoara, Novi Sad and Szeged. Each area, at the largest extent of the Euroregion, had a balanced mono-centric urban profile, with well-represented large and middle-sized towns (Arad, Reșița, Deva, Hunedoara, Petroșani in the Romanian part; Subotica, Zrenjanin, Pančevo, Sombor in the Serbian area; Kecskemét, Szolnok, Békéscsaba, Hódmezővásárhely, Baja, Gyula, Kiskunfélegyháza, Szentes, Makó, Kiskunhalas, Jászberény, etc. in the Hungarian part) (Tab. 1), as well as a significant number of small towns (Nancu et al., 2014).

**Table 1: The main features of the DKMT Euroregion at its largest extent (1997)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Timiș County</td>
<td>683 540</td>
<td>8 697</td>
<td>Timișoara</td>
<td>319 279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hunedoara County</td>
<td>418 565</td>
<td>7 063</td>
<td>Deva</td>
<td>61 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arad County</td>
<td>430 629</td>
<td>7 754</td>
<td>Kecskemét, Szolnok, Békéscsaba, Hódmezővásárhely, Baja, Gyula, Kiskunfélegyháza, Szentes, Makó, Kiskunhalas, Jászberény, etc. in the Hungarian part</td>
<td>37 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caraș-Severin County</td>
<td>295 579</td>
<td>8 514</td>
<td>Arad</td>
<td>159 074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMANIA (total)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 828 313</td>
<td>32 028</td>
<td>Caransebeș, Reșița</td>
<td>73 282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Autonomous Province of Vojvodina</td>
<td>1 931 809</td>
<td>21 506</td>
<td></td>
<td>85 903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERBIA (total)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 931 809</td>
<td>21 506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Bács-Kiskun County</td>
<td>534 000</td>
<td>8 445</td>
<td>Kecskemét, Baja</td>
<td>114 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Csongrád County</td>
<td>423 826</td>
<td>4 263</td>
<td>Hódmezővásárhely</td>
<td>30 640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County</td>
<td>399 000</td>
<td>5 582</td>
<td>Szentes, Makó</td>
<td>170 052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Békés County</td>
<td>392 000</td>
<td>5 632</td>
<td>Jászberény</td>
<td>47 019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUNGARY (total)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 733 483</td>
<td>23 922</td>
<td>Szolnok</td>
<td>29 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DKMT</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5 493 605</strong></td>
<td><strong>77 456</strong></td>
<td>Jászberény</td>
<td>27 727</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census 2011, Romania; Census 2011, Serbia; Nancu et al., 2014*
Romanian part of the Euroregion

Timișoara (population 319,279 in 2011) is one of the largest cities in Romania (3rd rank in the national urban hierarchy). Located in the Banat Plain on the banks of the Bega River and documented in 1177 and 1266, the city’s early development relied on its favourable position vis-à-vis the main commercial axes. In the Middle Ages, it was one of the main centres of resistance against the Ottoman expansion. Beginning with the 18th century, its development was connected with sewerage works on the Bega River and the introduction into the navigable circuit, but the city’s upsurge started in the second half of the 19th century, when it became linked to the railway (1857), the telegraph (1854), and telephone (1881); had lighting gas (1857), horse-driven tramway in 1869 and electric tramway in 1899. At the same time, the city’s cultural life got momentum, too: the first theatrical representations (1791), the first sections (1872 and 1874) of the future Banat Museum (1949) and starting with 1918, the Romanian language was being used in education and the press (Ghinea, 1996).

During the inter-war period, the economy continued to progress: new manufacturing units in the light industry, electro-technical, chemical and machine-building sectors, a trend pursued after 1945 and driven by the socialist industrialisation, associated with important fluxes of rural population coming to the city, which thus had to be enlarged and systematised.

Timișoara acquired a complex and diversified industrial profile, some of the main producers being UMT (technological, mining, metallurgical, equipments etc.); Tehnomet (agricultural tools, subsets for vehicles), Electromotor, AEM (electrical measuring apparatus), Elba, Electrometal, Electrotimiş, etc. (electrotechnics), Solventul (petrochemical items), Azur (lacquers and dyes), Romtensid (detergents), Industria lânii, Uzinele textile, 1 Iunie (knitweat), Guban, Banatim (leather and footwear manufacturing units, food units (Vlăsceanu and Ianoș, 1998). Many of these enterprises closed down after 1990. The city’s population tripled from 91,580 inhabitants in 1930 and 111,987 in 1948 to 334,278 in 1992 (Nancu et al., 2014).

Arad (population 159,074 in 2011) is the seat of the homonymous Arad County. The city lies on the banks of the Mureş River, 50 km north of Timișoara. Attested by documents as early as the 11th century (1028), Arad is one of the oldest urban settlements in the territory of Romania. The town had an eventful history: the Tatar invasion (1241), the Turkish conquest (1552), and the Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian period (1687-1918). Between the 2nd November and the 1st December, 1918, it functioned as headquarters of the first Romanian government of Transylvania.

It also stands out as an important commercial and cultural-scientific centre (Romanian School – 1721; pedagogical school – 1813 – among the first set up in Europe; popular school of arts – 1853; philarmonic orchestra – 1890), as well as an industrial town beginning with the 20th century (in 1909 – Marta, the first Automobile Plant, and UTA Textile Mill). After the Romanian Administration was installed in Arad (1918), the town’s industrial profile began diversifying:
1920 – Astra Waggon Plant; 1926 – Sugar factory; 1930 – Polyrom Oils and Lacquers; 1936 – Uzina Tehnică Arad electric light bulbs. In 1938, Arad was assessed as the most important economic centre of Transylvania and the fourth in Romania. After 1950, the first toy and watch factories in this country (Arădeanca and Victoria) were build and the population rose from 77 181 inhabitants in 1930 to 190 088 in 1992, which implied the building of new dwelling-places, mostly new apartment-bloc districts (Ghinea, 1996; Nancu et al., 2014).

After 1990, as industry was declining, Arad would diversify its functional profile, becoming the main hub of the road transport of goods in the western part of Romania, developing simultaneously its commercial, financial-banking and tourist sectors.

Reşiţa (population 73 282 in 2011), the residential seat of Caraş-Severin County, is the main polarising core of the Banat mountainous region. Situated in the centre of the Caraş-Ezeriş Corridor, alongside the Bârzava River, its development is closely-connected with the iron-and-steel metallurgy, based on local resources of raw materials. In 1721, the first foundry became operational, the first furnaces functioning in 1771. The metallurgical works were subsequently enlarged and updated, especially under the centralised economy of the communist period, when downstream industries were being developed, too: machine-building, metal fittings (Plastomet), and complementary industries, employing largely female labour force (garments factories – Confectii and Resiconf) (Dumitrescu, 2008).

The demographic evolution went hand in hand with the industrial development, being also dependent on it: from 19 868 inhabitants in 1930 to 96 798 in 1992, which implied planning and expanding the housing stock. After 1990, as the ferrous industry in general, and that of Reşiţa in particular declined, coupled with a demographic setback, the population turned to other sectors of activity, mainly services and tourism (Nancu et al., 2014).

Deva (population 61 123 in 2011) is the residential seat of Hunedoara County. The town lies on the left-hand side terraces of the Mureş River, in the contact area between the Poina Ruscă Mountains and Haţeg Depression. This old-standing settlement (attested in 1269) had developed around the fortress, a major strategic point throughout the Middle Ages.

With the time, beside its defence function, trading, handicraft, and cultural-scientific activities would be discharged. After 1950, it was industry that proved attractive (copper metallurgy, building-materials, wood processing, silk weaving department, food units, geological prospecting and exploitation, etc.). Just like in other Romanian towns, demographic growth and housing projects were intimately connected with industry. The post-1990 industrial decline entailed a demographic downward-trend, with people turning to other jobs (services and particularly tourism, as the town and its surroundings has a good tourist potential) (Nancu et al., 2014).

Hunedoara (population. 60 525 in 2011), together with Deva, form a conurbation of mutual functional complementariness. This old traditional centre (documented in 1265) developed
simultaneously with industry after 1884, when the first furnace of the Iron Works, the hardcore of the future Iron-and-Steel Combine Works, was being operated. The ferrous metallurgy, based on local resources (iron ore in the Poiana Ruscă Mountains and coking pit coal in the Petroşani Basin), engendered complementary manufactures (footwear, knitwear) that relied mostly on female labour force. The downside of the metallurgical sector made the workforce seek other economic areas, especially tourism (Dumitrescu, 2008).

_Lugoj_ (population 40,361 in 2011) is the second-in-size city of Timiş County. It lies in the homonymous plain on the bank of River Timiş. Documents attest it in 1242, when measures were being taken to rebuild the fortress destroyed by the Tatar invasion in the previous year. Raised to the rank of _civitas_ in 1542, the town became the most important cultural centre of the Banat (Vlăsceanu and Ianoş, 1998), stimulated by some illustrious learned men (Moise Peştişel and Ștefan Fogaşari), the formation of the first choir in Banat (1810), a theatre (plays in Romanian since 1842) and the establishment of some learning institutions. The town had an early industrial activity (a natural silk mill in 1904). Similarly to other Romanian towns, the post-1950 large-scale industrialisation drive added new branches, e.g. machine-building as well as the production of textiles, building materials, electrometal items, food and artisanal manufactures.

_Petroşani_ (population 37,160 in 2011) polarises the industrial-urban grouping of the Jiu Valley, including _Vulcan, Lupeni, Petrilă, Uricani_ and _Aninoasa_ totalling 120,670 inhabitants. It has a typical one-industry profile, namely, coke pit mining. After 1990, as this sector declined and there were few professional reconversion opportunities for people, the area turned into a deeply disadvantaged zone.

_Caransebeş_ (population 24,689 in 2011), lying at the crossroads of several old trading routes along the large corridors of the Timiş and the Bistra Valleys, the town became the second railway knot in the Banat. Having an old standing urban tradition (town status in 1556), Caransebeş represented an important centre of culture and learning (a 16th century Romanian school), only to decline after the Turkish invasion of 1658. It took as long as the latter half of the 19th century, when – being connected to the railway network – it succeeded to recover. Industry developed mainly in the years of the socialist economy, and involved wood processing (_Mocars Combine Works_), metal constructions (_Caromet_), geological prospections and exploitations, as well as food units. Despite the post-1992 industrial and demographic decline (31,878 inhabitants at the time), the town continues to be an important transport hub (rail, road, and air), tourist centre (cultural-historical, and starting-point for walks and hikes in the adjacent mountain areas).

The Euroregion’s Romanian part has also other local polarising cores with over 10,000 inhabitants: _Pecica, Sântana_ and _Lipova_ (Arad County); _Sânnicolau Mare_ and _Jimbolia_ (Timiş County); _Bocşa, Moldova Nouă, Oraviţa_ and _Oţelu Roşu_ (Caraş-Severin County), _Orăştie, Simeria_ and _Călan_ (Hunedoara County).
Serbian part of the Euroregion

The DKMT’s Serbian part is polarised by Novi Sad, lower in the hierarchy coming Subotica, Zrenjanin, Pančevo, and Sombor.

Novi Sad (population 341,625 in 2011), the residential seat of the Vojvodina Autonomous Region, is the second-in-size city in Serbia after Belgrade, the country’s capital. The city lies on the banks of the Danube, south of the Hungarian Great Plain. It developed around the fortified Petrovaradin city, and was attested in 1649. An important defensive centre of the Hapsburg Empire against the Ottoman expansion, Novi Sad would become the biggest Serbian town (18th-19th centuries), the cultural and political core of the Serbs who, at that time, had no national state on their own. After being integrated into the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867), the town was subjected to a policy of Magyarisation, its ethnical structure becoming a mixed one. From 1st of December, 1918, Novi Sad became part of the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the forerunner of the future Yugoslavia, and of independent Serbia since 2006. The city’s complex industrial profile, connected with the harbour, is based on the tertiary sector. The Serbs who returned home from the former Yugoslav republics after 1990 added significantly to Novi Sad’s demographic increase (from 179,000 inhabitants in 1991 to 341,625 in 2011) and implicitly to expanding its housing stock (Săgeată et al., 2010; Săgeată, 2011).

Subotica (population 141,554 in 2011), the seat of North Bačka District, lies in the proximity of the Serbian-Hungarian frontier. Its mixed ethnical structure is formed of a relative Hungarian majority (32,66%), followed by Serbs (29,86%) and Croats (9,18%). With a history marked by the Ottoman and the Hapsburg Empires, the city was part of Hungary until 1918 and of Yugoslavia until 2006. It was an important commercial centre and a railway knot in the southern basin of Pannonia. After 1990, when ethnic conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo broke out, Novi Sad was faced with large inflows of Serbian refugees from those former Yugoslav republics.

Pančevo (population 123,414, 2011), seat of South Banat District, lies on the terraces of the Danube and the Timiş rivers close to Belgrade (19 km). It is one of Serbia’s important industrial centres (e.g. oil refinery, air industry components, machine-building, chemical fertilisers). After the 1999 NATO bombardments in particular, industrial development brought about large flows of population to the city, mostly Serbian refugees from the other republics of former Yugoslavia.

Zrenjanin (population 123,362 in 2011). Situated in the east of Vojvodina, the city is the administrative centre of the Central Banat District. Likewise the other district towns, Zrenjanin is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural place, the outcome of its troubled history, a reality visible in urban physiognomy. The town has a complex industrial, services and cultural-artistic function, being also a long-standing well-known sporting centre.
Sombor (population 47,623 in 2011), the administrative seat of West Bačka District, was attested in 1340, known in the course of time for its commercial and cultural-religious functions. A multi-ethnic and multi-cultural place, the town’s rich history is reflected in its cultural and architectural heritage (Nancu et al., 2014).

Hungarian part of the Euroregion

The Hungarian part of the Euroregion covered a territory of 23,992 km² and gathered a population of 1,723,483 at its largest extent in 1997. It consisted of four counties: Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, and Békés; with the major towns acting also as residential seats: Szeged, Kecskemét, Szolnok and Békéscsaba.

Szeged (population 170,052 in 2011), seat of Csongrád county, is the biggest city and the main polarising centre of the DKMT Euroregion’s Hungarian part. Third-in-size in Hungary, the city lies on the banks of the Tisza, in a point of triplex confinium made up by the borders of Hungary, Romania and Serbia. An old city (documented in 1183) with a rich history, Szeged became a royal city in 1498; it was occupied by the Turks (1526-1686); then again a royal city in 1715, having later seen an urban progress connected with the railway network (1854) and the opening of the first industrial units (1869). Nowadays Szeged has a complex functional profile: industrial (important centre of the food industry, producing mainly some traditional items, e.g. paprika, or the piquant salami), a strong tertiary sector, and especially an academic centre. The city’s rich history, seen in numerous buildings, true monuments of art and architecture, represents a touristic attraction.

Kecskemét (population 114,226 in 2011), the administrative centre of Bács-Kiskun County, lies in the central part of Hungary located at an approximately equal distance (86 km) from Budapest and Szeged. Situated in the midst of a sand plain, the city discharges agricultural and commercial activities, the latter benefitting from the trading in agricultural products (mostly cattle and wine), the primary units set up to process them, representing the embryos of the future industry, having favoured the accumulation of capital, concentration of population and expansion of the housing stock. The city’s population increased from 8,255 inhabitants in 1700 to 43,240 in the early 20th century and to 57,327 after the Second World War, with the numbers doubling that same century. Kecskemét is also an attractive tourist destination for its monumental buildings (from the 18th and 19th centuries), museums, churches, etc. The main industrial unit is the Daimler-Benz factory for automobile components opened in 2012.

Szolnok (population 74,577 in 2011) is the administrative centre of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County. It rises on the banks of the Tisza River, a lowland region, at the crossroads of old commercial routes. Attested by documents in 1075, the town has had an eventful history and lots of influences seen to this day in its architectural structures (Săgeată et al., 2010; Săgeată and Persu, 2013). This urban settlement began developing and diversifying its functional profile
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after 1850, the population growing from 10 600 to 24 160 in 1900 and 34 000 in 1949, and twice as many in the years of socialist economy (up to 78 328 inhabitants in 1990/93), followed by a slight decrease as industrial restructuring set in. Owing to its thermal water resources the town became a tourist and spa centre (Nancu et al., 2014).

Békéscsaba (population 62 050, 2011) is the smallest of the County seats in the Hungarian part of the DKMT Euroregion. The city lies in the Hungarian Great Plain (Nagy Alföld), crossed by important transport axes such as country road 44 that connects Békéscsaba and Gyula, and high-speed railway line linking Budapest-Szolnok-Békéscsaba-Lőkösháza. Documented in 1330, it developed at a slow pace until the 18th century, when the first Slovakian colonists began settling in the Hungarian steppe. Being connected to the railway network, as well as the construction of the industrial units in the latter half of the 19th century were of great importance for the development of the urban infrastructure, which would be partly destroyed by bombardments in the two world wars. The period governed by a centralised economy contributed to a new, industrially based urban development, the town becoming one of Hungary’s main food industry centres with a record population of 68 000 inhabitants in the 1980s.

Hódmezővásárhely (population 47 019, 2011) in Csongrád County lies at the crossroads of some old commercial routes. It was founded in the 15th century through the merging of several villages. Destroyed by the Turkish invasions in the 16th century, the town would recover under the Habsburg administration, when vast hydro-amelioration works were undertaken, and with over 55 000 inhabitants in 1890, it was the fourth largest town of the country. Severely affected during the two world wars, it passed through a new development phase under the centrally based economy, when big industrial units were built, though later dismantled from the latter half of the 1980s on. Nowadays tourism proves to be an efficient alternative thanks to the monuments of the town and the thermal water resources nearby.

Baja (population 37 300, 2011) is situated in the south of Hungary. The second town in Bács-Kiskun County, it began developing under the Ottoman domination, being given town status in 1696. Under the Habsburg administration it had commercial and transport functions; with industrialisation coming relatively late, at the time of the socialist economy, when it was an important textile centre. Currently, it is engaged in trading, services, academic education, and tourism.

Gyula (population 31 679, 2011) in Békés County lies on the banks of the Crişul Alb River close to the border with Romania. It is a multicultural place, hosting the largest Romanian community in Hungary (2.3% of the town’s population) and an important Romanian school (Nicolae Bălcescu High-school). Documents attest this locality to 1313 as a military stronghold (fortified city), also engaged in trading, attracting a significant Jewish community, largely deported in the Second World War. At present, the town economy relies on tourism, having an interesting architecture and health spas for local thermal water therapy. Kiskunfélegyháza (population
30 640, 2011), in Bács-Kiskun County, is an important railway knot. It has a long history (attested in 1389). Its slow-going development was boosted by the Habsburg administration, which stimulated the building of monumental structures in the town centre, now a tourist attraction. Other converging localities, with 25-30 000 inhabitants are Szentes (Csongrád County); Kiskunhalás (Bács-Kiskun County) a major railway knot; Jászberény (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County) renowned for the Electrolux factory of refrigerators; Makó on the banks of the Mureş River (Csongrád County), an area rich in gas resources, lies at some 20 km from the Romanian border (Nancu et al., 2014).

In terms of population size, in the study area, Timișoara Municipium ranks first with 319 279 inhabitants. It is a strong economic and research centre. Second in line comes Novi Sad (341 625 inhabitants), capital city of Vojvodina Autonomous Region in Serbia, followed by Szeged, Arad and Sobotica (140 000 – 180 000 inhabitants each); Szolnok, Reșița, and Békéscsaba, Deva, and Hunedoara (50 000 – 100 000 inhabitants each). On the other hand, the small mountain villages of the Romanian part of the Euroregion are marked by demographic problems such as the ageing and migration of the population (Fig. 4).

In terms of ethnical structures, beside the cross-border minorities several others nationalities are found: Germans, Bulgarians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Roma. Cooperation relations are established mainly in the field of economy, the building of transport and communication facilities, environment, tourism, culture, education, health-care, civil protection, and defence against disasters.

Figure 4: The number of inhabitants in DKMT Euroregion at its largest extent (Source: authors)
4. Organisational and institutional structure, operation

The main decision-making body of the DKMT Regional Cooperation is the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the preparatory, coordinating and strategic decision-making body of the cooperation and is composed of the leaders of the regional public administration institutions. The full power members of the General Assembly (founding members and associated members) and other participants (permanent and case-by-case guests) take part in its activities. Yearly, on the last weekend of May, the Day of DKMT Euroregion is organised at the Triplex Confinium memorial at the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border. At such occasions, borders are temporarily opened and the General Assembly usually has a meeting on the spot.

The General Assembly elects the president-in-office for one year from among the presidents of the member organisations; the same person cannot be elected in two successive years, the rotation among the countries has to be taken into account. The president-in-office directs the organisation in the period between the General Assemblies, coordinates the activities of the Secretariat, and has to draw up the Annual Report about the activities of the cooperation and the implementation of the decisions made by the General Assembly.

The duties of the Secretariat are to carry out administrative tasks. It is constantly in relation with the member regions, contributes to the preparation of working papers, initiates and organises joint events, follows the programs of the European Union, prepares project proposals upon the decision of the General Assembly and implements projects. The seat of the Secretariat is the administrative seat of the president-in-office. The Secretariat has three delegated members: one Hungarian, one Romanian and one Serbian.

The Coordination Committee is a body consisting of one person per each involved country; actually, the vice-president of the founding organisation carries out the preparation of decisions as well as the preliminary coordination and keeps in touch with the DKMT Euroregional Development Agency Public Utility Company (PUC).

The workgroups prepare initiatives, projects, programs and recommendations in the different professional fields of the cooperation; they forward them to the General Assembly, and participate in the implementation of joint projects. At present, the DKMT Euroregion has ten workgroups addressing different issues:

- Economy, infrastructure and tourism workgroup;
- Urbanism, nature and environmental protection workgroup;
- Culture, sports, non-governmental organisations and social issues workgroup;
- International relations, information and mass communication workgroup;

http://dkmt.net/ro/index.php?bov=315831200921418
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- Catastrophe prevention workgroup;
- National health workgroup;
- Healthcare workgroup;
- Industrial park workgroup;
- Tourism workgroup;
- Agricultural workgroup.

The PUC was established by the General Assembly on 24th May 2003. The founding members of the General Assembly established the public utility company to ensure the implementation of the development aims defined in the deed of foundation of the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Regional Cooperation. With this measure, an economic entity having legal personality is created beside the political organisation of the regional cooperation, which is capable of preparing development tasks, drawing up project proposals, the management and implementation of projects. The PUC was jointly established by the eight organisations of the DKMT Euroregion. It plays an important role within international organisations as well: the DKMT Euroregion is a member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) since 2005. Currently, the Managing Director of the Development Agency PUC is Mrs. Eszter Anna Csókási, also member of the AEBR.

Some of the main achievements of DKMT include a common Strategic Plan of the Euroregion and several cross-border projects such as:

- Protean Europe: a cultural festival deploying a multitude of artists;
- Within and beyond the European Union: a series of economic development trade fairs and conferences for entrepreneurs and experts working in the field of agriculture, tourism, security policy, IT, and healthcare;
- Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC9): a four-language news portal that provides daily updates, helping the inhabitants of the region to find relevant information, though news and background information and in the framework of the radio service of ERIC own radio interviews can be heard on the website.
- cross-border thematic tourist routes: connecting to the culture of baths, art nouveau architecture, folklore and industrial memorials.
- joint flood prevention action group: for the possible prevention of floods occurring in the region, and for protection in case of danger. The rescue team has been equipped with the most modern sets of equipment, among others, a “mobile village” used for the fast removal of population.
- an international healthcare card: aiming to establish international division of labour among the hospitals and healthcare service providers of the region.

9 www.ericinfo.eu
5. Composition of the working group

Besides the General Assembly and the Secretariat, the DKMT Euroregion has ten workgroups and all of them address different issues\(^\text{10}\) like economy, infrastructure, and tourism; urbanism, nature and environmental protection; culture, sports, non-governmental organisations and social issues; international relations, information and mass communication; catastrophe prevention; national healthcare; industrial park; tourism, and agriculture. In 2003, the General Assembly established the Development Agency Public Utility Company aimed at implementing the objectives settled by DKMT Euroregion.

\(^{10}\) http://dkmt.net/ro/index.php?bov=315831200921418
6. Main activity areas/profile

The DKMT region was involved in many cross-border projects, using multiple EU funding sources (mainly through CBC PHARE programme before 2004, INTERREG programme and Cross-border cooperation programme Romania-Hungary 2007-2013). The projects were diverse and they covered the main objectives of the Euroregion: promoting tourism and environmental protection, infrastructure development, increasing the social cohesion of the region etc. In most of these projects DKMT was partner or coordinating partner, for others it acted as a territorial platform for initiating projects based on the needs identified in its strategic plan, thus using its limits for implementing their activities. Due to the fact that only some information regarding recent projects initiated by the Euroregion were available online, in this report only recent examples of projects are presented in detail. Information on implemented projects were gathered from the consulted literature and presented only as examples showing the diversity of initiatives in which the Euroregion was involved. However, the role of DKMT in these past initiatives was difficult to identify.

Romania and Hungary have developed strong cross-border ties, both at local and regional levels. They are involved in several euroregions such as the Carpathian Euroregion and Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT), the latter being the most successful euroregion in the Balkan-Danube area. Moreover, Romania and Hungary have benefited from constant EU financial assistance. Within the PHARE-CBC Programme (1996-2003), altogether 34 million euros were allocated for CBC projects to be implemented on the Hungarian side of the border and 28 million euro for the Romanian side. They played an important role in establishing some key facilities in the border area, including the modernisation of border-crossing stations and roads, as well as business infrastructure development projects. Environmental protection has also been an area of importance; projects in this field have mainly focused on water resource management, in response to the joint challenges identified.

Within the Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro (tri-lateral) Cross-border Cooperation Programme (2004–2006) nearly 32 million euros were allocated to Hungary (INTERREG), and nearly 20 million Euros to Romania (PHARE CBC), including national co-financing. Within the frameworks of the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, the European Union ensured further assistance in territorial cooperation to the border area between Hungary and Romania, continuing previous INTERREG IIIA and PHARE CBC 2004-2006 Community initiatives.

The cross-border cooperation between Hungary and Serbia started in 2003 within the framework of the Hungary-Serbia Pilot Small Projects Fund (PSPF) under the Hungarian National PHARE Programme. The main purpose of PSPF was to support people-to-people

actions and to facilitate institution-building projects of non-profit organisations along the Hungarian-Serbian border, as well as to prepare potential applicants for future INTERREG funding opportunities. Soon after, between 2004 and 2006, the Neighbourhood Programme Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro 2004-2006 within the framework of the trilateral Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro Cross-border Cooperation Programme was implemented. Through the Neighbourhood Programme it was meant to foster the cooperation along the external borders of the European Union, integrating external (CARDS) and internal (ERDF) EU financial instruments. The Hungary–Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme was implemented within the 2007 – 2013 European Union financial framework under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). The IPA instrument serves as a financial source both for candidate and potential candidate (among them Serbia) countries.

Moreover, the CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) is aimed at supporting the participation of the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The Stabilisation and Association process is the cornerstone of the European Union’s policy towards the region. It seeks to promote stability within the region whilst also facilitating closer association with the European Union. A key element of the SAP is a formal contractual relationship with EU in the form of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The SAP is designed to help each country to progress at its own pace towards greater European integration.

6.1 Examples of Recent Projects

Among the most important projects of the DKMT Euroregion are presented below: Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion and EuroRegional News Aggregator.

Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion

(http://borderless.dkmt.eu/project)

The project was implemented under the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 (www.huro-cbc.eu), and is part-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund as well as by the states of Hungary and Romania (Tab. 2).

The primary aim of the “Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion” project is to develop two, cross-border thematic routes. The project objective is to establish touristic routes that link the border regions together not only through their joint topics but also in a

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geographical sense, based on a common set of conditions, to enhance touristic potentialities. The implementation period of the project was 01.01.2011–30.09.2012.

Table 2: The sources of funds for the project “Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Fund ((ERDF + national co-financing)</th>
<th>Own contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DKMT Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza Eurorégiós Fejlesztési Ügynökség Nonprofit Közhasznú Kft.</td>
<td>183 935 EUR</td>
<td>174 535,92 EUR</td>
<td>9 399,08 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consiliul Judeţean Timiș</td>
<td>11 700 EUR</td>
<td>11 434,41 EUR</td>
<td>265,59 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>195 635 EUR</td>
<td>185 970,33 EUR</td>
<td>9 664,67 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: http://borderless.dkmt.eu/project)

The aim of the project was to gather the potential offer of the border region to taste and savour to gastronomy and historical themes of the regions. Each theme includes a shorter and a longer trip suggestion. Destinations, historical themes and overall gastronomy/wine tasting are presented in the brochures which can be found under the folder of documents to be downloaded from the project’s website (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6).

![Figure 5: Wine and gastronomy map of the DKMT Region proposed in the project](http://borderless.dkmt.eu/lang/en/ - the map can be found under the folder 'Wine & Gastronomy map')

In order to promote routes, the partners of the project utilise several different tools along with the development of a dedicated webpage. In the framework of the project, 110 000 pieces of brochures were printed in four languages and 3000 DVDs were produced also in four languages. Furthermore, a study tour was organised for journalists in June 2012 with the aim to advertise
the project and to attract and invite potential tourists to the region. Hence, representatives of daily papers and televisions from several countries were informed on the tourist offer, tasting and historical themes of the border region.

In August and September 2012, the information brochures were introduced at the following exhibitions and events:

- AGROMALIM, Arad (Expo Arad);
- XXII. Makó Hagyamafesztivál (22nd Onion Festival of Makó);
- Hungarikum Fesztivál, Szeged;
- Hegyaljai borünnepe (Winefest), Șiria;
- Bortér (Wine square), Szeged;
- Hagyományos kézművesek vására (Fair of traditional craftsman), Timişoara;
- Kelengyésláda, Timişoara.

The partners participated with the brochures and DVDs on the following exhibitions with own installations procured in the framework of the project:

- TT Warsaw, Warsaw,
- 45th International Fair of Tourism, Novi Sad,
- Főszezon, Budapest.

The closing conference of the project was organised on the 24th of September, where the project was evaluated as well as results and achievements were reflected.
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EuroRegional News Aggregator
(http://ernainfo.eu/index.php)

The project "EuroRegional News Aggregator" is implemented under the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 (www.huro-cbc.eu), and the project is part-financed by the European Union, through the European Regional Development Fund, by Hungary and by Romania (Table 3).

The main objective of the ERNA project is to offer and inform the population in the border region about cross-border issues and news, thus the targeted groups can directly receive news without border hindrances.

The website of the project (www.ernainfo.eu) provides news in various languages, such as English, Hungarian, Romanian, and Serbian. Broadcasted topics, news and articles are processed and formulated by a team of specialists from Romania and Hungary (Table 4). Implementation period of the project was from 1st of January 2011 till 30th of June 2012.

Table 3: The sources of funding for the ERNA project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Fund (ERDF + national co-financing)</th>
<th>Own contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DKMT Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza</td>
<td>183 662,50 EUR</td>
<td>174 400 EUR</td>
<td>9 262,50 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurorégiós Fejlesztési Ügynökség Nonprofit Közhasznú Kft.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutul Intercultural Timişoara</td>
<td>107 787,85 EUR</td>
<td>105 600 EUR</td>
<td>2 187,85 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>291 450,35 EUR</td>
<td>280 000 EUR</td>
<td>11 450,35 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: http://ernainfo.eu/)

Table 4: Some examples of DKMT news updated on the project's website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DKMT News</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Romanians injured in the accident in Hungary have been brought to Timișoara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic - 06-09-2013 23:00:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three people injured in the accident that took place in Hungary at the end of last month have been brought in the country – two men and a little girl, all seriously injured but stable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The motorway still keeps us waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic - 20-06-2012 08:14:07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hungarian authorities have suspended the construction works of the Makó-Nădlac motorway connecting Romania with the west.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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DKMT News

| Water is distributed at MÁV stations | Traffic - 19-06-2012 08:10:03 |
| Water is distributed from today at large railway stations because of the extreme heat | |
| Summer railway timetable in Hungary | Traffic - 18-06-2012 08:25:40 |
| Trains run in line with the summer timetable from 16 June, it will have the largest significance for railway services around the Balaton. | |
| More people fly | Traffic - 17-06-2012 08:17:06 |
| The number of travellers using air-lines slightly increased in Romania last year. | |
| Traffic restarted on one lane on the Csongrád road | Traffic - 16-06-2012 08:15:38 |
| On the Szeged exit section of the Csongrád road, connecting the town with the M43 motorway, reconstruction works still continue, therefore the traffic can only move in altering directions, on one lane. | |

(Source: http://ernainfo.eu/pages.php?list_cat=yes&idc=14&ids=1)

The Euroregional news aggregator provides a balanced space for communication to the local/regional public institutions and NGOs with useful and non-sensational information that attract little attention in mainstream media. One of the problems that the Romanian-Hungarian team aims to solve is related to the small number of sites of public institutions and NGOs in which the RSS news aggregator may have an important role.

6.2 Examples of Past Projects

Amid the leading projects of the DKMT Euroregion implemented before 2005 the following ones are noteworthy:

- opening of new border crossing points: rail (to Berliste–Iam) – important for the restoration of the oldest railway lines in Romania: Oraviţa–Iam (RO)–Bela Crkva–Weisskirchen (Serbia)–Socol–Baziaş (RO), road and rail (at Socol) – out of isolation to the Danube enters the country and improves the natural riches offered by the Iron Gates Natural Park, road and rail to Grădinari (Caras-Severin/RO)–Markov (VS/Serbia) which will support a project and cultural tourism in Caraş-Severin and Vrsac. The project aims the promotion of cultural tourism, wine-growing area of Vrsac–Markov–Grădinari and natural heritage, tourism and industrial zone Anina–Oraviţa–Iam;
- the construction of the Rôszke (state border)–Novi Sad traffic corridor X/A motorway;
- modernization and development of road infrastructure in the area Naidăş–Socol–Baziaş, with funding from the Neighborhood PHARE Programme 2004–2006 Romania–Serbia;
creating a border industrial park between Caraş-Severin and South Banat District (following the model of industrial park creating between the AP Vojvodina and Hungary);

creating etnocentre to facilitate the study and preservation of folk customs and traditions, crafts, and folklore;

a circuit tour on both sides of the Danube border in two natural parks: the Iron Gates Park (South Caraş-Severin and Mehedinţi) and Park Gerdap (Borski and Braničevski districts);

creating a joint alert system to prevent disasters (flooding, environmental accident / pollution, etc.) between the DKMT states. It wants a common system of information management and joint logistics (site, common equipment, communication system for mailing information) to stay in real time all relevant information on flows and water quality;


“Vocational School of Tourism” for preparing the specialists of high level in the field of tourism.

Other more recent projects and programmes where the DKMT region has been involved are the following (Oskó, accessed November 2014):

- Environmental consciousness of everyday life of the young, for the young people (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Hunida PUC, 2005);

- Study and exchange of experience regarding water quality improvement (PHARE Small Project Fund 2003 Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro program), 2005-2006;

- Within and beyond the European Union – series of cross-border trade fairs and conferences (Phare CBC 2003 Hungary and Romania – Cross-border economic development program), 2005-2006;


- Formation of thematic tourist route groups in the DKMT Euroregion (INTERREG IIIA), 2006-2007;

- A development project recommended in the strategy of the DKMT (strengthening economic relationships within the region – establishing tourism related cooperations between SMEs and non-profit organisations);

- ERIC – Euroregional Informational Centre (INTERREG IIIA), 2006-2008 - A development project recommended in the strategy of the DKMT (increasing the social cohesion of
the region – extending information supply. ERIC is operating as an international news agency, in four languages - Hungarian, Serbian, Romanian and English. It is continuously up-dated online helping to inform the inhabitants of the region directly and indirectly—by informing editors and journalists dealing with cross-border cooperation - with the latest news, interviews, selections, background analyses. Apart from the news and articles available on the portal at the address www.ericinfo.eu, we can also access a regional programme preview, a free, multi-lingual introduction and advertisement interface for enterprises, radio interviews, live programs (Ghiorghioni, n.a.);

- Security without borders (European Commission Directorate-General Environment – Community Civil Protection Action Programme, 2007-2008, Formation of thematic tourist route groups in the DKMT Euroregion (INTERREG IIIA). In this series of events the most important civil defence related sources of danger affecting the territory of the Euroregion were examined by experts arriving from the region, from Italy and Slovakia, also considering practical tasks in connection with flood prevention, epidemics, industrial accidents, the storage of dangerous substances and elaborating recommendations for international cooperation serving the security of the citizens of neighbouring states (Ghiorghioni, n.a.).

The region has been involved also in infrastructure projects such as (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011): construction of the infrastructure of the frontier crossing-point Cenad-Kiszombor (the Romanian-Hungarian frontier); renovation of the Bega Channel; renovation of the Szeged (Hungary)-Kikinda (Serbia and Montenegro)-Timișoara (Romania) railway; environmental protection in the Surduc Lake area; rural development and introduction of the area to the international tourist circuit; renovation of the Buzias centre for spa treatment and spa leisure activities; renovation of the Lugoj- Timișoara- Nădlac - Szeged road connecting western Romania to the Pan-European Corridor IV; opening of a new frontier crossing-point at Triplex Confinium – the location where the frontiers between Romania, Hungary and former Serbia and Montenegro meet.

6.3 Organisation of Events (meetings, conferences, seminars, cultural and media events)

6.3.1 Scientific events

Since 1999, the DKMT has organised 15 regional conferences on environment, food quality, the protection of biodiversity, nutrition and health-related issues (Tab. 5). The aim of these conferences was to promote further regional cooperation and a better and healthier environment within the region.
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**Table 5: Regional DKMT Conferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editions</th>
<th>Conference Topic</th>
<th>Place and date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Arad (Romania), 19-20 November 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Szeged (Hungary), 12 May 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Petroșani (Romania), 6-7 April 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Szeged (Hungary), 9-10 May 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Food Quality</td>
<td>Novi Sad (Serbia), 4-5 September 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environmental Medicine and Health</td>
<td>Timișoara (Romania), 14-15 October 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Szeged (Hungary), 17 June 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environmental Medicine, Nutrition and Health</td>
<td>Timișoara (Romania), 22-24 June 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environmental Health and Protection Environmental Biodiversity and Health</td>
<td>Arad (Romania), 11-13 May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Cross-border Bioecology and Public Health</td>
<td>Arad (Romania), 16-17 May 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Szeged (Hungary), 15-16 May 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Food, Environment and Health joined to 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; CEFSER Workshop</td>
<td>Novi Sad (Serbia), 14-15 September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Integrative Medicine, Nutrition and Health</td>
<td>Timișoara (Romania), 8-10 September 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Szeged (Hungary), 18-19 May 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Environment and Health</td>
<td>Novi Sad (Serbia), 16-17 May 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled from [http://www.dkmt2013.uns.ac.rs/gallery.html](http://www.dkmt2013.uns.ac.rs/gallery.html) and www.dkmt.net (accessed on September 12, 2014)

An overview of the most recent editions of the DKMT Euroregion conferences is presented below.

**The 12<sup>th</sup> DKMT Euroregion Conference on Food, Environment and Health**

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT) on Food, Environment and Health was held in Novi Sad (Serbia), on 14-15 September 2010. The conference was organised by the Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad, and it was a joint-action with the 1<sup>st</sup> CEFSER Workshop, as part of the planned activities within the FP7 project CEFSER (GA 229629). With this scientific event, the participating researchers had the opportunity to have an insight on how the strengthening of research potential is made possible through EC funded projects. The joint DKMT Conference and the CEFSER Workshop aimed to serve as a forum for the exchange of know-how and experience, as well as a chance for elaborating new ideas for future research projects.

The Conference’s thematic areas were: food safety, nutrition, lifestyles and health; Environment and health; Food and health; Clinical and experimental research. The Programme of the event was organized in five sessions following the main thematic topics covered by the Conference (13 oral presentations), one plenary lecture session (two invited lectures) and two poster sessions (38 posters).
The 13th DKMT Conference on Integrative Medicine, Nutrition and Health

The scientific event was organised by the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Victor Babeş, Timișoara (Romania), in the period between 8-10 September 2011. Integrative Medicine was the key issue of the Conference programme, due to its general perception as the medicine of the future, which combines Eastern and Western concepts in a holistic view of the human being. The conference was organized jointly with a Symposium of PhD students within the frame of the project POSDRU/88/1.5/S/63117 “Doctoral scholarships for competitive PhD students in the European Research Area”. The Symposium represented a part of planned activities within the POSDRU project, giving participating researchers an opportunity to have an insight on how the strengthening of research potential is made possible through POSDRU projects. The joint scientific event (the DKMT Conference-the Symposium of PhD students) encouraged the exchanges of know-how and experience between the participants, providing the basis for future research projects. The event addressed four thematic areas in the euroregion:

- the perspectives of integrative medicine in practice and education;
- nutrition, functional foods and food supplements;
- lifestyles and health; and
- environmental pollution and health.

The 15th DKMT Euroregion Conference on Environment and Health

The Conference was held at the Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. The aim of the Conference was to gather scientists and researchers within the DKMT Euroregion for promoting the exchange of their ideas about the influence environment has on food and health, as well as to present the results of their researches to the interested audience. The main goal of the conference was to raise the awareness of the challenges and priorities of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region to which Hungary, Romania and Serbia also belong, broadening the Conference’s thematic issues by the incorporation of four vertical priorities of the Danube Strategy: environmental protection, irrigation and agricultural development, navigability, and energy production, explored during the Conference’s round table, in order to recognize the regional capacities for the scientific support to the Strategy’s priorities.

With the same goal of proving the scientific support to the Danube Strategy, the 15th DKMT Conference joined the LACREMED Conference "Sustainable agricultural production: restoration of agricultural soil quality by remediation", addressing the novel environmentally friendly approaches in the agricultural development within the region. The LACREMED Conference represented a part of activities within the LACREMED project implemented through the IPA programme of Cross-border Cooperation between Hungary and Serbia co-financed by the EU, representing another way of strengthening the research potential within the DKMT Euroregion.
The thematic areas of the Conference covered:

- environmental protection;
- air pollution and scenarios of future air quality emissions;
- climate impact on air quality and health;
- novel methods to combat soil and water pollution;
- assessment of the impacts of bio-energy development on soil quality, agriculture, biodiversity, and climate change;
- environmental impact on food safety;
- food quality and food safety;
- public health and the environmental (air, water, soil) quality;
- emerging issues in environmental health;
- nano-materials in the environment, food and health;
- irrigation and agricultural development;
- navigability;
- energy production.

The Programme of the Conference was organized in five sessions (nine invited lectures, ten presentations) and three poster sessions (66 posters) as follows:

1. **1st Environmental protection - novel methods to combat soil and water pollution** (two invited lectures, four presentations, one poster session)
2. **2nd Water quality and emerging issues in environmental health** (three invited lectures and one presentation, one poster session).
3. **3rd Public health and the environmental (air, water and soil) quality** (one invited lecture, two presentations)
4. **4th Air pollution, scenarios of future air quality emissions, climate impact on air quality and health** (one invited lecture, two presentations and one poster session)
5. **5th Food quality and food safety - environmental impacts** (two invited lecturers, one presentation).

The organisers aimed to promote young researchers by awarding the three best presentations according to the following judging criteria: organization/content/aim of the poster or the oral presentations, visual impact of the posters or PowerPoint-presentations and quality of the answers provided. The research results of the participants were published in the Conference Proceeding Book.
The International Seminar on “Entrepreneurial initiative and Regional development – European comparisons”

The International Seminar on “Entrepreneurial initiative and Regional development – European comparisons” is another example of scientific event organised within the DKMT region that addressed the regional polarization and discrepancies between the various national segments across the region, in relation to the undergoing transformations induced by the EU integration. The seminar was organized by the West University of Timişoara in collaboration with the University of Angers and the University of Novi Sad, between 10 and 15 July 2006. The Seminar was an itinerant working seminar, following a route between Timişoara (Romania), Novi Sad (Serbia-Montenegro), and Szeged (Hungary).

The seminar welcomed the meeting of the “2H2S Program” researchers from a multidisciplinary and international perspective, grounded on the detailed analysis of the regional and local realities of Europe. The “2H2S” programme associates academic persons from humanities and social sciences (geography, sociology, economy, history etc.) and regional personalities of the political, economic, cultural and social life. The seminar oriented the scientific debates on the role of the “entrepreneurial initiative”, seen in a broad European comparative perspective, i.e. economic, social-cultural (especially in the associative domain) and political perspectives (concerning mainly territorial projects).

The thematic issues covered by the Seminar were:

- **Characteristics of the territorial economic development during the globalization era**
  
  **Background:** The transnational and multicultural space of the Banat, as a nucleus of the DKMT Euroregion, represents an excellent field of observation and analysis of these processes, in a period when the fast economic globalisation seems to compromise the models of economic development established on local synergies. The various European experiences will be able to come together in a productive dialogue with the economic reality of this pluralistic space.
  
  **Key questions answered:** Are the economic perspectives of these areas connected mainly to local or to national factors? Does any international factor play a much larger and determinant role due to globalisation and the extension of the European integration process? How do these factors play together on the economic stage, what are their consequences on local and regional structures and what are their chances in view of sustainable development?

- **Cultural identity and induced territorial outcomes**
  
  **Key questions answered:** In the new circumstances, can we still consider the existence of a regional identity of the people from the Banat? Could the mercantile tradition, inherited from the imperial policy and exercised by the local communities (especially German), still have an echo nowadays? Does the position of “frontier area” represent a strength or an obstacle for present and future economic development?
The role of the authorities in the social-economic renewal

**Background:** The school education is represented by a vast network of secondary schools and college units which form the basis of professional selection, the area of influence of the local centres being much wider than the limits of the Banat or the development regions gathered in the DKMT Euroregion.

**Key questions answered:** Has the educational system of the DKMT Euroregion adapted itself to the specialized needs of the labour market? What are the synergies which emerge in the relationship with the enterpriser, the formative and the research environments? What are those strategies which can guarantee a survival in a highly competitive environment?

Associative, entrepreneurial and venture networks as cross border networks

**Background:** Networks, in the variety of the forms, are at the centre of all territorial development projects. Social and cultural networks are frequently mentioned but seldom analysed. This kind of networks may be relying on common shared experiences generating the dispersion of individuals, who nevertheless continue to be cooperative and have exchange relations. There are networks, which are built ad-hoc by means of interpersonal, administrative, business-related or other kind of contacts. The identity element appears to be a remarkable support for network structuring, perceivable especially in pluralistic spaces, such as the cross border space of the Banat.

**Key questions answered:** What are the main features and meanings of the contemporary networks? Are the cross border cooperation sufficiently dense in order to generate stable and active networks which can influence the level of recognition, acceptance and the number of joint projects? What is the role of the foreign investors in the stimulation of local synergies?

From one regional model of development to another – European comparisons

**Background:** The model of economic success and social prosperity of the Banat seems to evolve in leaps, with periods of boom and crisis, according to the circumstances. The boom period given by the capitalization of agricultural products and natural resources ended together with the last decade of the communist era. The Romanian part of the Banat is searching today for new solutions, market niches, which would enable it to preserve and consolidate its privileged status among the other Romanian regions.

**Key questions answered:** Could the present individual competition of the three national areas of the DKMT Euroregion be subject to change towards a beneficial competition, with chances of success on the European level? How could be the cohesion between the four main polarizing cities (Timișoara, Novi Sad, Szeged, Arad) strengthened, without jeopardizing their strong connections with their national territories?

Insights on the features of the economic development of the DKMT Euroregion

**Background:** The one-week experience in and beyond the cross-border space of Banat, implying meetings and debates applied to the local reality, allowed to derive the shape of illustrative insights and representations realized on scientific grounds. The constant
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corpus of participants at the previous meetings of the work seminar already has the required proficiencies. The variable structure of the group depending on the location and social-economic content of the laboratory space chosen for each edition and new perspectives.

Key questions answered: Can individual reasoning and collective debating on the economic and social space of the Banat represent a source of ideas for the further evolution of the region? How could we make a better use of the established liaisons and meetings facilitated by the seminar? Can we imagine a frame of collaboration for the maintenance of the scientific reasoning, with positive effects on this laboratory space?

The presented works were reviewed by a scientific board and were published in a special issue of “Geographica Timisensis”, a scientific magazine of the Department of Geography of the West University of Timişoara.

6.3.2 Cultural events

Euroregional Theatre festival Timişoara (TESZT)

The company of “Csiky Gergely” Hungarian State Theatre is a young, enthusiastic, internationally recognized team, always searching for new forms of artistic expression. The permanent Hungarian theatre company at Timişoara was founded in 1953 as part of the Romanian State Theatre, but it has been an autonomous institution since 1957. The name “Csiky Gergely” was given to the institution in 1990. The theatre was involved in many projects and has a rich and varied repertory, including different types of performances such as: classic and contemporary theatre, non-verbal performances, music, puppets and marionette theatre plays.

One of the most important projects of the theatre is TESZT – the Euroregional Festival of Theatre Timişoara, and has been organized for the seventh time in 2014. The event was international and it contributed to the promotion of knowledge of multiculturalism. The Festival worked as a platform for cultural exchanges and also as an invitation to dialogue with the artists and other specialists in the field.

The TESZT goal was to support a closer and more frequent collaboration among the theatres in the region and to improve the communication between the institutions and the public of Timişoara, as a first step to future exchanges of performances and of experiences, as well as to a better understanding of the new theatrical forms. The TESZT festival was planned to be organized once a year, giving possibilities to the theatre to become a platform for celebrating the meetings between all those who are part of this region’s theatre life. Since 2007, the programme has become one of the most important cultural events of the DKMT Euroregion, where theatre performances, concerts, exhibitions and other auxiliary events are part of the
program. The past few years proved that this meeting works as a great forum of all those who are willing to think together about the regional theatrical efforts. The initiative of the TESZT festival was also to provide a meeting place for the three cultures and by fulfilling this role, it helps bringing closer the creators in the region. The TESZT aimed to become a cultural but also an artistic point for different art forms, a place for experiments and research, for dialogue between the public and the artists, where the young generation is treated as partner. As a perspective, the future goals of TESZT festival will be strongly connected to the TESZT Academy.

6.3.3 Regional media events

Analysing the PR challenges in promoting the cross-border cooperation Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa (DKMT), Cernicova-Bucă (2010) showed that since 2004/2005, the Euroregion DKMT has lost its attractiveness for the media. The local authorities refrained from commenting on conflicts. The battle for competences between national and local authorities reduced its dimension as a result of the administrative reform – at least in Romania. PR efforts in the first decade of the 21st century were less salient at the county level, rendering the impression that the DKMT is not on the public agenda any longer. The DKMT is no longer a topic included in the weekly press conferences organized by the president of the Timiş county assembly.

Palea (2011) analysed the regional media communication within the DKMT region. The study showed that except for the territorial studios of public radio and television (e.g. Radio Timişoara, TVR Timişoara), which have all the characteristics of regional press and which host cross-border shows directed at the public of the DKMT Euroregion, there are very few instances of regional press. In the form of written press, only local or county press were found, directed towards a cross-county audience. Usually, most of the information published covered the town where the headquarters of the editorial team are located. The main media products edited in Timişoara are: Ziua de Vest, Focus Vest, Evenimentul Zilei – Vest, the Transilvania-Banat supplement of the daily newspaper România Liberă (when it was launched), Bănăţeanul, Cronica de Sud-Vest etc. (some of these newspapers no longer exist), as well as in the products of other towns: 24 h – in Reşiţa or Noul Observator – in Jimbolia, Tăt Banatu’i Fruncea – in Făget, Nyugati Jelen – la Arad etc. Some cross-border attempts are also worth mentioning: Délivilág és Temesvári Új Szó – between 1991-1993, Régi(j)óvilag- in Hungarian, founded in 2006, or Licurici, Romanian publication broadcasted around the border area between Romania, Serbia and Hungary, launched in 2003. The authorities from the Euroregion have also tried to produce a full-colour euroregional magazine, in the beginning under the name of Euro Trio (1998-1999), and later of Euro Régió (2000-2001). However, the magazine did not last on the media market. In the audio-visual department, it was only Radio Banat Link which has undertaken a regional editorial policy as a cable radio and television channel. Analogue was previously exploring the regional audiences (Cernicova, 2009). The author considered some large regional media products as examples of real success in the area of electronic media,
namely: the www.zoro.ro portal, with information available in German; the news www.ericinfo.eu portal, with information written in four languages (Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian and English).

Analysing the state of the regional mass-media, within Western Romania and the DKMT Euroregion, Palea (2011) found a decline of the written press, but an increase in the number of visitors for the online news sites. The author related these trends to the changes in mass-media worldwide, but also to the typology of target audiences. Several institutions like NGOs, promoters and implementers of regional projects, or other stakeholders, interested in being informed about regional affairs, were identified as the main users of the online media information. The author considered the ericinfo.eu portal as a good example of DKMT information dissemination, due to its user-friendly design and complex structure (e.g. advance search options, information in four languages). Comparatively the zoro.ro portal, delivering information only in German, was found as limiting the share of the target audience.

**Media events within the PROBITAS Programme**

PROBITAS is a complex long-term Euroregional programme focused on human rights and democratic education, aimed at creating a favourable framework to support and stimulate the formal and/or non-formal contacts and experience exchange between young journalists and young artists from Western Romania and Eastern Serbia (Vojvodina Region), in the so called Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza Euroregion DKMT). The PROBITAS programme aimed at building-up a solid non-governmental organizations network in the DKMT Euroregion.

On June 12th 1998, the first Euro-regional meeting of independent radio stations from Romania, Serbia and Hungary took place in Timişoara. The meeting gathered representatives from West Radio Timişoara, Radio 021 Novi Sad (Serbia) and Radio Media 6 Szeged (Hungary) who signed a **Partnership Agreement** with the intention to stimulate the tri-lateral collaboration in order to develop a media network in the DKMT Euroregion.

Soon after, on July 4th 1998, the representatives of the three independent radio stations signed a new Agreement in Szeged (Hungary). The Agreement stipulated the foundation of “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” project with the following goals:

a) to inform the public, media and international organizations about “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” project;

b) to establish the most suitable ways to accomplish the technical needs in order to exchange information and to create the basis for further development of Euro-regional communication;

c) to analyse and identify the structure and the deadlines of the radio materials which will be broadcasted as a part of the project;

d) to establish the basic elements of a unique marketing strategy;
e) to debate and elaborate a project with the aim to inform the European Community, the European Union and international organizations who support quick Euro-regional development about “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza”.

On September 12th 1998, the participants signed The Novi Sad Agreement in Novi Sad. The Agreement contained concrete activities for the first common Euroregional radio program. In December 1998, the first one hour Euroregional radio programme “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” was broadcasted simultaneously in Timișoara (by Radio West), Novi Sad (by Radio 021) and Szeged (by Radio Media 6).

On April 28th 1999, West Foundation for Regional and Euroregional Journalism, as a non-governmental organization, was founded in Timișoara. Main goal of this non-governmental organization was to sustain and to promote cooperation between young journalists in the DKMT Euroregion.

The cooperation between the three partners continued on these new foundations in 1999, when the representatives of the three radio stations participated at the First Edition of the Summer School for the Regional and Euro-regional Journalism, organized by the West Foundation and the Radio West Timișoara in Sebiș, Arad County.

The collaboration stopped in the 1999, under the constraints of the Serbian regime hindering the freedom of speech and it was re-launched on 5-7th April 2001, on the occasion of the Euro-regional Mass Media Meeting, organized by CED in Timișoara. The event aimed at bringing together journalists, press institutions and media related NGOs and thus increasing the media's contribution to the establishment and/or consolidation of democracy in the region. The debates focused on the results of “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maris-Tisza” project. All the participants agreed the WFJ initiative of the “Probitas” long-term programme and appreciated its strategy as an important step for the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the journalistic domain. The first edition of the new programme “Probitas” was launched during 2001 summer under the title “Euroregional Journalism and Tourism”. The programme was redefined on May 2002, when a Partnership Agreement was signed by representatives of the West Foundation for Regional and Euroregional Journalism Timișoara, Novi Sad School of Journalism, Editing and Publishing House “Freedom” from Novi Sad and Tibiscus University of Timișoara.

The “Probitas 2003 – Multiculturalism against conflicts” event was the latest phase of a long term strategy, launched in 1999, by West Foundation for Regional and Euro-regional Journalism Timișoara. The final goal of all these activities was to ensure a future coherent inter-operational journalistic and creative activity dedicated to consolidate the Euro-regional young community, to prevent regional violence, terrorism and conflicts, to promote human rights, mutual acquaintance and peaceful co-existence between minorities and majority and to find out jointly common realistic answers to multi-ethnic society problems, very specific for the geographical
coverage of the project. “Probitas 2003 - Multiculturalism against conflicts” project aimed to fulfil these goals by:

a) organising professional meetings between young and/or experienced journalists and professional artists which will carry out basic and applied debates on the causes and potential conflicts in the region, on violence and terrorism sources and its motivations;

b) sustaining the Third Edition of PROBITAS programme inter-operational training and experience exchange programme (during the summer of 2003), dedicated to young journalists and young artists from Romania and Serbia, representing different ethnic communities from Danube-Kris-Maris-Tisa Euro-region, including a large area from Western Romania, Eastern Serbia and South-Eastern Hungary.

Subsequently, on these foundations, the second (2002), the third (2003) and the fourth edition (2004) of “Probitas” programme scored a great success, being sustained by important organizations and institutions from Europe and the United States. Over 150 young and/or experienced journalists and artists were involved in its lucrative activities from Romania and Serbia. At the end of every edition, participants published between 4 and 6 issues of “Probitas Magazine” and produced a similar number of one hour radio-shows.

Consequently, the programme “Probitas” was rewarded with “Best@Networking Award” on the occasion of the Third Edition of the “Regional NGO Fair” at the end of 2002.

From 2005, in the context of the European integration of Romania, the programme „Probitas” needed to change its strategic orientation: it aimed to sustain the complex processes of this integration and, on the other hand, at promoting a new generation of Romanian youngsters interested in communication and civic matters.

6.3.4 Other events

An international civil protection preparedness exercise (EU-HUROMEX) was organised during 22-26 September 2008 in Szolnok, Gyula, and Arad in the framework of Civil Protection Mechanism of the European Union. The event had a budget of more than 500 000 Euros and it was among the biggest EU actions in the field of disaster defence (EC, 2011). The exercise was planned within the HUMOREX project, which included the preparation, implementation and evaluation of a full-scale simulation scenario of civil protection interventions, in a hypothetical situation of serious flooding. The recovery of infrastructure damages was also considered within the exercise.

The exercise was addressed to local population and gathered the participation of disaster saving units and rescue teams from: Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Moldova. The exercise was based on a flood emergency situation scenario and was attended by more than 500 people from eight countries. During the exercise, 160 people have been evacuated from Gyula (Hungary) to Chişineu de Criş (Romania)
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(Fig. 7). The exercise took place on the territory of Hungary, at the catchment’s area of the river Tisza and in Romania in Arad County (large scale affected areas over more than 250 km). The countries required assistance via the Monitoring and Information Centre, and applied the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) for handling disaster management.

![SCENARIO](image)

*Figure 7: The target area for flood scenario in the HUMOREX exercise (Source: [www.igsu.ro/documente/SAEARI/Huromex.pdf](http://www.igsu.ro/documente/SAEARI/Huromex.pdf), accessed on July 13, 2015)*

The lesson learned post-HUMOREX exercises were related to:

- difference between Offered capacities and Coming capacities;
- the need of a Proactive On-site Commander;
- the need for Cooperation between OSOCC-LEMA;
- language barriers;
- coordination of the Convoys in country and crossing the border (convoy length – 3,5 km);
- different Chains of Command;
- different Rescue Procedures;
- the need for Networking /Cooperation;
- practical experience;
- new standard of the bilateral cooperation;
- detailed scenario flexibility;
- efficiency of the Observers program;
- hygiene and Security on Camps;
- evaluations after the activities;
- media, web pages;
- cultural awareness.
Moreover, a joint flood prevention action group has been organised by the DKMT Euroregion for the possible prevention of floods happening often in the region, and for protection, in case of danger. The rescue team has been equipped with the most modern sets of equipment, among others, a “mobile village” used for the fast removal of population.

A regular phase of emergency preparedness software was designed, defining the workflow, the database structure or the design of the user interfaces. The software was successfully tested in the conditions resembling real flood-related situations achieved during the deployment of the international exercise EU-HUROMEX. Based on the lessons learned and the results, starting from April 2009, a new software (TEVAC - Trans Border Evacuation) was designed in order to be used by all Emergency Situations Inspectorates all over Romania (Baş et al., 2010).

The closing conference of the Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC)

The Conference was held in Novi Sad and it gathered the present and future ERIC partners. The closing discussions addressed the main achievements over a 2-year period of activity and the future plans of the Centre in relation to existing rights of using Internet and further possibilities of using it for the operation of the new ERIC portal, to maintain and update the news and information flow within the DKMT region. The event was held in the Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC), established by the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa Euroregion Developing Agency Ltd, Voivodina Self-governing Territory and Regional Media and Art Foundation, in the scope of INTERREG III/A. Assessing lecture was given on Eastern-European possibilities of media privatisation, as well as its present conditions.

The Day of the DKMT Euroregion

The Day of the DKMT Euroregion is organised on the last weekend of May every year at the Triplex Confinium memorial at the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border. During the event, borders are temporarily opened and the General Assembly of the DKMT performs a meeting.
7. SWOT analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existence/possibility of EU membership;</td>
<td>The EU harmonization of economy still needs improvement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural traditions, cultural cooperation and coexistence of diverse cultures and communities;</td>
<td>Low population density, marked demographic ageing, migration of certain population groups, mainly young;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its geostrategic role as a gateway between Central Europe and the Balkans;</td>
<td>High numbers employed in agriculture;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuable natural resources and availability of raw materials necessary for industry (felling and wood processing, textile, shoe manufacturing, food industry, machinery and electronics);</td>
<td>Differences in the educational and health care systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational infrastructure supporting small- and medium-size enterprises (e.g. industrial parks, chambers of trade and commerce, centres of business development, consultancies and duty-free areas);</td>
<td>Shortage of capital, lack of interest on behalf of investors, low level of own sources, relative poverty in all three areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of international airports, e.g. Timișoara;</td>
<td>Weak transport connections within the region, outdated infrastructure between Romania and Serbia;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important European road corridors which cross the Euroregion as well as natural corridors open towards Central and Western Europe (through the Danube), to the western Mediterranean (across the Sava corridor), to the Balkans (by the Morava–Vardar and Niš–Sofia corridors), to the Carpathians basin and the Black Sea (on the Lower Danube and passes across the Carpathians);</td>
<td>Border crossing points with insufficient capacity between Romania and Serbia;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Danube River stretching from the west to the south, providing links and favourable conditions for marine traffic between the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea (with</td>
<td>Underdeveloped and inadequate management and marketing strategies, including tourism infrastructure;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortage of capital, lack of interest on behalf of investors, low level of own sources, relative poverty in all three areas;</td>
<td>Lack of Euroregional tourism marketing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficiency of the institutional system of cross-border regional and local level cooperation;</td>
<td>Lack of Euroregional motorway and state-of-the-art expressway links;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdated rail infrastructure, long border-crossing time between Romania and Serbia;</td>
<td>Missing components of communal infrastructure (e.g. sewage treatment, and waste collection and recycling), heavy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strengths
- Connections to the Middle East and the Caspian Sea;
- The presence of minorities in the region fosters cooperation in the fields of education and culture;
- The existence of three internationally acknowledged higher educational centres in the region that have been cooperating in several fields, i.e. Timișoara, Szeged, and Novi Sad;
- Joint strategic planning and joint management that allow a homogenous development of the region;
- The homogeneous management system of EU funds opens up new areas of cooperation and strengthen the existing ones;
- Good border crossings by road and one by rail between Romania and Hungary, Hungary and Serbia, but insufficient between Romania and Serbia;
- Road and rail networks are in good condition on the Hungarian side, but they both need to be modernised on the Romanian and Serbian sides;
- At economic level, there is a cross-border common market thanks to the low prices of products, the availability of a work force, the large number of new enterprises along the border area;
- Long-standing tradition of agreements (since the 1960s) between the three countries, aimed at regulating the movement of people, goods and capital across the border.

### Weaknesses
- Pollution in large cities (dust and exhaust gases), polluted surface and ground waters;
- Lack of joint programmes in environmental protection with a long-term monitoring.
- The low level of coordination of actors in the management of the Euroregion and the lack of communication (e.g. no functional country secretariats, outdated website);
## Opportunities

- Improvement/stabilizing relationships in the Balkans;
- The region can act as a Southeast European gate towards the enlargement of the EU;
- Availability of EU support for cross-border cooperation through different funding instruments;
- Common management system of EU funds which opens up new relationship opportunities and can improve the efficiency of cooperation;
- The university centres of the region are capable of catalysing European education through R&D and innovation;
- Trans-European network intersecting the region Vienna–Szeged–Istanbul–Thessaloniki and Budapest–Arad–Bucharest, Trans-European Motorways E68, E70 and E75 and the important Trans-European corridors No. 4, 5, 9, 10A and 7 (the Danube) as well as their branches - provides excellent opportunity to connect the area to the rest of Europe;
- Increased effectiveness of joint environmental and nature protection initiatives as a result of coordinated actions;
- Joint management of natural and human-induced disasters (e.g. floods)
- Improving economic performance of the countries which can contribute to the strengthening of cross-border cooperation and development of the region;

## Threats

- Changes of the political situation that might negatively affect cooperation;
- The proximity to the Western Balkans periodically affected by tensions and conflicts, thus triggering economic disrupting within the Euroregion and foreign investments;
- Relatively high environmental risk of natural disasters and pollution;
- The slowness of infrastructural developments restricts cooperation possibilities;
- Shortfall caused by the insufficient financing of R&D and the higher education sector;
- The Schengen border control may hinder cooperation;
- The tourism related marketing activity is not achieved because of the lack of financial resources as well as that of joint management and promotion;
- Lack of consistent programmes to retrain labour force and insufficient employment opportunities;
- Planning and insufficient publication of statistics on cooperation and joint results of activities;
- European institutions should better disseminate their cross-border cooperation models, while national authorities should harmonise legal procedures in this field and create a database covering also local and not only national initiatives;
- The absence of cooperation structures, excessive state bureaucratisation
### Opportunities

- Increasing interest of potential investors and tourists as a result of the improvement of infrastructure (roads, border crossings);
- The use of alternative sources of energy may help save energy in the region, especially in rural and tourist industry areas.

### Threats

- (translating into inefficiency, slowness and loss of opportunities);
- increased administrative centralisation may hamper cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion;
8. Future plans and goals

8.1 Future challenges and trends of the cross-border cooperation

Economic relations between Romania and Hungary can be explained by the economic dynamics of the two countries as well as by the EU integration factor, which provides momentum for further increase of the economic cooperation along the border. There are many good examples of positive cooperation between the two sides.

Nevertheless, the two main obstacles that have been detected with respect to Hungary-Serbia, are related to state centralisation and the lack of adequate resources, especially in Serbia. Other factors include EU regulations on foreign employment, import quotas, and quality standards to control the cooperation in the economy and labour sectors.

After Hungary became a member of the EU, levels of economy and technology changed in favour of Hungary, with Serbia lagging behind. The economies of the two countries are not complementary; they compete in the same fields, i.e. food industry, agriculture, transport and tourism, with the great advantage on the Hungarian side because of its membership in the EU, providing a better access to the Union market. Hungary also benefited greatly from EU funds, while Serbia suffered the ten-year period of sanctions. The two countries cooperate on environmental issues as members of the Danube Commission, as well as in matters concerning Tisza and Timiş rivers. The environmental restoration of the Bega and Caraş rivers were drawn up, but EU funding is needed for their implementation. The same also applies to other initiatives (e.g. Szeged-Timişoara railway, the new Szeged-Nov Sad-Timişoara navigable channel and new border crossing points).

In terms of education and culture in northern Vojvodina, at the border with Hungary, education from primary to university level is carried out in Hungarian language which enables many citizens of Serbia to attend schools in Hungary (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011). As for sports activities, Hungarian teams often go to the spas in the Vojvodina area for training camps. Moreover, a wide range of cross-border activities involving everyday services for citizens of the border area are taking place.

In the Romanian-Serbian cross-border area there are very good relations in the field of trade (after the limitations imposed by the embargo were abolished), and in the socio-cultural field, given the good ethnic relations and the linguistic minorities in the area. In the economic and industrial sectors, trade fairs and exhibitions were organised, mostly on the Romanian side.

The main obstacles to cross-border cooperation can be identified in the centralised bureaucracy, but also into a lack of crucial instruments, like an up-to-date database for all joint initiatives. Opportunities at the economic level, however, do exist: low cost of labour, a good level of consumption, tourist potential, etc. The cross-border cooperation between Romania
and Serbia increased after the resolution of the Kosovo crisis and the establishment of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, launched in 1999. An important role was played once again by the Council of Europe, which coordinated a number of projects promoting regional cooperation, consequently, it profoundly contributed to the stabilisation and democratisation of the region.

The economic dynamics across borders is a positive factor for developing cross-border cooperation between the two countries. The level of coordination between the Romanian and Serbian administrations improved in the last few years, although the administrative capacity of both countries should be improved concerning cross-border cooperation. During the last few years (after the Yugoslav Wars), a significant improvement was witnessed in areas like movement of people and goods. With Romania as part of the EU, this trend will gradually continue as it is supported by strong cross-border ties, and economic and socio-cultural development. The border infrastructure is still not adequate by European standards, even though considerable improvements have been made.

The future plans of the DKMT Euroregion are very well related to the fact that two of the participating countries are already members of the European Union, which assures significant support for cross-border cooperation programs. Moreover, Serbia’s chances to become a European Union member will lead to the diversification and expansion of cooperation potential in the region. The implementation of concepts defined in the strategic plan of the DKMT Euroregion will continue during the forthcoming years – in line with the national development plans of the certain member countries: the projection of a “Euroregional TGV” fast railway connecting Budapest-Békéscsaba-Arad-Bucharest; a motorway between Röszke and Belgrade, completely constructed on the E75 section; the Triplex international industrial park founded on the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border; the “Banat road” built between the Belgrade-Pančevo-Kikinda-Triplex border point and the Deszk node of the M43 clearway; turning Danube into a complex European tourism and environmental protection route on the territory of the DKMT Euroregion; the reconstruction of the Timisoara-Szeged-Subotica-Bácsalmás-Baja railway line in the framework of a TEN corridor – Trans-European network; the Magyarscanád-Cenad Bridge reconstructed on the Mureș River; maintaining environmental protection green belts along borders; a new border crossing station is established between Caras-Severin County and the southern part of the Vojvodina etc. (DKMT Euroregion Fact Sheet - Association of European Border Regions13).

8.2 Expected funds to finance projects within DKMT

The success of the programs and projects that the DKMT Euroregion benefited from (e.g. PHARE CBC, Hungarian–Romanian CBC Programme) has provided the favourable environment for the attraction of further financial instruments.

The CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) is aimed at supporting the participation of the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The Stabilisation and Association process is the cornerstone of the European Union's policy towards the region. It seeks to promote stability within the region whilst also facilitating closer association with the European Union. A key element of the SAP, for countries that have made sufficient progress in terms of political and economic reform and administrative capacity, is a formal contractual relationship with the EU in the form of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The SAP is designed to help each country to progress at its own pace towards greater European integration.

The INTERREG programme provides funding for interregional programmes across Europe implemented under the European Community's territorial cooperation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It is expected that INTERREG EUROPE will continue the achievements of INTERREG IVC over the 2014-2020 financing period to provide financial support for projects within the cross-border area.

Moreover, the Romania-Hungary Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 and the Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014–2020, which are currently under development, could support initiatives aiming to develop and broaden relationships among local communities and local governments in the field of economy, education, culture, science and sports – and help the region to maintain the process of European integration. To this, one might add Romanian, Hungarian, and Serbian national sources.
9. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation

In Central and Southern Europe the process of European integration involves regional cooperation, such as border regions, thus substantially contributing to the implementation of cross-border strategies and preparation for accession of some countries, i.e. Serbia. They also contribute to the diminishing of tensions and maintaining the stability in the Balkans area. Euroregions enable the involvement of human and material resources that would otherwise remain unused. On the other hand, border regions are often secluded from the centres of decision-making and economic activity, thus facing problems related to an insufficient transport infrastructure; underdeveloped service sector; inadequate technological infrastructure. However, all of these can be solved through regional economic cooperation.

The DKMT Euroregion includes territorial-statistical units (corresponding to LAU2 level) pertaining to three neighbouring countries: Hungary, Romania and Serbia generally overlapping an important historical province - Banat. Thus, by its geographical position and tripartite structure the Euroregion is at a most favourable position in the context of European Union enlargement.

Moreover, important natural transport corridors across the region also connect it with other important European regions: the Danube to the Central and Western Europe on its upper sector, and the Carpathian basin and the Black Sea on its lower sector; the Sava corridor to the western Mediterranean region; the Morava–Vardar and the Niš–Sofia corridors to the Balkans. In particular, the Danube corridor plays an important role through its northwest to southeast passageway, thus linking the Atlantic Ocean with the Black Sea.

In addition, its favourable location has led to the development of important communication axes such as the Trans-European railroads linking Vienna–Szeged–Istanbul–Thessaloniki and Budapest–Arad–Bucharest, as well as Trans-European Motorways E68, E70 and E75 and important TEN-T corridors (Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor and the Orient/East-Med Corridor) and their branches. All of these stand as important objectives of the European infrastructural investments, thus providing excellent opportunities to connect DKMT to the rest of Europe.\(^{14}\)

The DKMT Euroregion is one of the most important and active areas of Europe by its position in the eastern border of the European Union at the crossroads of Trans-European and Pan-European corridors. However, intensity of the cooperation is lower than in Western Europe because homogenisation processes are significant barriers to the development of the border regions. Thus it stands as an important area in the development and stability of the West Balkan region. Two of the regions belonging to DKMT are parts of countries that are part of the EU (Hungary and Romania) and one to an EU candidate (Serbia). Moreover, Hungary is part of the Schengen Area. All these factors provide favourable context for cooperation within and beyond the borders of the EU in Central Europe and Southeast Europe.

The Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT) consists of four counties in Hungary: Bács-Kiskun (centre Kecskemét), Békés (centre Békéscsaba), Csongrád (centre Szeged), Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok (centre Szolnok), four counties in Romania; Arad (centre Arad), Hunedoara (centre Deva), Timiş (centre Timișoara), Caraș-Severin (centre Reșița), and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (centre Novi Sad). The area of DKMT is 77 243 km², gathering a population of over 5 900 000 inhabitants. The Euroregion has its origins in the bilateral cooperation between Timiş (Romania) and Csongrád (Hungary) counties through the Regional Cooperation Protocol Danube–Mures–Tisa. In its current form, the organisation was established on 21st of November 1997 in Szeged. Two of the LAU2 units of the DKMT Euroregion belong to countries which are EU members, Hungary joined in 2004 and Romania in 2007. Hungary is part of the Schengen Area, too.

DKMT's objective is the development of relations between local communities and local representatives in areas like environment, economy, education, culture, health, science and sport, and cooperation in perspective of European integration. This cross-border region is one of the most important areas of the European Union, with a specific role in the Trans-European and Pan-European corridors, as well as an important area in the modernisation of the West Balkans.

The main decision-making body of DKMT is the General Assembly that is also electing the President in office, formed by heads of regional authorities for a period of one year, according to the principle of rotation between countries. DKMT’s Secretariat is composed of three delegated persons, each from the Romanian, Hungarian, and Serbian parts, based on internal agreements between the regional leaders of the three countries. Working groups study and draw up programs and projects, make proposals and draw up reports on activities from the General Assembly. The Steering Committee is composed of three presidents of the regional authorities, one from each country. The Agency for Cooperation Development DKMT realises activities conducted by both public and economic utility, for ensuring funds needed for the development of regional DKMT cooperation.

The DKMT Euroregion Development Agency Public Utility Company was established by the General Assembly on 24th May 2003. The founding members of the General Assembly established the public utility company to ensure the implementation of development aims defined at the act of foundation of the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Regional Cooperation.

The region was involved in the last years in many cross-border projects using multiple available EU funding sources (mainly CBC Phare programme before 2004, INTERREG programme and Cross-border cooperation programme Romania-Hungary 2007-2013). The projects were diverse and covered the main objectives of the Euroregion: promoting tourism and environmental protection, infrastructural development, increasing the social cohesion of the
region, etc. The cooperation was also involved in organizing and managing scientific activities, emergency situation training and other media activities. The Euroregion is also active in terms of scientific activities; specifically, it organised 15 regional conferences that analysed and investigated the issue of regional cooperation and the possibilities of its enhancement in order to create a better and healthier environment within the region. Besides the scientific activity, a full-scale simulation scenario was organised in the framework of the HUMOREX project. This hypothetical situation imitated a disaster caused by a serious flood and it dealt with the issues of preparation, intervention, implementation and civil protection.

However, the DKMT Euroregion has undergone several structural changes from its establishment, and these changes have affected the level of communication and the visibility of actors involved in its management (e.g. no functional country secretariats, outdated website, reduced availability to communicate results and activities). All of these could negatively impact the effectiveness of this cooperation initiative.
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CROSSING THE BORDERS

Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Ruse – Giurgiu

Written by
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8. Management (incomes/expenses) ............................................................................................................ 70

9. SWOT-analysis (specifically with a cooperation base, instead of a territorial base) ......................... 71

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1. Introduction

The cross-border cooperation in the Danube region is very attractive and fruitful topic in the recent years. However, when we research this region, we have to keep in mind some geographical attributes that shape the region and its structure. In general, the cross-border collaboration between both countries (Bulgaria and Romania) is relatively poor, and for a long period, the Danube River was rather a “boundary” phenomenon than a possible development corridor.

The particular report concerns Bulgaria and Romania. Both countries have a common history and geography, but it is very often presented in a controversial and propagandist way, serving the political regimes. Both countries experienced a common Ottoman Empire period during their history; consequently, formation and crystallization of their national identity have happened in the last 140 years. Bulgaria and Romania are very typical example of local political context in Eastern Europe. After the Ottoman period, these two states were often enemies in the subsequent conflicts.

Even in the period of “Cold War” when Romania and Bulgaria were located in the same ideological space, an active and cohesive border region policy was not developed. Subsequently, the border regions and territories remained heavily isolated and now they are the poorest and depopulated areas in both counties. What is more, the Danube River added to this negative development because it is the natural border, and for a period of a century, Bulgaria and Romania constructed only one bridge over the Danube River on more than 450 km length. Although, since 1989 there have been very strong political changes and for the recent 10 years, especially after the accession period in the EU, Bulgaria and Romania have established better conditions for initiatives directed to border regions.

Simply, numerous projects were approved with the aim to “start” the cross border cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania in the period 2007-2013. The current research investigates not only the activities performed in particular regions and implemented by particular programs, but the given case study also discusses some “forward and backward linkages” that are needed to be stressed in the area of the cross border cooperation.

More or less, the current project report illustrates that the situation is relatively “inactive and dependant by the current EU project financing.”
2. Cross-border cooperation development

2.1 Cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania - Ruse district and Giurgiu County

2.1.1 Cross-border Cooperation Programs - successful instrument for cross-border partnership

The geographic position of Ruse district, within the northern part of Bulgaria, and of Giurgiu County, within the Southern part of Romania, determines their involvement in the CBC\(^1\) Program between both neighboring countries.

Romania – Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program for the period 2007-2013 is the first program which addressed the Bulgarian-Romanian border area as an internal border of the EU. The program is based on widely accepted objectives in the area of cohesion policy at European level for cooperation at different territorial levels - cross-border, transnational and interregional. In this regard the program is aimed to support joint activities between both countries at different development spheres, like economic, social, environmental protection, etc. The ultimate objective of this CBC in the EU is the achievement of sustainable territorial development - within national territories and at cross-border level /cooperation with neighboring regions/.

The Program for CBC development in the period 2007-2013 was a continuation of the PHARE CBC Program (2003-2006) with name PHARE CBC Joint Programming Document Bulgaria-Romania. One of the key issues of the program is to apply a unified approach regarding to CBC development.

---

\(^1\) cross-border cooperation /CBC/
2.1.1.1 CBC Bulgaria and Romania - the beginning /2003-2006/

The PHARE CBC Joint Programming Document between Bulgaria and Romania 2003-2006 was based on the following strategic framework:

Table 1: Strategic framework of the Joint Programming Document Bulgaria-Romania for the period 2003-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint Programming Document Bulgaria-Romania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 1. Improving infrastructure - 5 priority objectives are defined:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The continued development of the transport in the border region and across the border in support of tourism and economic development;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased cross-border contacts between people in the border regions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improvement in the general quality of life of those living and working in the joint border region;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improvement in the efficient management of the border crossings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase of cooperation between businesses across the border, including cooperation on supply of materials, marketing and transport of goods to market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 2. Economic development - 1 priority objective is defined:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To achieve economic and social cohesion and to promote competitiveness within the eligible area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 3. Environmental protection and management - 4 priority objectives are defined:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contribute to the economic and social development of the region;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Counteract those factors which restrict and limit the potential of the Region as a proper place either to live/work or Region to visit;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protect, restore and manage environmentally important habitats and other natural assets;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate the collection and monitoring of key environmental indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 4. People to person's actions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focused on a wide range of activities aimed at CBC development and partnership established in the area of cultural exchange, education, health, sport and leisure time, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority 5. Technical assistance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regarding actions in all priorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


That means this Joint Programming Document was based on 5 development priorities, including many objectives and measures aimed at increasing of CBC actions in different
development areas - infrastructure, economic, development, environmental protection, and people to a person's actions. Improvement of transport accessibility within the CBC region was the main attention of the Document's strategic framework, moreover, it emphasized economic and social cohesion; the competitiveness of the region /focusing on SME sector/; and nature protection management.

The territorial scope of the eligible area includes 15 administrative units /corresponds to the NUTS III level/:

- The following 8 districts in Bulgaria: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, Ruse, Dobrich and Silistra;
- The following 7 counties in Romania: Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi and Constanta.

The four year implementation period /2003-2006/ of the Joint Programming Document between Bulgaria and Romania can be characterized by the following kind of pros and cons:

Positive key moments in the Bulgarian-Romanian CBC region's development:

- Defined common vision for CBC region development, focusing on economic, social and territorial cohesion between the border regions within both countries;
- Successful implementation of joint projects with significant public importance between Bulgaria and Romania in the area of different development spheres;
- Commonly accepted approach with the aim to improve economic, social and territorial cohesion at cross-border level;
- Building of administrative capacity at regional and local level in the field of CBC development and partnership establishment.

Critical issues concerning the Joint Programming Document implementation:

- CBC project implemented in the period 2003-2006 are characterized by their “case by case” realization, i.e. firstly, they are “border oriented” than achievement “joint cross-border character”;
- The inexperience of partners / actors that participate in the CBC actions and initiatives;
- Difficult implementation of some infrastructure CBC projects because of problems in the area of project management;
- Insufficient results are achieved in the area of priority 2, need to reconsider the strategic framework for joint actions aimed at cross-border economic development.
2.1.1.2 CBC Bulgaria and Romania 2007-2013 - lessons learned and best practice

If we take into account all the pros and cons of the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Program for the period 2007-2013, the following “lessons learned” can be identified in the process of CBC Program development:

- **Raising awareness of stakeholders / participants about the existing opportunities for CBC between both countries;**
- **Involvement of all relevant stakeholders:** actions focused on local participation, encouragement of joint activities, decentralization in decision-making;
- **Project sustainability:** elaboration of feasibility- and pre-feasibility studies which concern specific forms of analysis as CBA /Cost-benefit analysis/, IRR /Internal Rate of Return/, project durability, etc.;
- **Providing of technical assistance** for successful project management and realization;
- **Encouraging activities in communication and exchange of information between the stakeholders / participants aimed at improving the coordination at cross-border level.**

The strategic keywords of the framework for the programming period 2007-2013 were the following: transport accessibility, information availability and dissemination, sustainability, environmental protection, economic development /enhancement of comparative advantages and reduction of disadvantages/, coherence in the sphere of social and cultural aspects of development /see Table 2/.

The defined strategic framework was based on the following key moments:

- Overcoming of the barriers in different development areas between both countries;
- Achievement of objectives and implementation of measures with the aim of territorial cohesion between the CBC region;
- Encouraging the implementation of joint activities in the area of environmental protection.
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Table 2: Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013 - overall and specific objectives

| Overall strategic objective: |
| "To bring together the people, communities and economies of the Romania-Bulgaria border area to participate in the joint development of a cooperative area, using its human, natural and environmental resources and advantages in a sustainable way” |

| Specific Objectives: |
| 1. Improved access to transport infrastructure within the eligible area to facilitate the mobility of goods and people |
| 2. Improved availability and dissemination of information on joint opportunities within the border area |
| 3. Sustainability of the intrinsic value of the area’s natural resources from prudent exploitation and effective protection of the environment |
| 4. Sustainable economic development of the border area of joint initiatives to identify and enhance comparative advantages and to reduce disadvantages |
| 5. Social and cultural coherence strengthened by cooperative actions between people and communities |

*Source: Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013*

Five specific objectives of the program are characterized by the following features:

- **Specific objective 1 “Transport”:** transport accessibility plays a fundamental role in the process of CBC development.
- **Specific objective 2 “Communication”:** communication represents a crucial importance for the achievement of other specific objectives;
- **Specific objective 3 “Environmental protection”:** it takes into account the crucial need for environmental protection;
- **Specific objective 4 “Economic development”:** it increases CBC region’s competitiveness; joint activities implementation aimed at sustainable socioeconomic development;
- **Specific objective 5 “Social and cultural coherence”:** aimed at overcoming the barriers existing in the sphere of regional integration with social and cultural effect.
Based on the overall and specific objectives that were defined, Romania - Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Program 2007-2013 supported projects realized in the area of the following 4 Program Priority Axes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Priority Axes defined in the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 1. Accessibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key words: transport mobility improvement, transport accessibility, information and communication infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 2. Environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key words: sustainable use / protection of natural resources, environmental protection, efficient risk management promoting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 3. Economic and Social Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key words: cohesion in the economic and social sphere of development, joint identification and enhancement of the CBC region comparative advantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 4. Technical Assistance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013

2.1.2 The role of Euroregion Danubius Association, an NGOs in CBC development - Ruse District and Giurgiu County

Striving for CBC development is also reflected in the NGO sector for partnerships on both sides. In this regard, we should consider their role as a “success factor” for CBC development.

The Euroregion “Danubius” Association was established on 9th of May 2002 by the Regional Administration Ruse and Giurgiu County Council. The Association is registered as an independent legal entity - a private entity for the public benefit / organization in the NGO sector/. In 2005, the Danubius Euroregion joined the Association of European Border Regions /AEBR/, and since November 5, 2009 it has been an associate member of AEBR.

The Euroregion Danubius Association actively participates in many cross-border initiatives between the Ruse district and Giurgiu County, and it plays an important role in CBC development. The Association participates as a project partner or as a participant which supports the project implementation /coordination, logistics, translation/.

In other words, the Euroregion Danubius has been working and making significant efforts in order to make this Association as the most responsible non-governmental organization in the area of CBC. The main development spheres of cooperation, supported by the Association, are the following: economic development, transport, environmental protection, education, labor market, culture and agriculture.
Financing of the Association is carried out through:

- Dues;
- Projects;
- Consulting services;
- Donations/Grants;
- Courses in Romanian languages;
- Other sources.

The Association participates in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region /EUSDR/ elaboration. The key moments defined by the Euroregion Danubius are the following:

- Striving for competitiveness;
- Development of Integrated transport systems;
- Activities focused on monitoring of the environment;
- Protection of the Danube River, conservation of biodiversity, prevention of transboundary pollution and reduction of the risk of flooding;
- People to people actions, administrative capacity at local and regional level, encouragement of cultural exchange.

Taking into account the needs of the local residents and the development possibilities within the CBC region, the Euroregion Danubius Association defined the following 4 main development topics:

1. Creation of better conditions for socioeconomic development;
2. Territorial developers focused on the infrastructure and accessibility;
3. Polycentric network system for living development;
4. Environmental monitoring.
Subsequently, the main activities of the Euroregion Danubius Association can be grouped into the following five areas:

### Euroregion Danubius Association - main activities in the area of CBC development

- Supports central and local authorities in their implementation of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation;
- Supports local communities and authorities to find solutions for common cross-border issues /e.g. The problem with border charges of the Danube Bridge/;
- Encourages, consults and coordinates CBC between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Romania in the following spheres of development: economic development, transport accessibility, environment, education, culture, labor market, healthcare, agriculture;
- Supports partnerships between its members: exchanging information, coordination and consultation, establishment of joint teams;
- Study the feasibility of implementation of projects under various programs and initiatives for CBC, as well as programs and initiatives that can contribute to a better socioeconomic development of border regions.


One of the most successful projects where the Euroregion Danubius participated was the project “Development and promotion of church cross-border tourist route”. It was financed under the PHARE Program for CBC development between Bulgaria and Romania. The main focus of the project was to take into account the existing potential of religious tourism and its possible development within the CBC region. Implementation was undertaken by two project partners.

The final result of the project elaborated a religious tourist route at cross-border level, including the territory of the Ruse District in Bulgaria and Giurgiu County in Romania. On the other hand, this project played a role of successful starts of cross-border initiatives between both countries in the area of tourism sector.

### Project name: “Development and promotion of church cross-border tourist route”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Financing / Project partners</strong></th>
<th><strong>Project description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Financing:** under the PHARE Program CBC BG-RO 2004  
 **Project partners:** Euroregion “Danubius” and Giurgiu County Council | The results: developed tourist route between the Medieval monastery complex near Ivanovo village /Ivanovo municipality, Ruse district/ and the rock monastery “St. Dimitar Basarbovski” /Ruse municipality/, through the Orthodox churches of Ruse and Giurgiu in the monastery in Comana /Giurgiu County/. |
Projects under Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013

In this section of the case study, those projects are going to be presented where the Euroregion Danubius Association participated. The project “Tour Net - Promotion of cross-border networking for development of a common Bulgarian-Romanian tourist products” is the next project of the Association. The project attempted to promote cross-border cooperation and cross-border network within the field of tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: “Tour Net - Promotion of cross-border networking for development of a common Bulgarian-Romanian tourist products”</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 473 908,77 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead partner: Business Support Center for Small and Medium Enterprises - Ruse</td>
<td><strong>Project focus:</strong> Development of different tourist oriented products and services at cross-border level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giurgiu County Council, Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest - Territorial University Center - Giurgiu, Association Euroregion “Danubius”</td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 31st August 2010 – 29th February 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project attempted to promote and increase the overall competitiveness of the region. Project implementation focused on six specific objectives:

- Promoting the establishment of a cross-border network in the tourism sector;
- Mapping of the available tourism resources within CBC region;
- Elaboration of common informational and promotional materials;
- Elaboration of common services;
- Development of common tourism strategy which will promote the existing possibilities for tourism sector development;
- Development of common strategy aimed at the common tourism cluster establishment.

The next successful project was the “Joint actions for management of emergency situations in case of hydro-meteorological events and accidental water pollutions”. It concentrated on environmental issues, pollution monitoring, contamination prevention and crisis management in the cross-border region. The following common activities were included in the project with the aim to improve the risk management:

- Preparation of maps /utilizing geographic information system - GIS/ assessing flood risk within the region and forecasting the potential risk factors;
- Purchase of special equipment /boats, vehicle/ aimed to increase the capabilities in the field of rescue and intervention activities;
- Bilingual web portal development which provides easily accessible information /in real time/ for all authorities and general public from Bulgaria and Romania;
- Elaboration of joint activities for information and training in the area of efficient management of emergency situations.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: “Joint actions for the management of emergency situations in case of hydro-meteorological events and accidental water pollutions” /JAMES/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead partner: Giurgiu County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partner: Directorate Civil Protection - Ruse District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion “Danubius” role: assists in the project realization /logistics, translation/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next project, implemented in 2010/2011 concentrated on cross-border cooperation among public schools, among their pupils, and the project aimed to establish sustainable partnership relations in the area of education, youth and sports activities within the CBC region. It was an important CBC development with focus on “people for people” actions with participants from the Bulgarian municipality of Tsenovo and the Romanian Local Council of Comana.

The main focus of the project was designed to create conditions in the area of cooperation between the youth living in both territorial border units. The activities implemented during the project, were the following:

- Cultural-educational training of highschool students within the target region;
- Organizing of the seminar for 40 highschool students from Bulgaria and Romania;
- Performing various actions with cultural-educational and sport character in highschools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: “Cross-border initiative for cooperation between public schools from two municipalities in region Ruse - Giurgiu in creating sustainable partner relations for extracurricular activities with the accent on sport and leisure of students from public schools”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project lead partner: Tsenovo municipality /Ruse district, Bulgaria/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partner: Local Council of Comana /Giurgiu County, Romania/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority axis 1, defined in the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Program 2007-2013, concentrates on “accessibility” within the CBC region. In this regard, the next reflected project is named as the following “Roads management in the Giurgiu – Ruse cross-border region – a
successful strategy”. It focused on the issue of road management and its possible development in the cross-border region.

The project realization can be summarized: application of common geospatial solution in the sphere of road network management within the CBC region /such as the elaboration of a pilot project in the area of digital and satellite technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: <strong>“Roads management in the Giurgiu - Ruse cross-border region - a successful strategy”</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project lead partner: Giurgiu County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partners: Regional Administration - Ruse, University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, one of projects with the highest value /over 7.5 million Euro/ was under the Priority axis “Accessibility”. The project focused on the issue of transport infrastructure within the CBC region, its management, its modernization and establishment of sustainable/durable coordination between both regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: <strong>“Rehabilitating the access infrastructure for the development of the cross-border cooperation within the Giurgiu - Ruse area”</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project lead partner: Giurgiu County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partner: Slivo Pole Municipality /Ruse district, Bulgaria/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next CBC project named as “Insuring an efficient management of the joint intervention in an emergency situation in the Giurgiu-Rousse cross-border area”, designed the creation of joint infrastructure at a cross-border level in the area of emergency situations. The project focused on the question of coordination and management of intervention activities in the CBC region for the achievement of better monitoring, management and prevention of situations with emergency character.
The project implementation included the following objectives and activities for their achievement:

- Objective: Increasing the response capacity and operative interventions at cross-border level
  - Activity: Building of Giurgiu - Ruse Centre for Cross-border Coordination and Management of Intervention
  - Activity: Donation of specific equipment in case of disasters
- Objective: Increasing of management efficiency in case of emergency situations
  - Activity: Elaboration of Communication and Information System, technical and logistical support of the management efficiency
  - Activity: Conducting of joint activities between the CBC regions, with the aim to raise the awareness and improve the skills/training activities/in case of emergency situations.

**Project name: “Insuring an efficient management of the joint intervention in an emergency situation in the Giurgiu-Rousse cross-border area”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project lead partner:</strong> Giurgiu County Council</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 5 633, 877,89 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner:</strong> Regional Police Directorate - Ruse to the Ministry of the Interior</td>
<td><strong>Project overall objective:</strong> Achievement of efficient joint management within the CBC region through activities that improve monitoring, management and prevention in the area of emergency situations. <strong>Duration:</strong> 17th September 2010 – 16th March 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utilization of existing potential for the tourism sector and its development within the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border region were the main objects of the project implementation named as “Eco-tourism: A perspective for development of two small cross-border communities”. The project’s main idea corresponds to the endogenous potential of the territory, and it supported the development of tourism. Another important moment was the creation of the conditions for development of an alternative type of tourism - ecotourism.
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Project name: “Eco-tourism: A perspective for development of two small cross-border communities”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project lead partner:</strong> Vetovo municipality /Ruse district, Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Project focus:</strong> Creation of conditions for implementation of joint cross-border initiatives within the target region aimed at tourism sector development. <strong>Duration:</strong> 9th August 2011 – 8th February 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong> Gostinu Local Council /Giurgiu County/, “Club, Friends of Public’s Park of Rusenski Lom” /Ruse district/, Association “Young people with young ideas” /Ruse district/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main focus of one of the CBC projects implemented in the period 2007-2013 was based on the following key moments: “ecologic cross-border operations” and “business integrated zone”. This project is implemented under the Priority axis 3 - “Economic and Social Development” of the CBC Program between Bulgaria and Romania. Its main objective was the creation, development and implementation of instruments for analysis of socioeconomic development within the CBC target region. One of the project key activities was the elaboration of the GIS regional map.

Project name: “Ecologic Cross-Border Operations for a Business Integrated Zone - Eco Biz”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project lead partner:</strong> Giurgiu County Council</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 1 413, 998,09 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong> Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises /Ruse district/, University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Research-Development National Institute for Textile and Leather Bucharest /Romania/, National Agricultural Research-Development Institute Fundulea /Calarasi, Romania/</td>
<td><strong>Project main objective:</strong> Creation, development and implementation of instruments being used for socioeconomic development analysis. <strong>Duration:</strong> 28th June 2011 – 27th January 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project’s main focus was to provide adequate support for the CBC through promotion of local products, and to increase the level of investment in the region Giurgiu - Ruse in order to create a positive image and to reduce disadvantages within the region. Implementation of Eco Biz project is associated with the following activities implemented and results achieved:

- Created specialized software for the analysis of social and economic development of the region Giurgiu - Ruse, including socioeconomic and GIS maps of the region;
- Establishment of four information points to provide information to those who wish to start an Eco business within the CBC region;
- Joint exhibition for bio /organic/ products and environmental business solutions in the regions of Ruse and Giurgiu;
- Organized 10 local seminars in settlements within Giurgiu County;
- Visited 10 Eco farms in Romania to collect information on best practices;
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- Conducted training among companies about the concept and dimensions of Eco business;
- Elaborated common marketing strategy for the development of eco-business in the border region Ruse-Giurgiu. This strategy is based on the results from the *Study on the ecological business dimension in Giurgiu-Ruse region* which was developed during the project implementation.

As a result of project implementation: *companies can use the services of specialized software developed for socioeconomic analyses for free. This software provides free qualified information and consulting services in the area of environmental business and job opportunities and management of company documents and information*. This can be done with free registration in the system. Without registration only specially developed GIS maps of regions Ruse and Giurgiu can be viewed. The web address of the specialized software system is [http://ecobiz.smebg.net/](http://ecobiz.smebg.net/).
3. Determination of geographical confines

3.1 Ruse District and Giurgiu County - geographical confines

The Ruse district is located in the northern part of Bulgaria. To the North, the district is bordered by the Republic of Romania, to the East – it has common border with the districts of Silistra, Razgrad and Targovishte, and to Southwest-West it is bounded by the district of Veliko Tarnovo (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Ruse district borders

Specific geographic location of the Ruse district within the Republic of Bulgaria has created favorable conditions for its development. The region has a role of a center with significant importance which performs important functions in several different spheres - transport, economics, logistics, culture, etc. The Northern boundary of the Ruse district has a strategic importance - the Danube River creates opportunities for cross-border and transnational cooperation and partnership.

The second longest river in Europe - the Danube River runs through the territory of the following countries: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine. 6 Danube ports function within the Bulgarian territory which are characterized by their international importance, to be specific, Vidin, Lom, Samovit, Svishtov, Ruse and Silistra. The total number of the Bulgarian ports on the Danube River is 16.

The Port of Ruse is the biggest port on the Danube River within Bulgaria which predetermines its crucial role in the national transport system. The port plays the role of an important multimodal transport center providing transport connection between water, rail and road transport, and it has a direct connection to the national railway and road network.
Two Pan-European transport corridors, which cross the Republic of Bulgaria, pass through the territory of the Ruse district. These are the transport corridors № 7 and № 9:

- **Trans - European transport corridor № 7** - Rhine - Main - Danube connecting the Black Sea and the North Sea /with a total length of 2 300 km/;
- **Trans - European transport corridor № 9** - which starts from Helsinki /Finland/ and passes through the territory of Viborg, St. Petersburg, Pskov, Moscow and Kaliningrad within Russia, Kiev and Rozdilna in Ukraine, Kishinev /Moldova/, Bucharest /Romania/, Ruse, Veliko Tarnovo, Stara Zagora and Haskovo within Bulgaria, and up to Alexandroupolis in Greece /see Figure 2/. The Trans - European transport corridor connects the Baltic Sea and the Aegean Sea.

The strategic location of Ruse region determines the construction of the Danube Bridge /the first within the territory of Bulgaria/ which connects the country with the Republic of Romania. The Danube Bridge /also known as the Friendship Bridge/ connects the Bulgarian city of Ruse and the Romanian city of Giurgiu. Its construction began in 1952 and the Bridge was opened to transport in 1954. The Transport connection between both neighboring countries is characterized by two lanes of road and railway traffic. The last rehabilitation within the Bulgarian part of the Bridge was in 2011. This bridge is one of the two bridges in Bulgaria crossing the Danube River. The second one connects the cities of Vidin /Bulgaria/ and Calafat /Romania/, called as “The New Europe Bridge”, was officially opened in June 2013.
On the territory of Ruse district, a border checkpoint /BCP/ Ruse operates which connects the Bulgarian city of Ruse with the Romanian city of Giurgiu.

Territorial scope of the Ruse district includes 83 settlements, 9 of which are suites and 74 are villages. The district consists of the following 8 municipalities /Local Administrative Units - LAU 1 level, EUROSTAT/ - Borovo, Byala, Dve mogili, Ivanovo, Ruse, Slivo pole, Tsenovo and Vetovo.

Table 3: Administrative-territorial units included in the territorial scope of Ruse District and Giurgiu County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruse District - 8 municipalities</th>
<th>Giurgiu County - 1 municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities: Borovo, Byala, Dve mogili, Ivanovo, Ruse, Slivo pole, Tsenovo, Vetovo</td>
<td>Municipality: Giurgiu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program*

Five from these eight municipalities within the Ruse district are directly located on the Bulgarian-Romanian border /bounded by the Danube River/ and have a common border with the national border with Republic of Romania. These are the following municipalities: Tsenovo, Borovo, Ivanovo, Ruse and Slivo pole /in direction from West to East/.

The city of Ruse is the biggest Bulgarian city within the territorial scope of the CBC region /target region/. Its population was 149 642 people in 2011² which is 63,6% of the population at district level /235 252/ and 2,0% of the population at national level /7 364 570 in 2011/. According to

² Number of population in 2011 - according to the last official census in the Republic of Bulgaria
the last official census in the Republic of Bulgaria, population at district level represents around 3.2% of the total population in the country.

Table 4: Number of population and population density in Ruse district and Giurgiu County in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territorial Unit (level NUTS 3)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population Density /per/km(^2/)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruse District</td>
<td>235,252</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giurgiu County</td>
<td>265,494</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Giurgiu County is located in the Southern part of the Republic of Romania and it includes the territory of one municipality, namely, Giurgiu. The same named city of Giurgiu is the county’s capital city. 2 other cities /Bolintin-Vale and Mihăilești/ and 51 communes are included within territorial scope of the county.

Regarding the administrative territorial structure of the Republic of Romania, it should be noted that the communes represent the lowest level of administrative subdivision within the country. On the other side, town and cities have a status of “city” or “municipality”. According to the communes’ number of population, we should mention that when the commune’s population exceeds 10,000 people, the commune usually receives a city status. According to the Statistical Office of the EU /EUROSTAT/ communes and cities within Romania correspond to the Local Administrative Units - LAU 2 level.

![Figure 4: Geographical location of Giurgiu County](left)

![Figure 5: Administrative map of the Republic of Romania](right)
In 2011, 54,655 people lived in Giurgiu, which is 20.6% from the number of population at county level /265,494/, the value at county level forms 1.3% of total number population of the Republic of Romania /see Table 4/.

To the South, Giurgiu county borders Bulgaria /districts of Ruse and Silistra/ and both cities of Ruse and Giurgiu are twinned. The distance between the city of Ruse and the city of Giurgiu is about 13 km and this proximity creates very good conditions for the CBC and partnership establishment in different development spheres aimed to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion between both countries. The transport connection between both cities is carried out through road and railway transport.

In terms of the effort to improve the transport accessibility both within Bulgaria and at cross-border level, one of the Bulgarian national priorities in the transport sector is to construct a high-speed railway line between the cities of Ruse and Giurgiu which will pass through the Danube Bridge. Implementation of this priority has been associated with the need to rehabilitate the railway line of Ruse-Varna. According to information provided by the National Railway Infrastructure Company - NRIC /Bulgaria/, the value of the rehabilitation will reach

Figure 6: Railway lines in the Eastern Balkans
nearly 750 million Levs without VAT. It is expected, that the realization of this large-scale infrastructure project will be financed under the new Operational Program “Transport” for the period 2014-2020. The ultimate objective achievement - to start a high-speed train in the direction of Bucharest-Giurgiu-Ruse-Varna will have a great importance for the transport accessibility improvement within the target CBC region.

3.2 Ruse District and Giurgiu County as part of the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program

Geographical confines of the area are one of the longest borders within the EU. The border extends 610 km, while 470 km is demarcated by the Danube River. The target CBC region defined within the program is located in the Northern part of the Republic of Bulgaria and in the Southern part of the Republic of Romania along the national border between both countries.

Figure 7: Territorial scope of Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013
Source: http://www.cbcromaniabulgaria.eu/

Romanian-Bulgarian CBC region includes 15 administrative units that corresponds to the NUTS III level /EUROSTAT³/. These administrative units /7 in Romania called as counties and 8 in Bulgaria named as districts/ belong to the territorial scope of 6 regions from NUTS II level /see Table 5/.

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³ see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/
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Table 5: Romanian and Bulgarian administrative units included in the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Romanian territory included in the CBC Program - 7 counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 counties /NUTS III level/ Mehedinti, Dolj and Olt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within territorial scope of the Oltenia South West Development Region of Romania /NUTS II level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 counties /NUTS III level/ Teleorman, Giurgiu and Calarasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within territorial scope of the Muntenia South Development Region of Romania /NUTS II level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 county Constanta /NUTS III level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within the territorial scope of the South East Development Region of Romania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Bulgarian territory included in the CBC Program - 8 districts + 1 /</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 districts /NUTS III level/ Vidin, Vratsa, Montana and Pleven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within territorial scope of the North West Planning Region of Bulgaria /NUTS II level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 districts /NUTS III level/ Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within territorial scope of the North Central Planning Region of Bulgaria /NUTS II level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 district /NUTS III level/ Dobrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within territorial scope of the North East Planning Region of Bulgaria /NUTS II level/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 district /NUTS III level/ Razgrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within territorial scope of the North Central Planning Region of Bulgaria /NUTS II level/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to the program eligible area, we should mention that Razgrad district has been included in the CBC region /see Figure 7/. Therefore, the territorial scope of the CBC region includes 16 administrative units.

The territory of the Razgrad district was not included in the territorial impact scope of the Joint Programming Document between Bulgaria and Romania for the period 2003-2006. Concerning the Romanian cross-border region included in the program 2007-2013, no changes were made in the eligible area.

Table 6: Area /km2/ and percentage /%/ of CBC region included in the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area /km2/</th>
<th>% of the total country / CBC territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romanian CBC area</td>
<td>39 317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian CBC area</td>
<td>32 613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC region - total area</td>
<td>71 930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.cbcromaniabulgaria.eu/

4 The area of Bulgarian CBC region includes 9 administrative units /districts/ - Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra, Dobrich and Razgrad. The last one district Razgrad is included in the CBC region by using the flexibility rule provided by Article 21 (1) of the ERDF Regulation.
The total territory of Romania is 238 396 km², and 39 317 km² is included in the Romania - Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Program. The total CBC area within the Bulgarian territory, defined in the program’s territorial scope, is 32 613 km², which forms 29.4% of the national territory /111 001,9 km²/ /see Table 6/.

3.2.1 Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu in the context of the CBC Program Bulgaria and Romania

Besides the analysis of Ruse District and Giurgiu County a further successful and significant project should be mentioned, namely “Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”. This project was implemented in the period February 2011 - August 2012 under the financial support of the CBC Program between both countries with the following participants: Ruse municipality as the lead partner and Giurgiu municipality as the second project partner.

First of all, it should be pointed out that in the European policy “Euroregion” is considered to be a structure of transnational cooperation between two or more territories located in different European countries. Euroregions usually do not correspond to any legislative or governmental institution, they have no political authority and their work is limited to the competencies of local and regional authorities that constitute them. Transnational and cross-border cooperation is always a “bottom-up” initiative, irrespective of the level of decentralization. The need for cooperation of local authorities /cities, municipalities or group of municipalities/ lead to the creation of associated regional groupings, which often exceed the limits of several administrative regions. The Euroregions cover parts of the country that are relatively distant from the central government.

That means the Euroregion has been created with the aim to promote cooperation in cross-border areas, to encourage common cross-border interests, to stimulate welfare of the border population and to balance the development on both sides of the border.

Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu has an area of 517,8 km² and it includes the city of Ruse in Bulgaria and the city of Giurgiu in Romania, as well as other 13 settlements in the territorial scope of Ruse municipality. The greater part of the Euroregion area is located in Bulgaria, specifically, 469,2 km², which is 90.6% of the total Bulgarian area, and the Romanian part represents 48,6 km² which is 9.4% of the total territory of Romania. 219,622 inhabitants lived within the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu in 2011, and 92% of them lived in urban areas. The most important cities are the cities of Ruse and Giurgiu.

The General objective of the project was the issue of sustainable development within the Bulgarian-Romanian CBC region through the introduction of new models for cooperation and
establishment of platforms for partnership development. The main activities of the project were the following:

- Development of Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan;
- Elaboration of Investment profile of Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu.

Furthermore, the Investment profile was elaborated which presented the attractive domains of the region to the potential investors, like competitive advantages of the cross-border area, economic structure of the region and its key elements, infrastructure, support services and local cultural traditions.

What is more, Ruse has a well-developed infrastructure that enables transport operations to take advantage of the geographical location. The railway infrastructure in Ruse serves more than 1/3 of the Bulgarian external trade, the most important railway lines Ruse are the following ones: Gorna Oryahovitsa and Ruse - Varna.

Today we can explicitly claim that the strategic geographical position of both cities has been the decisive determinant which strengthened the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu as an important transport, distribution and logistics center. The two municipalities have developed all kinds of transport with the exception of the air transport.

3.2.1.1 Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu – a brief historical overview

Up to this moment, the presentation of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu was done in terms of its inclusion within the scope of the CBC Program between Bulgaria and Romania. However, it is important to emphasize that conditions for cooperation can be found also in the past. Subsequently, a little historical overview is given about this specific cross-border region.

Even in ancient times the Danube River was a basis for cooperation. During the heyday of the Roman Empire, strategic locations were fortified. And gradually, historical names started to be mentioned concerning both cities on both sides of the Danube. Several similarities in the structure of the medieval fortresses from the 13th up to the 14th century proposed a scientific hypothesis that those cities were part of a unified fortification system of the medieval Bulgarian Empire. Furthermore, Ruse has a century-old tradition as a port since the Roman times, which continued to exist during the Turkish domination. And in the 19th century, a constant circulation of ship passengers, goods and/or mail took place between the two cities. Moreover, there are religious similarities in both cities too. Both cities have a common patron, namely St. George, to whom the main churches are dedicated.

Ruse and Giurgiu have the advantage that they are situated on the same road, rail and river transport system. Giurgiu is served by four railway stations, and the city is a port of Bucharest. This is confirmed by the creation of the first railway line, the first telegraph connection, connection to a phone network and construction of a modern port in 1905.
4. CBC Bulgaria and Romania - good practices

This part of the case study includes the implemented projects within the defined CBC region. On the one side, the implemented projects between Ruse-Giurgiu will be briefly described and characterized, on the other side, the analysis includes also projects implemented in cooperation between the Ruse district and other territorial units located in the southern part of the Republic of Romania.

That means the analyzed projects were implemented with the financial support of the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program for the period 2007-2013. This program had four priority axes; nevertheless, the case study investigated the projects implemented under the Priority Axes 1, 2 and 3.5

These projects are separated into three groups depending on the specific priority axes on which they have been realized:

- Priority Axis 1: “Accessibility”
- Priority Axis 2: “Environment”
- Priority Axis 3: “Economic and Social Development”

4.1 Projects implemented under the Priority Axis 1: “Accessibility”

Priority Axis “Accessibility” included achievements in the area of a wide range of activities, concerning different development spheres. In this regard, we can mention the following key moments of the Priority Axis 1, transport accessibility, road infrastructure improvement, development of communication networks and connections, elaboration of common strategy aimed at sustainable territorial development at cross-border level, elaboration of innovative online project concepts, etc.

CBC project under implementation

One of the ongoing projects is “CBC LIVE /Cross Border Cooperation Live Interaction Videoconferencing Network”. Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry plays the role of the lead partner and the project focuses on the development of communication networks and fostering connections between the targets of the cross-border regions. In this regard, two specific project objectives are defined:

- Activation and encouragement of the CBC development within the region through upgrading of the existing networks and ICT facilities;
- Improvement of interregional communication and sustainable linkages at cross-border level through innovative pilot solutions for ensuring easy transport access.

5 The official website of the Programme did not contain information about the 4th priority axis.
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**Project name: CBC LIVE /Cross Border Cooperation Live Interaction Videoconferencing Network/**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 812 202,40 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong> Romanian Association for Technology Transfer and Innovation,</td>
<td><strong>Project main objective:</strong> Communication networks and foster connection development at cross-border level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vratsa Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Bulgaria/, Calarasi Chamber of Commerce,</td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 31(^{st}) May 2014 – 30(^{th}) November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and Agriculture /Romania/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rehabilitation and modernization of infrastructure were the object of the next CBC project.

**Project name: “Rehabilitating and modernization of access infrastructure to The cross border area Giurgiu - Ruse”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Giurgiu County Council</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 4 926, 737,92 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner:</strong> Municipality of Borovo /Ruse district, Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Project focus:</strong> to improve and modernize the transport infrastructure within the Bulgarian-Romanian CBC target region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 14(^{th}) August 2014 – 13(^{th}) January 2016</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Completed CBC projects**

The number of implemented projects, under the Priority Axis 1, “Accessibility” of the CBC Program between Bulgaria and Romania, are 5 with a total value of 23 490 772,57 Euro.

The main focus of the project was aimed to improve the transport accessibility of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu to the Trans European Transport Corridor № 9. This priority corresponds to the important role of the transport infrastructure condition in the process of the target CBC region development. In this regard, the project activities included: infrastructure modernization and traffic system optimization.

**Project name: “Improvement the accessibility of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu With Pan-European Transport Corridor № 9”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Ruse municipality</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 6 790, 140,63 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner:</strong> Giurgiu Municipality</td>
<td><strong>Project focus:</strong> Transport, infrastructure development within the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 14(^{th}) July 2012 – 13(^{th}) January 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the most successfully realized projects for CBC development was the “Common strategy for sustainable territorial development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria” which had a total value over 6.8 million EUR. Project implementation included 12 project partners, 8 from Bulgaria and 4 from Romania /with the lead project partner Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration from Romania/.

### Project name: “Common strategy for sustainable territorial development of the Cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration from Romania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Ministry of Regional Development from Bulgaria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Romanian Association for Electronic and Software Industry - Oltenia Subsidiary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Association Center of Consultancy and Projects Management - Europroject /Romania/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● National Agency of Land Improvements /Bucharest, Romania/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● District Administration Pleven /Bulgaria/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Human Resources Development Agency - Ruse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Business Support Center for Small and Medium Enterprises - Ruse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Agency for Sustainable Development and Eurointegration - Ecoregions /Bulgaria/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Veliko Tarnovo Municipality /Bulgaria/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Association of Danube River Municipalities “Danube” /Bulgaria/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 6 889, 500,70 EUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project main focuses:</strong> Striving for sustainable territorial development within the CBC region between Bulgaria and Romania.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 10th February 2012 - 9th February 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The project’s main focus concentrated on the elaboration of a common strategy for sustainable territorial development of the CBC region. The project’s general objective was to evaluate and assess the overall state of development in the region within the terms of social, economic and territorial aspects. Furthermore, evaluation of economic competitiveness, as a prospect for the future development, was another key moment of the project.

Project implementation included the following activities aimed at the sustainable territorial development achievement:

- Elaboration of Territorial Development Strategy with support of sustainable spatial and economic development within the CBC area;
- Building up of a comprehensive and operational territorial data base for the CBC target region;
- Development and implementation of efficient and sustainable territorial monitoring instruments;
- Elaboration of pilot projects in its role as the main input for the future project implementation /striving for sustainability over time/;

Activities aimed at: increasing the awareness within the CBC region as regards to the existing common problems, information about sustainable solutions applying, actions for promotion of the region.

Another successful project was the “Rehabilitating the access infrastructure for the development of the cross-border cooperation within the Giurgiu - Ruse area”. Its implementation was between the period 26th August 2010 – 25th December 2012, with the participants Slivo pole municipality in the role of the lead partner /Ruse District/ and Giurgiu County Council /Giurgiu County/. The project budget was 7 561, 489,46 EUR.

Another implemented project, under the Priority Axis “Accessibility”, was the “Roads management in the Giurgiu - Ruse cross-border region - a successful strategy”. The project had a total value of 1 444, 203,60 EUR and it was implemented in the period 17th September 2010 – 16th March 2012.

The next project was the “Innovative Online Projects Concept” under the CBC Program, implemented during the period 30th June 2010 – 29th December 2011, with the participants from Bulgaria and Romania. The main activities were focused on the following key moments: to raise awareness about the cross-border cooperation and its importance and impact /information access and dissemination/, partnerships establishment /possible opportunities for

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6 For a detailed information about this project see section ‘The role of NGOs in CBC development between Ruse District and Giurgiu County’

7 The detailed analysis of the project can be found in the chapter ‘The role of NGOs in CBC development between Ruse District and Giurgiu County’
partnerships establishment to be identified, cohesion in the social and cultural sphere / realization of joint activities at cross-border level/.

### Project name: “Innovative Online Projects Concept”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** The Center of Consultancy and Projects Management - Europroject /Olt, Romania/  
**Project partners:** The Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Vratsa /Bulgaria/ and Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry | **Budget:** 805 438,18 EUR  
**Project main focus:** Elaboration of an IT concept which aims to bring together the CBC region with respect to the social, economic and cultural cohesion.  
**Duration:** 30th June 2010-29th December 2011 |

### 4.2 Projects implemented under the Priority Axis 2: “Environment”

Priority Axis 2 and the project under this axis take into account the crucial role of the environmental protection, successful and sustainable development within the CBC region. In this regard, the project activities concern the following main topics at cross border level: environmental management and protection, prevention of environmental disasters, increasing of the capacity for emergency situations response, etc.

#### CBC projects under implementation

There are 2 projects with current status “under implementation” with a total value of 6 719 190, 66 EUR. These projects should be completed in 2015.

“Network and web platform to improve the public awareness of environmental management and protection in the cross-border area Giurgiu-Rousse and adjacent cross-border area” is one of the ongoing project. The lead partner is the National Institute of Research-Development for Machines and Installations Designed to Agriculture and Food Industry, whereas the University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” and Club Friends of Public’s Park of Rusenski Lom are the project partners. The project concentrates on increasing the public awareness, sensibility about the environmental management and protection within the target CBC region.

The project includes the following activities:

- **Environmental knowledge transfer** between different stakeholders /medium of teaching, organizations with environmental impact, etc.
- **Establishment of Romanian-Bulgarian scientific partnership** aimed at transfer in the area of the environment /technology and knowledge transfer/ between different target groups related the environmental sector.
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Project name: “Network and web platform to improve the public awareness of environmental management and protection in the cross-border area Giurgiu-Rousse and adjacent cross-border area”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> National Institute of Research and Development for Machines and Installations Designed to Agriculture and Food Industry /INMA/ - Bucharest <strong>Project partners:</strong> University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Club, Friends of Public’s Park of Rusenski Lom</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 954 757,66 EUR  <strong>Project main focus:</strong> Implementation of activities aimed to increase the sensibility of people about the role of environmental management and protection within the CBC region.  <strong>Duration:</strong> 13th June 2014 - 12th December 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Common Action for Prevention of Environmental Disasters” is the next ongoing project, which should end in 2015. The project focuses on the implementation of joint activities at a cross-border level for environmental disaster prevention. The overall objective is aimed to improve the institutional and technical capacity for prevention and emergency response in the CBC.

The main object of the project is based on the flood risk, specifically; the project aims to optimize decision-making process in order to ensure sustainable development. On the other hand, it is important to increase the awareness of different stakeholders / participants in the sphere of flood risk. On this base, the project realization includes activities: providing of information about the impact of floods on the environment, as well as information concerning the importance of the measures aimed to environmental protection.

Project name: “Common Action for Prevention of Environmental Disasters”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> National Agency of Land Improvements /Romania/ <strong>Project partners:</strong> Ecolinks - Gsuproos /Ruse, Bulgaria/, Foundation for Democracy, Culture and Liberty /Calarasi Branch, Romania/</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 5 764 433 EUR  <strong>Project main focus:</strong> Environmental disaster prevention in case of flood, through joint project activities at cross-border level.  <strong>Duration:</strong> 31st August 2013 – 30th August 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successfully completed CBC projects

There are 9 successfully implemented projects which were financed under the Priority Axis 2 “Environment”, total value of the projects was 19 753 141, 02 Euro. The following part of the case study collected these projects and it attempts to give a brief description about the aim/objects of these projects.

“Enhancing the operational, technical capacities for emergency situations response in Giurgiu-Ruse Cross-Border area” was a successful project, it was aimed to increase the current efficiency in the process of emergency response within the territory of CBC region. District
Directorate of the Ministry of Interior - Ruse was the lead partner in the realization of the project. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the public authorities in the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu were the main target group of the project.

The project implementation included the following 3 specific objective achievements:

- **Specific Objective 1**: Improving the condition of the existing fire emergency-rescue fleet and equipment of the rescue teams operating within the CBC region;
- **Specific Objective 2**: Ensuring of compatibility of fire extinguish equipment and emergency-rescue equipment in the region;
- **Specific Objective 3**: Development of capacity for forecasting and management, quick response in case of epidemiological risk to the population.

### Project name: “Enhancing the operational, technical capacities for emergency situations response in Giurgiu-Ruse Cross-Border area”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** District Directorate of the Ministry of Interior - Ruse  
**Project partners:** Giurgiu County Council | **Budget:** 5 843, 603,20 EUR  
**Project main focus:** To increase the capacity of the responsible public authorities within the CBC region in the area of emergency response situations.  
**Duration:** 27th October 2010 – 26th April 2013 |

Another successfully realized project is the “Joint actions for the management of emergency situations in case of hydro-meteorological events and accidental water pollutions - JAMES”³⁸. This project was implemented between Giurgiu County Council /as the lead partner/ and Directorate Civil Protection - Ruse District /project partner/ between 2011 and 2014. The total value of the project amounts to 4 717, 915,25 EUR.

Two project partners from Ruse district /Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises Ruse; Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry/ participated in the realization of project named “Integrated systems of monitoring and controlling wastewater, the quality and security of textile products commercialized in Romania and Bulgaria” The project’s main activities were aimed to establish a joint strategy /short, medium and long-term/ with focus on the environmental protection within the CBC region. This strategy is concentrated on different points such as in the sphere of environment as natural resources, efficient valorization, modern technologies promotion, etc. Other activities implemented during the project realization were the following: development of common systems in the sphere of environment monitoring and

³⁸ For project details see the chapter ‘The role of NGOs in CBC development between Ruse District and Giurgiu County’
control, elaboration of common informational and promotional materials in the area of environmental issues. These main activities correspond to the striving for sustainable development within the target CBC region.

**Project name:** “Integrated systems of monitoring and controlling wastewater, the quality and security of textile products commercialized in Romania and Bulgaria”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** National Research & Development Institute for Textiles and Leather, Bucharest /Romania/  
**Project partners:** Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest /Romania/, Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises Ruse, Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry | **Budget:** 722 280,51EUR  
**Project main focus:** To encourage CBC region development which to be based on the joint striving for environmental protection /monitoring, control/.  
**Duration:** 3rd September 2011 – 2nd March 2013 |

Concerning the projects, realized under the Priority Axis 2 “Environment”, we should mention the CBC project with title “REACT - Integrated system for dynamic monitoring and warning for technological risks in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area”. University of Ruse” Angel Kanchev” was the project partner.

The project’s main focus was based on four specific objective achievements:

- **Specific objective 1:** Focused on the need for increasing of the institutional capacity of the local public administration and business community in case of accidental industrial pollution;
- **Specific objective 2:** Aimed at planning capacity of the joint intervention development. It should be established on the base of the risks assessments generated by accidental industrial pollution;
- **Specific objective 3:** Local public administration capacity development in the area of the prevention and reaction in case of accidental industrial pollution;
- **Specific objective 4:** Raise the awareness of different stakeholders about the risks of accidental industrial pollution.
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**Project name**: “REACT - Integrated system for dynamic monitoring and warning for technological risks in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** National Institute for Research and Development in Electrical Engineering /Bucharest/  
**Project partners:** The National Research & Development Institute for Industrial Ecology /Bucharest/, National Research and Development Institute for Gas Turbines /Bucharest/, University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Association of the Danube River Municipalities “Danube” /Pleven, Bulgaria/ | **Budget:** 983 908,67 EUR  
**Project main focus:** Joint activities realization aimed at increase the capacity of different stakeholders within the CBC region in case of accidental industrial pollution.  
**Duration:** 8\(^{th}\) July 2011 – 7\(^{th}\) January 2013 |

Sustainable development of the CBC region between Bulgaria and Romania was reflected in the implementation of project aimed to establish an ecological corridor based on the idea for reasonable management and use of the natural resources within the region. The project realization included the following two activities:

- Establishment of long lasting partnership aimed to increase the ecological corridor management capacity and to implement the management plans of protected areas within the region;
- Implementation of activities with the aim to increase the incomes of people who live in the protected areas and protected territories within the CBC target region.

**Project name**: “Cross-border ecological corridor Ruse-Giurgiu”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Club Friends of Public’s Park of Rusenski Lom - Ruse  
**Project partners:** “Green Romania Ecological Society” Association /Giurgiu, Romania/, Ecolinks - Gsuproos /Ruse, Bulgaria/ | **Budget:** 321 077,16 EUR  
**Project main objective:** To encourage the CBC target region sustainable management and use of natural resources through ecological corridor establishment.  
**Duration:** 16\(^{th}\) October 2010 – 15\(^{th}\) April 2012 |

Some of the most important results from project implementation were the following:

- Construction of an ecological corridor between both neighboring areas. In future, the achieved result will significantly influence the rational management, use of natural resources and sustainable development of CBC region;
- Established long-term relations between the partners. These relations are able to build capacity to manage ecological corridor and performance management plans for the protected areas;
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- Support for a specific target group - farmers, who work within the areas that have been mentioned /Natural Parks, Protected areas, areas within the territorial scope of NATURA 2000/.

The achieved results are associated with the implementation of the following specific activities:

- Management plans for the Protected areas were prepared and the Management plan of Natural Park “Rusenski Lom” was updated /developed plan for the forests management and similar management plan for the Natural park “Comana”/;
- Developed an analysis with the aim to help the training of the farmers cultivating lands within the region of NATURA 2000.

A further project was implemented between the period 2010 – 2013, “Insuring an efficient management of the joint intervention in emergency situation in the Giurgiu-Ruse cross-border area” with the participation of two project partners - Giurgiu County Council /the lead partner/ and District Directorate of Ministry - Ruse /in role of the another project partner/. The total value of the project amounts to 5 633 877, 89 EUR.9

Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry played the role of the lead partner during the implementation of the CBC project aimed to implement joint actions focused on the idea for eco-responsible cross-border SMEs. In this regard, the implemented main activities had an important role for successful achievement of project objective:

- Realization of activities for establishment of durable cross-border partnership in the area sustainable development within the region;
- The need to raise the awareness of different participants/stakeholders about their environmental performance in minimizing the negative impact on the environment.

### Project name: Eco-Force: “Joint Actions for Eco-responsible Cross-Border SMEs”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ruse  
**Project partners:** Bulgarian-Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Ruse/, Association for Sustainable Development Slatina /Olt, Romania/, Romanian Ecological Action Foundation /Dolj, Romania/, Idein Society /Ruse/ | **Budget:** 371 931,40 EUR  
**Project main focus:** Striving for sustainable development within the region based on the realization of activities aimed at environmental protection.  
**Duration:** 1st June 2010 – 30th November 2011 |

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9 For a detailed analysis of this project see the chapter 'The role of NGOs in CBC development between Ruse District and Giurgiu County'
Implementation of this project led to the following results:

- Enhanced CBC and joint efforts in order to solve the common problems of the SMEs;
- Improvement of environmental performance of the SMEs and reduction of their negative environmental impact;
- Created a joint database in the area of ecology and a measure of environmental readiness.

This eco resource database contains full information on applicable legislation for Bulgaria and Romania with examples, case studies and best practices, information on waste management, voluntary instruments, sources of financing, calculator for carbon emissions, data on network Eco-Force - consultants, organizations and/or members.

This software is connected to the suitability of companies. It will allow a precise analysis of willingness to introduce environmental management systems /EMS/. Within the project, 100 companies were included for free in the pilot audit and received this software. Subsequently, environmental map of the companies and map of waste resources were elaborated.

Eco-mapping is a new systematic and accessible methodology used in the process of implementing an EMS in SMEs, which gives maximum amount prior information about the environmental impact of the company's activities, risk factors and potential discrepancies in which to take preventive or corrective action. Within the project, 25 companies were involved in its pilot implementation.

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that the implemented project activities have led to the achievement of many important results relating to sustainable development of the SME sector within the CBC region Ruse-Giurgiu. I.e. these activities and results represent a good basis for future establishment and development of successful joint activities between different stakeholders from the SME and institutional sector at cross-border level.

The municipalities of Ruse and Giurgiu played the role of partners in the realization of project focused on the need for increase the existing capacity of the public-administration in Ruse and Giurgiu in point of view the striving for better joint risk management, prevention and environmental protection. This project was implemented under title “Improvement of the capacity of the public administrations in Ruse - Giurgiu Euroregion for better joint risk management, prevention and environmental protection”, between the years 2010-2012.
The next project was the “Improvement of the capacity of the public administration” between two municipalities with the aim of risk management and environmental protection.

**Project name:** “Improvement of the capacity of the public administrations in Ruse - Giurgiu Euroregion for better joint risk management, prevention and environmental protection”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Municipality of Ruse  
**Project partners:** Municipality of Giurgiu | **Budget:** 595 945,76 EUR  
**Project main focus:** Increase the capacity at cross-border level in the sphere of joint risk management, prevention and environmental protection.  
**Duration:** 28th September 2010 – 27th March 2012 |

University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” was a partner in the project named as “Common strategy to prevent the Danube’s pollution technological risks with oil and oil products”. The project’s overall objective was to manage /effectively and timely/ pollution of the Danube River. In this regard, the project activities included: elaboration of a study in the area of existing possibilities; establishment of a common structure at cross-border level in order to manage the crisis situations; activities that include modelling and virtual simulation; development of a common strategy aimed to prevent technological pollution of the Danube River with oil products.

**Project name:** “Common strategy to prevent the Danube’s pollution technological risks with oil and oil products”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** National Research & Development Institute for Gas Turbines COMOTI Bucharest /Romani/  
**Project partners:** University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” | **Budget:** 562 601,18 EUR  
**Project main focus:** Implementation of activities aimed at efficient and timely manage of the risk of pollution of the Danube River with oil and oil products.  
**Duration:** 7th September 2010 – 6th March 2012 |

### 4.3 Projects implemented under the Priority Axis 3: ”Economic and Social Development“

**Successfully completed CBC projects**

University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” was a partner in the implementation of project named as ”Cross-Border University Network for Intercultural Communication“ which was focused on social cohesion between both countries. In this regard, the key moments of the project were the following: reduction and elimination of the negative cultural barriers among the people and
their perception, establishment of bilateral contacts between both countries /representatives from the university, business, and administration sector/, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: ”Cross-Border University Network for Intercultural Communication”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead partner: University of Veliko Turnovo St. Cyril and St. Methodius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partners: University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Ovidius University Constanța, Faculty of Letters, University of Craiova, International Elias Canetti Society, Ruse</td>
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</table>

The same project partner University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” participated in the implementation of another project. This project emphasized the establishment of new partnerships in the area of RDI activities at cross-border level. The project objectives were aimed to bring together business and research for accessing EU funds. In this regard, the key activities of the project were associated with the following results:

1. Joint network was formed by the specialists from all technological area /this result corresponds to the main objective of SANDI project/;

It should be mentioned that this result is characterized by its major future importance. The presence of the specialists from different entities will cover a large knowledge area by connecting different entities /research, university and economic agents/ in order to access and invest new funds in trans-border area.

2. Specific needs were identified at cross-border level;

3. Different events were conducted, e.g. workshops, conferences, etc. At these events, specific partners from the joint network were correlated, hence these events were utilized as network-building occasions.

Analyzing the benefits of the project, it should be emphasized that the key moment is the consideration of local needs of the population and territory. In this regard, we can say that this project has really good opportunities for future successful development of cross-border activities and initiatives between the target stakeholders within the region. Moreover, an interactive website was elaborated which gives useful information about cross-border initiatives/activities about sustainable development, it informs about educational, research, business and authority issues, about the projects which are dedicated to the local needs and about future prospects of cross-border cooperation in the given area. Effective functioning of this website represents an important condition for the establishment of long-term partnerships in the area of RDI between business and research within Ruse and Giurgiu. The website can be found on the following URL-address: [www.cbc-partners.ro](http://www.cbc-partners.ro)
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**Project name:** “Support Actions to create New RDI partnerships in trans-border area in order to bring together Business and Research for accessing European Founds - SANDI”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Lead partner: National Research and Development Institute for Gas Turbines - COMOTI /Bucharest, Romania/  
Project partners: University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” | **Budget:** 540 382,47 EUR  
**Project main focus:** Establishment of partnerships at cross-border level in the area of RDI. To bring together business and research within the CBC region.  
**Duration:** 12th July 2011 – 11th January 2013 |

The following table describes the four principal domains of RDI, namely education, research, business and authority:

**Education:**
- This part presents relevant information about all Universities and their facilities related to all the network fields.
- Users are facilitated by the possibility to search for educational events, workshops, fairs and opportunities to work on National or European projects in collaboration with Research Institutes and Universities.

**Research:**
- It contains relevant information about all Research and Development Institutes with their facilities.
- Searching for free training opportunities or even jobs for desired fields.
- Possibilities for creation of partnerships and consortiums between Institutes and Universities in order to access EU Funds.

**Business:**
- Bridging the gap between Research and Business plays the key moment for long-term results and achievement.
- This part from the website presents many opportunities to find the “perfect” partner either as Company, Research Institutes and/or Universities in order to create future projects on EU Funds.
- Options for business sector to search for the best experts in different fields in order to improve their business.

**Authorities:**
- This part consists very helpful information about all Authorities in the Cross Border Area.
- Search options for general information about environmental EU legislation which must be applied.
- Information about environmental monitoring related to soil quality, water quality, and air quality and noise control.

In other words, the website and its included database are proved to be very useful and applicable. They contain valuable information about different partners in four key areas /education, research, business, authorities/. This website database includes information about the following key fields: education, research and development, health, industry, agriculture, transport, IT / telecom, commerce, tourism, finance, publicity, consultancy, environment, public administration.

**Cross Border Cooperation Partners from Romania /from 8 territorial units/:**
Information about the partners from Bucharest, Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constanta.

**Cross Border Cooperation Partners from Bulgaria /from 9 territorial units/:**
Information about the partners from Vidin, Montana, Vraca, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Razgrad, Silistra, Dobric.

We can conclude that the results of this project represent a good starting framework for long-term /sustainable/ partnerships between Bulgaria and Romania and their cross-border cooperation. Inclusion of a database that contains information on a large number of cross-border partners from both countries /representatives from 17 territorial units/ substantially increased the sustainability and potential favorability of the project. On the other hand, the available information cover 14 key areas of development with the aim to establish long-term sustainable partnerships at cross-border level between different stakeholders from Romania and Bulgaria.

The next implementation project was named “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”, and it included the following two main activities: development of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan and elaboration of Investment profile of the Euroregion /for detailed analysis see section: 4.4/. The main object was to encourage sustainable development and to promote new models of cooperation and partnership. Two partners participated in the project.

| Project name: "Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - integrated opportunity management through master-planning" |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Project partners** | **Project description** |
| Lead partner: Municipality of Ruse | Budget: 949 944,48 EUR |
| **Project partners**: Municipality of Giurgiu | Project main focus: To encourage the sustainable development within the CBC region through establishment of new cooperation models and partnership platforms. |
| | Duration: 18th February 2011 – 17th August 2012 |
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Under financing support of the CBC Programme between Bulgaria and Romania /Priority Axis 3 “Economic and Social Development/ the project “Ecologic Cross-Border Operations for a Business Integrated Zone - Eco Biz” was implemented in 1 413 998,09 EUR. University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” was the project partner.10

Other implemented project included various fields. Promotion of tourism is at the center of cross-border cooperation because it is able to positively influence the economic and social status of the local people. The project attempted to introduce several innovative solution into tourism sector and it reflected sustainable development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: “PROmotion of TOUrism through Flexible Business Support - PRO TOUR”</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead partner: Association for Economic Development Svishtov /Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partners: Constanta Maritime University, Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry, The Center of Consultancy and Project Management - EUROP PROJECT /Olt, Romania/, Pleven Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Bulgaria/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 5th August 2011 – 4th December 2012</td>
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</table>

What is more, several other projects were implemented with the aim of territorial cooperation; sustainable development, human resources, renewable energy and employment promotion; cross-border business cooperation and its promotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: “Bulgarian-Romanian Area Identities: A Neighbourhood Study /BRAINS/”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead partner: Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest Territorial University Center, Giurgiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project partners: University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 12th July 2011 – 11th January 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 For a detailed information about the project, see section ‘The role of NGOs in CBC development between Ruse District and Giurgiu County’
### 4.4 Best practices for future CBC Projects

One of the most successful project was the “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”. This project included the development of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan and elaboration of Investment profile of the Euroregion. In this regard, analyzing the best practices collection in the period 2007-2013, the Strategy for promoting the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu should be mentioned.

*Table 7: Development vision of The Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu defined in the elaborated Investment Profile of the CBC region*

**Development vision:** “Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu become to 2020 the most attractive investment destination of the Bulgarian-Romanian border, competitive economic zone connected with the network of urban centers on the Danube River”

**Logistics and Transport Center:** The Euroregion will be the focus point of the European network of road, railway and waterway, intersection point of the main flow of goods and people to Asia Minor.
**Tourist Center:** The region Ruse-Giurgiu will become a major destination for tourists from Bucharest and Northeastern Bulgaria for recreation and practice of sport, fishing and tourism.

**Agri-food Center:** In 2020, the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu will be the main place for supply of agricultural products, fish, fresh and organic food for consumers in Bucharest and a major hub of grain in the Balkans.

**Energy Centre:** The Euroregion will attract the interest of investors interested in the production of energy from renewable sources /solar and biomass/ at low prices.

**Industrial Center:** In 2020, the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu will be the most attractive place for industrial enterprises in terms of its strategic location, accessibility, local resources, modern business infrastructure, low operational costs and closeness to emerging markets.

Source: Investment profile of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

The development vision defined in this Investment profile corresponds to the key moments which are based on the following strategic document for regional development at European level:

**Strategy “Europe 2020”**

- *Smart growth* – based on knowledge and innovation;
- *Sustainable growth* – more efficient and environmentally-friendly utilization of resources;
- *Inclusive growth* - economy with high employment rates.

**EU Strategy for the Danube Region**

EU Strategy for the Danube Region based on the following key moments:

- *Provide connectivity in the region*: mobility improvement, multimodal transport development, renewable energy use, tourist and cultural activities encouragement;
- *Environmental protection within the Danube region*: improve water quality, management of environmental risk, maintenance of biodiversity, natural resources, and soils;
- *Ensuring of prosperity in the Danube region*: promote an economy based on science, education and information society, supporting the competitiveness of the companies, development and investment in human resources;
- *Development of the administrative capacity, cooperation and security improving.*
The strategic framework defined in the Investment profile of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu includes the following hierarchically related elements: one overall objective, three specific objectives and measures for their achievement.

**Table 8: Strategic framework for the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu development /overall and specific objectives/**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall objective: “Attracting new investments and development of the business relations within the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu by improving the opportunities available and development of high quality services in support of investors”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Specific Objective 1:** Attracting of new investments in the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu  
- Defined 4 measures for objective achievement:  
  1.1. Encouraging major projects of local participants  
  1.2. Establishment of strategic partnerships  
  1.3. Providing infrastructure that is efficient and adequate of the investment projects  
  1.4. Providing incentives for investment |
| **Specific Objective 2:** Providing of support services to existing and potential investors  
- Defined 5 measures for objective achievement:  
  2.1. Informing investors for the way of implementation and development of investment projects  
  2.2. Providing access of existing and potential investors to services  
  2.3. Simplification and harmonization of the rules and procedures at local level  
  2.4. Providing of a skilled workforce in accordance with the actual requirements of the business environment  
  2.5. Increase the administrative capacity of local governments to attracting and promoting investment |
| **Specific Objective 3:** Establishment of a favorable image of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu as a strategic place for investments  
- Defined 5 measures for objective achievement:  
  3.1. Collection, processing and dissemination of important information to potential investors  
  3.2. Announcement the Euroregion as an attractive place to invest  
  3.3. Partnerships between the institutions  
  3.4. Exchange of good practices for encouraging the investments with other countries  
  3.5. Creating a consolidated database for potential investors with opportunity to find partners |

*Source: Investment profile of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/*

**ERGO MasterPlan**

The Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan which was developed under the CBC Programme between Bulgaria and Romania, plays the role of unique strategic document for development of the target region. This cross-border Masterplan included 10 significant *joint* projects between the CBC, discussed and adopted by communities in both cities of Ruse and Giurgiu.
The project, defined within the ERGO Masterplan, focused on different development areas:

- **Economic**: Priority projects, in the sphere of economy, aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the CBC region: producing establishment, support for the SME sector;
- **Transport**: Priority projects, in the field of the transport system, focused on the following key moments: improving transport accessibility at cross-border level, development of effective transport system within the urban areas;
- **Energy**: Priority projects, in the sphere of energy, focused on energy efficiency, increasing of energy efficient buildings, generating energy from renewable sources, energy management, energy saving, generation of energy from waste;
- **Tourism / Urban development**: Priority projects, in the sphere of tourism and urban development, concentrated on the attractiveness of urban centers - visitor centres, green zones, city centers refurbishment /real estate sector/.

It is very important to mention that those 10 project profiles, which were elaborated within the Masterplan, play the role of “Pre-Feasibility Studies”, i.e. this stage included all steps of the so-called “Definition” stage. Future steps concerning the evaluation of the defined projects may be realized by the elaboration of full “Feasibility Studies”. In other words, “Pre-Feasibility Study” played the role of starting point for the next stage.

![Flowchart of project stages](image-url)

*Figure 8: Steps of evaluation of the Priority projects defined in the ERGO Masterplan*

Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

The next possible steps/stages in the projects realization, could be the following:

- **“Realization”** stage which includes the elements: Technical Realization Scheme, Business Plan, and Implementation Plan.
- “Implementation” stage which concerns: Detailed Planning, Production/Construction, and Implementation.
- “Operation” stage which includes 2 elements: Operation and Optimization.

Figure 9: Territorial scope / Location of the 10 cross-border Priority Projects defined within the ERGO Masterplan
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Legend of used colors:

1. Development sphere: Economy Project/Object: Mega-Site /s/
4. Development sphere: Transport Project/Object: High-Speed Train
5. Development sphere: Transport Project/Object: Integrated City Train / Tram
8. Development sphere: Tourism Project/Object: Visitor Centres
10. Development sphere: Real Estate Project/Object: City Centres Refurbishment

Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

Priority Project 1. Mega - Site /s/

As regards to the defined Priority Project 1, we should mention the following characteristics:

- **Concerning the current situation in economic development within the CBC region:** lack of jobs at local level /including attractive working places within the region/ → need for action to end this trend.
- **Concerning the Priority Project 1:** it can be expected that attraction of a big company into the region will have significant impact on the employment/unemployment structure and it will stimulate the economic growth within the region.
- **Expected results:** labor demand for the needs of the relevant proceeding, as well as demand for local service suppliers.
- **Type of production:** According to the ERGO Masterplan, car production is the most suitably within the territorial scope of the Euroregion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 1: Mega site /s/</th>
<th>Project main focus: Producing</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specifics:</strong> Attraction and establishment (at least one) production. The most promising is the car manufacture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space requirement / Value of investments:</strong> Necessary area of 300-400 ha; estimated investment is around 300-500 million EUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> Suitable parcels can be identified east from city of Ruse and north or west from city of Giurgiu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing / Realization:</strong> Private sector investment. Realization with public and EU support /subsidies/. For example from the European Investment Bank.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources:</strong> Employment of 4 000 to 5 000 workers, opening up 2 000 jobs to service providers /hotels, restaurant, personal services, etc./.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The expected needs of an enterprise for car production, like area, communication, electricity were determined as suitable:

![Figure 10: Potential location of cars production enterprise within the Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu](source)

**Priority Project 2. Cross-border Business-Incubator /s/**

The main focus of Priority Project 2 takes into account the important role of the SME sector and its economic development within the defined CBC region. The project is named as “Cross-border business incubator/s/”, it is aimed to increase the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises within the Ruse-Giurgiu Euroregion.

- **Features in the functioning of SMEs:** most of the economic/business companies and entities operate only on the territory of their own country, i.e. on the relevant national market → need for action to support the business activities within the Ruse-Giurgiu CBC region.

- **Concerning the Priority Project 2:** cross-border business incubators should play the role of an important assisting element which supports the SMEs in the process of overcoming the national market borders.

This support could be in different spheres: information providing, know-how, training opportunities, conduction of events which informs about the characteristics of different markets, “best practice” collection and exchange, implementation of successful initiatives at
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cross-border level, legal and tax consulting, consulting in the area of tenders applications and calls for proposals, support in the area of marketing and communication.

- **Necessity of business incubators**: approximately 140 companies are interested in the creation of cross-border business incubators /100 companies in Ruse and 40 companies in Giurgiu/ within the CBC region. It can be estimated that 20-30% of these interested companies will be real candidates.
- **Should be carried out**: elaboration of a precise Feasibility Study and evaluation of financing opportunities /different subsidies/.

![Figure 11: Potential location of Cross-border Business Incubators within Ruse and Giurgiu](source)

*Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 2: Cross-Border Business-Incubator /s/</th>
<th>Project main focus: Support of start-up SMEs oriented to external markets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specifics</strong>: Support for start-up of SMEs by putting forward and initial development of their business which is oriented to markets outside the country's territory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space requirement / Value of investments</strong>: Necessary area for Ruse 5 000-8 000 m² and 2 000-3 500 m² for Giurgiu. An overall investment is about: 11,8 million EUR for Ruse and 5,14 million EUR for Giurgiu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong>: Western Port Zone Ruse /Bulgaria/ and Entrance in the Free Trade Zone Giurgiu /Romania/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing</strong>: Public investments / national and EU support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priority Project 2: Cross-Border Business-Incubator /s/  

**Project main focus: Support of start-up SMEs oriented to external markets**

- **Human Resources**: 10-12 employees for Ruse and 4-5 for Giurgiu. Creation of total 300 new jobs within 5 years.

Priority Project 3. New Danube Bridge

As regards the particulars of the defined project /especially the need for its realization/, we should note the following specifics:

- **Need for the Priority Project realization**: According to the information provided in the ERGO Masterplan, the existing Danube Bridge connecting Ruse /Bulgaria/ and Giurgiu /Romania/ is not able to serve the traffic volumes in the direction of the Trans-European corridor № 9 from Kiev /Moscow/ to Istanbul. Consequently, the need for construction of second Bridge on the Danube River is identified, and this construction could generate future development of the target CBC region.

- **Results**: The Bridge should provide a high-speed transport connection which includes both road and railway connection. As an optimal variant is defined construction of a highway with two lines in each direction, as well as a high-speed two rail lines.

*Figure 12: Potential location of the new Danube Bridge between Ruse and Giurgiu*

*Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”*
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- Return on investment /ROI/: Estimated investment for the construction of the new Danube Bridge is around 300 million EUR. On the other side, it is estimated that 10 million number of vehicles will cross the Bridge annually. In this regard, if the taxes /bridge toll/ will be around 5 Euro, the annual revenue will amount to 50 million EUR. That means one year income from the bridge tax could return 17% from the total investment of the Bridge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 3: New Danube Bridge</th>
<th>Project main focus: Construction of new Bridge on the Danube River which connects Ruse and Giurgiu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specifics:</strong> Requirement for road facility over the Danube River for the purposes of future highway and high speed railways. To build additional bypass road for both cities for both types of transport.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space requirement / Value of investments:</strong> The Bridge would be 3,5 km / 900 meters above the water/. Estimated investment is about 300 million EUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> East from the existing Danube Bridge Ruse - Giurgiu. Possible alternatives to be examined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing:</strong> Loans provided for long-term period /for example from the European Investment Bank/. These loans can be combined with other different private and public funds, as well as direct private investments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources:</strong> Requirement for at least 1 000 workers from construction companies /over 3 to 5 years during the construction/, and 200 permanent workers for future needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority Project 4. High-Speed Train

This Priority Project is based on the idea to provide a high-speed railway connection between Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. In this regard, the fast and secure transport connection between the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu and Bucharest /the Romanian capital with population of 3 million people/ and Istanbul /in its role as a mega city/ will have a significant impact on future development of the target CBC region.

The length of the planned railway line is above 700 km with the following stops along the route:

Provision of safety, comfort and fast mode of transport, with travel time between Bucharest and Ruse less than one hour, will be the most important results of this high-speed train. Moreover, one of the project’s main idea is the new railway station in Giurgiu /under the Priority Project 4/.

Figure 13: Potential location of the high-speed railway line between Ruse and Giurgiu

Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations – Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

With respect to this project, it should be noted that despite its great importance for the Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu and its future development, the decision on its implementation will be taken at national and/or at transnational level. In this regard, its future financing is considered to be a combination between consortium of development banks /for example World Bank, European Investment Bank/, private banks specialized in the area of infrastructure, as well as large investment funds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 4: High-Speed Train</th>
<th>Project main focus: Providing of fast and secure railway transport in direction Bucharest - Giurgiu - Ruse - to Istanbul /at a later phase/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Specifics: Fast and secure railway connection from/to Bucharest, at a later stage from/to Istanbul is needed for improvement of internal and external market.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Characteristics: Maximum speed of 220-250 km/h, average speed 150 km/hour; 700 km from Bucharest /Ploiesti/ to Istanbul; less than 1 hour from Ruse/Giurgiu to Bucharest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 4: High-Speed Train</th>
<th>Project main focus: Providing of fast and secure railway transport in direction Bucharest - Giurgiu - Ruse - to Istanbul /at a later phase/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Location: East from Ruse / Giurgiu, and at a later phase south from Ruse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financing: Total amount of the project is around 3 billion EUR. 20-30% of the investment is directed to the territory between Bucharest - Ruse / Giurgiu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human Resources: 1 000 jobs in the construction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority Project 5. City Train / Tram

Defined Priority Project 5 is focused on the existing transportation opportunities within the urban areas in the Euroregion. It covers two areas of development:

- *Transport sector* – improvement of transport mobility; development of public transport within urban area;
- *Environment* – providing effective means of transport, which do not adversely affect the environment.

The project’s main idea is that city trains should offer effective transport mobility, both inner-city transit and fast and easy intercity connection between both main cities, namely Ruse and Giurgiu. Subsequently, an elaboration of an integrated railroad concept on four levels is needed:

**Need for Integrated Railway Concept at local, regional, cross-border and international level, characterized by the following structure:**

1. **International High-Speed Train** /defined Priority Project 4/
2. **Intercity Trains** /from Bucharest to Giurgiu/Ruse and in future to Sofia, Varna or Stara Zagora/
3. **Regional trains** /from Giurgiu and Videle /Romania/ to the West; from Ruse along the Danube toward Silistra, etc. /
4. **Local City Train/tram** /including connection across the Danube/

Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

In regard of environmental protection, it should be mentioned that the project attempts to give incentives in order to decrease the use of private cars. It can be expected that the available effective, modern and comfortable means of transport, like city train / tram, will have a positive effect with the ability influence people and to be attractive for the travelers. In other words, the project and its implementation will stimulate people to leave their private cars when they enter into the cities.
Priority Project 5: City Train / Tram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project main focus: Development of effective urban transport within the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Specifics:** Effective system for urban public transport in Ruse and Giurgiu. Necessity of precise coordination with other transport modes.

- **Characteristics / Value of investments:** City rings - 12 km. Branches across the Danube River and additional urban rings with total length of 30-40 km. Investment (rails and trains) is around 200 million EUR.

- **Location:** Within the terrain of Ruse and Giurgiu.

- **Financing/Implementation:** Public platform companies. The project implementation may last to 3 years (period for delivery of trains).

- **Human Resources:** 300-400 employees will be needed for both cities Ruse and Giurgiu in order to implement the project (including maintenance).

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**Figure 14:** Potential route of the city train/tram system at local (inner-city) and cross-border level (between the cities Ruse and Giurgiu)

*Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations (ERGO) Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”*
**Priority Project 6. Neighborhoods with Green Energy**

Defined Priority Project 6 focuses on increasing energy efficiency/development sphere “Energy”. In this regard, the project corresponds to one of the priorities identified within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region aimed at “sustainable energy encouragement”. The project is supports “good example” in the process of applying “best practices” in the field of the energy efficiency.

The project activities include 2 main groups: production of energy from RES /renewable energy sources/ and implementation of measures which are able to increase energy efficiency. The issue of energy efficiency focuses on the following two groups of consumers: public services and private households. In regard to the first group, it is necessary to promote energy management and to establish the energy issue as priority domain at municipal level.

Taking into account the existing potential and needs of the Euroregion Ruse- Giurgiu, in terms of the development sphere “Energy” within the ERGO Masterplan, the following suitable indicative agenda is defined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suitable Indicative Programme for Euroregion Ruse - Giurgiu in the development sphere “Energy” - 9 elements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Measures for energy efficiency: in the area of both cities - construction of new buildings and with respect to the existing ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Production of required insulation materials to be realized within the Euroregion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Implementation of an entire residential neighborhood with passive-houses /use of all renewable energy available/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consideration about the possibilities for solar energy generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Implementation of self-supplying settlements within the rural areas /evaluation of possibilities for using biogas or biomass/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Consideration about the possibilities for implementation of waste-to-energy measures - for example a Central Incineration Plant for the whole Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Implementation of measures aimed to increase energy efficiency in the public sector - establishment of energy management at municipal level. Reduction of public sector energy consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. With regard to both - public and private sector: there is a need for a programme for exchanging energy-wasting devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Informational programmes conducted /to raise awareness with respect to the energy efficiency/.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/*
### Priority Project 6: Neighborhoods with Green Energy

**Project main focus: Energy Efficiency increase**

- **Specifics:** Demonstrating the advantages of energy efficient buildings and the opportunities to generate energy from renewable sources. Implementation of pilot projects within Ruse and Giurgiu.

- **Space requirement / Value of investments:** Terrains from 15 ha within Ruse and Giurgiu which mean 150 each. Investment is estimated around 120 000 EUR per unit /average area of 75m²/.

- **Location:** The locations for the pilot projects have already been identified.

- **Financing:** Purchase of land by private equity, possibilities for public land use.

- **Human Resources:** About 100 jobs in the construction companies.


The need for energy management in the public sector is associated with large losses of electricity at the municipal level /in the sphere of municipal services/. Inefficient production facilities /obsolete facilities/ cause significant energy losses up to 70%. Heating/cooling of public buildings, like hospitals, schools, administrative buildings, and their inefficient energy system generate significant problems for the budgets. Moreover, the role of municipality services /for example street illumination, public transport/ have significant impact on municipal budgets.

**Priority Project 7: Energy Management / Waste-to-Energy**

**Project main focus: Energy saving**

- **Specifics:** Energy management allows municipalities to save energy in different areas /street lighting, public transport, etc./. Relevant investments are not available in budgets.

- **Value of investments:** Expected savings is around 30% and even more. The first phase will require investment of around 80 million EUR for Ruse and 30 million EUR for Giurgiu. Besides, an additional possibility to obtain energy is the energy from waste.

- **Location:** Station to generate energy from waste can be in the Thermo-Electric Power Station - Ruse.

- **Financing:** Public-private partnership model.

- **Human Resources:** About 150 qualified workers /construction/.

The project’s main focus is aimed at implementation of energy management for the individual sectors /for example street illumination, heating of buildings, etc./.
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Energy Management Programme
- Includes the following different modular phases and work packages:

1st phase:
- **Monitoring** - continuous monitoring of all energy consumption;
- **Electrical grids** - definition of an optimal future structure in its role of overall target objective, study the usability of existing grids, refurbishing/replacing present installations and/or completely new grid construction at municipal level;
- **Street illumination** - exchange of existing lamps to the LED-standard.

2nd phase:
- **Public transport** - increase the energy efficiency in both - different electric vehicles and motorized vehicles;
- **Energy efficiency** - improvement the electrical facilities in all types of buildings and services;
- **Building standards** – reduction of energy costs in the sphere of cooling and heating systems.

Possible 3rd phase:
- **District heating** - saving energy by reconstruction of pipe-nets and heating-units;
- **Energy generation** /from RES/ - potential opportunities /for example: Photovoltaic-power stations, wind parks, hydroelectric stations/;
- **Centralized purchasing** - idea for joint purchasing of electricity.

Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Europsregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

In regard to the production of an alternative energy, as potential variant is assessed the waste-to-energy programme implementation.

Priority Project 8. New Visitor Centre /s/

Defined Priority Project 8 focuses on tourism sector and its development within the CBC region. Main idea is aimed to increase the attractiveness of both cities, Ruse and Giurgiu, for the future visitors. With reference to the significant importance of the Danube River, the best potential place for construction of the visitor centres is along the Danube River /in the territory Ruse and Giurgiu/.
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Figure 15: Potential location places of Visitor Centres /one in Ruse and one in Giurgiu/
Source: Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations /ERGO/ Masterplan /elaborated within the project “Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu Operations - Integrated Opportunity Management through Master-Planning”/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 8: New Visitor Centre /s/</th>
<th>Project main focus: Increase the attractiveness of both cities Ruse and Giurgiu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specifics:</strong> Cities of Ruse and Giurgiu want to welcome their guests perfectly. In this regard, the construction of new visitor centres should be used for guest’s service and tourist attraction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space requirement / Value of investments:</strong> Requirement for suitable terrains: 500 m² for each center. Construction and furnishing will amount to 1 million EUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> At the entrances of both cities - Ruse and Giurgiu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing:</strong> Direct municipal investment, managed by company which is an external contractor.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources:</strong> 3-5 permanent employees for each center.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priority Project 9. Green Zones

This Priority Project is focused on the following two key moments: creation of recreation possibilities for the residents and visitors, as well as improvement the quality of life within the urban areas /urban development/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 9: Green Zones</th>
<th>Project main focus: Recreation places along the Danube</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specifics:</strong> To make the coastal areas of Ruse and Giurgiu into attractive places for recreation, this will be supplemented by city parks and clean natural areas in the suburbs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space requirement / Value of investments:</strong> Length of the coastal areas of Ruse and Giurgiu - over 5 km each. In a first stage, each municipality should pay about 75 000 to 80 000 Euro for the international design competition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> Zones along the Danube River.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing:</strong> Municipal investment and/or sponsorship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources:</strong> 50 workers (in each city) will be needed for maintenance and cleaning of coastal areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority Project 10. Refurbishment of City Centres

This Priority project is focused on the following approach in the area of urban development: first step - all industrial facilities should be relocated out of the centers, and second step - “the new”/free territory, which is obtained after relocation, can be used for building of complete blocks of residential or office buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Project 10: Refurbishment of City Centres</th>
<th>Project main focus: Improve the quality of buildings within the city centres in Rousse and Giurgiu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specifics:</strong> 2 000 new apartments in Ruse and minimum 750 new apartments in Giurgiu should be built annually for the next 30 years with the newest energy-efficiency standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value of investments:</strong> Annual investment of about 100 million EUR for Ruse and 40 million EUR for Giurgiu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong> Everywhere in the urban centers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financing:</strong> Private investment with public support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources:</strong> Permanent workforce of at least 2,000 people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Organisational and institutional structure, operation (level of institutionalisation)

Despite of the EU membership in the region, common cross-border organizational and institutional structure or any other legal form have not been created yet. This is the basic reason why the current case study about Bulgaria/Romania does not include any specific organization dedicated to cross-border cooperation, which are outside of the system of the IPA Programs and projects and funds. In other words, there separate administrative structures function on both sides of the border and these administrative structures deal with the issue of CBC, but without common organizational and institutional structure.

Different type of structures that exist and operate in the area of CBC between both regions of Ruse and Giurgiu, can be divided into two groups:

- First group: public administrations /local and regional authorities/
- Second group: Universities and organizations in nongovernmental sector which contribute to CBC establishment and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First group for Bulgaria /Ruse region/</th>
<th>Public administrations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Administration Ruse, <a href="http://www.ruse.bg/">http://www.ruse.bg/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local Municipal administrations /8 municipalities in Ruse district/: Borovo, Byala, Dve mogili, Ivanovo, Ruse, Slivo pole, Tsenovo, Vetovo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within Giurgiu County, we can mention the following public administration structures contributing to the establishment of contacts /a wide range of different activities/ at cross-border level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First group for Romania /Giurgiu County/</th>
<th>Public administrations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Giurgiu County Council, <a href="http://www.cjgiurgiu.ro/">http://www.cjgiurgiu.ro/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communes within Giurgiu County territory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second group with organizational structures which operate within Ruse region is represented by the following units:

**Second group for Bulgaria /Ruse region/ - Universities, NGO**

- Association Municipal Energy Agency /Ruse/, http://www.mea.bg/
- Association “Young people with young ideas”
- Bulgarian-Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Ruse/, http://www.brcci.eu/
- Club Friends of Public’s Park of Rusenski Lom
- Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry, http://www.rcci.bg/
- The Euroregion “Danubius” Association - http://www.ruse.bg/
- University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, http://www.uni-ruse.bg/

All organizations listed above, are characterized by their importance in the cross-border cooperation, initiatives and activity. Furthermore, all of these organizational structures have a significant role in successful implementation of many projects financed under the CBC Programme between Bulgaria and Romania in the period 2007-2013. That means there is a huge need for a further and deeper analysis which would investigate these organizations, their role, structures, activity, since this kind of research would profoundly influence, encourage and stimulate the future cross-border development in the target region.

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11 For a detailed analysis of all organizations, please visit the mentioned websites.
5.1 University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”

In the period 2007-2013, University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” participated in the implementation of 9 projects for CBC between Bulgaria and Romania /projects were financed under the CBC Programme between both countries/. This should be considered as a good example in the process of establishing of successful partnerships between scientific and management structures.

Implementation of joint activities at cross-border level between the University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” and representatives of regional authorities from Romania - Giurgiu County Council, had a positive effect for cooperation between scientific and governance structures. The University also participated in joint realization of projects with Regional Administration Ruse and representatives of NGO sector.

University of Ruse played an important role in the realization of a common project with partners, like Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest and various German universities. The project -Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Center /BRIE/ represents one of the first sign of the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu. Bringing together the representatives of science and industry, BRIE represents a cross-border educational network in South Eastern Europe.

The Center’s main objective is to bring together institutions of higher education from both sides of the Danube River with a focus on inter-university and inter-cultural CBC. The Interuniversity Centre concentrates on the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu through generating, helping, deepening the relations in the sphere of science.

BRIE provides education in Masters Programs and interacts with businesses sector, politicians, public administrators, NGOs and with the media in order to respond to societal needs /university - public - private Partnership/.

This Centre is a project within the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, it was initiated by the German Rectors’ Conference at the end of 2000. The project was completed in 2002.

### Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Center /BRIE/

- **Main activities**: Development of human capital - training of professionals in order to overcome existing social and economic disparities with the other parts of Europe.

- **Role of the organizational unit**: Education in the following Master Programs: Master Program in European Studies and Regional Cooperation; Master of European Studies and Public Administration.

- Organizational structure:
  - **Board** - Rector of Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Rector of University of Ruse, Director of BRIE Centre at Bucharest Academy of
Economic Studies, Director of BRIE Centre at University of Ruse. The Board is chaired by one of the Rectors of the Universities and it rotates annually.

- **Commission** - BRIE - Ruse and BRIE - Giurgiu offices in their role of an executive body.

- **Advisory Board’s President** - Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth /former President of the German Federal Parliament and former Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Women, Youth and Health/.

- In BRIE participate many international, Bulgarian and Romanian members.

- **Location:**

  - BRIE Bulgaria: Ruse 7017, Studentska Street №8 /the building of University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”/

  - BRIE Romania: BRIE main office /Bucharest/ - Academy of Economic Studies; address: Bucharest 4th district, Serban Voda Street № 22-24. BRIE Giurgiu Office - Giurgiu municipality, Bucuresti Street, bl. 202/5D /Casa Cartii/

- **Director:** BRIE Ruse - Assoc. Prof. Mimi Kornazheva; BRIE Giurgiu - Prof. Marius Constantin Profiroiu

### 5.2 Association of Danube River Municipalities “Danube”:

The Association of Danube River Municipalities “Danube” should be mentioned in current analysis because of its role in the process of CBC establishment between Bulgaria and Romania. 36 municipalities in Bulgaria participate as members of the Association, situated within the territorial scope of 7 districts /Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra/.  

*Source: http://www.adodunav.org/en/page/rusie*
Although this organization does not have a local character, nevertheless, we believe that it should be mentioned in this part of the analysis in terms of its important role in establishment of cross-border initiatives generally between Bulgaria and Romania.

5.3 **Bulgarian-Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry /BRCCI/:**

Another initiative supporting regional development /including at cross-border level/ is the Bulgarian-Romanian Chamber of Commerce /BRCCI/. This is cross-border business association with the aim to support Bulgarian and Romanian business communities in order to implement commercial partnerships, business contacts and information exchange. Its main objectives is to promote and develop economic relations between Bulgaria and Romania, and to promote opportunities for CBC with a view to successful integration of the businesses subjects of both countries on the European single market. Members of the organization are the leading Bulgarian and Romanian companies from different economic sectors - industry, transport, tourism, trade and services, as well as international companies and organizations with an interest in both neighboring countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Bulgarian-Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry /BRCCI/:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Main activities:</strong> Support the local business community and municipalities in the region, to solve common problems, to achieve sustainable economic development and full integration of both parties in the European common market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Role of the organizational unit:</strong> Cross-border business association aimed at supporting the Bulgarian and Romanian business representatives in the process of trade partnership, business contacts and information exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Organizational structure /authorities and management/:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chamber’s authorities are: General Assembly, Governing Board, Chairman of the Board, Control Board, Executive Director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- At the moment, more than 120 Bulgarian and Romanian companies are members of the Chamber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Financing:</strong> dues; grants of funds, programs and foundations for implementation of own and joint projects; revenues from economic activity; interest and dividends; donations, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Location:</strong> Ruse 7000, 26 Aleksandrovska Str., floor 4, office 3 /the seat/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Since the beginning of 2013, BRCCI has a branch office in the capital city of Bulgaria - Sofia /aimed to facilitate contacts with companies based in the region/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Institutional form:</strong> Non-governmental organization /association/ non-profit organization, with an autonomous character for carrying out activity for private benefit. It was established in 2003.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second group for Romania is presented by the following organizations which have important role in the process of CBC establishment and development:

**Second group for Romania /Giurgiu County/ - Universities, NGO**

- Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest Territorial University Center - Giurgiu
- “Green Romania Ecological Society” Association /Giurgiu/

In the period 2007-2013, these organizations participated in the implementation of joint projects with Bulgarian partners from Ruse region /representatives of various stakeholders - local and regional authorities, NGOs, scientific community, etc./.

### 5.4 Ruse Free Spirit City Foundation

Ruse Free Spirit City Foundation established in 2012 by decision of the Municipal Council of Ruse. The Foundation was defined as a legal entity for performing of public benefit activities. Its founder is Ruse Municipality.

**Mission:**

- The campaign is focused on the idea to regenerate the creative spirit city of Ruse and to turn it into a cultural center in the Danube region through uniting citizens, cultural communities, artists, professional unions, academic representatives, NGOs, international partners and the media.

**Main objective of the Foundation:**

- The Foundation aims to support and promote the implementation of activities that affirms the positions of Ruse as a city successfully combining tradition and innovation in the area of development of civil society, science, education, culture, heritage conservation, development of cultural tourism, literature and art, inventions and high technologies.

**Spheres of activities:**

- Civil Society Development;
- Science;
- Education;
- Arts and culture;
- Development of cultural tourism;
- Local Action Groups;
- Inventions and high technologies.
The Foundation is the creator of “The Faces of Ruse” fund, which stimulates the development of local talents in the following development spheres: science, education, art and culture and that with their achievements, promoting the city on a national and international level. The fund was established in 2014.

The Foundation is involved in supporting the implementation of large and innovative events that create so-called “Sense of community” aimed to affirm city of Ruse as a “port of free creative spirit”.

Ruse Free Spirit City Foundation plays an important role in the area of cross-border initiatives development. The organization’s activities in this area are aimed at creating international networks of partnering and promoting the city as a suitable destination for cultural tourism development.

In this regard, was developed strategic document “Strategy for investment and city marketing of Ruse Municipality for the period 2014-2020”, which outlines the overall vision to attract more tourists, foreign investors and qualified personnel within the region.

**Budgeting and sponsors**

The campaign Ruse Free Spirit City was launched in 2012 and managed to establish itself as a sustainable way for modernization of the cultural calendar in Ruse region by creating of cross-sector partnerships, including at cross-border level.

The budget of the Foundation in 2014 amounted to 248 780 Levs, including public and private funding. The budget of the Foundation in 2013 was the amount of 101 000 Leva /increase with 147 780 Leva, equivalent to over 100% in 2014/. The number of attracted private sponsors has increased from 8 in 2013 to 28 in 2014.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
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Figure 16: Budget of the Ruse Free Spirit Foundation in 2014

Figure 17: Number of sponsors of the Ruse Free Spirit Foundation

Source: Ruse Free Spirit Foundation, Annual Report 2014

Financing of local initiatives in Ruse municipality by Ruse Free Spirit City Foundation

The Foundation participates in projects with the following focuses:

- creation and preservation of artworks;
- organizing events in the area of culture and art (festivals, workshops, concerts, exhibitions, etc.);
- research, documentary editions, publications, analyzes;
- production and distribution of printed and electronic publications;
- organizing conferences, trainings, seminars and other public events;
- inventions of social significance;
- introduction of innovative practices in various areas of public life;
- promoting the opportunities of city of Ruse as a cultural center of international level.

Financing of approved projects is implemented under the budget of the “Rousse Free Spirit City” for the relevant year, approved by the Municipal Council of Ruse.
6. Composition of the working organ

At the very moment it is obvious that there are only dedicated organs to CBC and each country is following its own legislation and priorities. Subsequently, establishment of an EGTC would be a very positive step ahead, which can be dedicated to CBC initiatives in any kind of fields and priority axes.

The mechanism for implementation and monitoring of Romania - Bulgaria CBC Programme which was established in both countries includes the following single and joint bodies:

**Managing Authority:**
- Responsible for managing and implementing the Programme in accordance with EC Regulations and the principles of sound financial management;
- Established within the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration;
- The Bulgarian counterpart is the National Authority, represented by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

**Certifying Authority:**
- Responsible for certifying statements of expenditure and applications for payment before they are sent to the Commission.

**Audit Authority:**
- Responsible for ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the Programme.
7. Main activity areas/profile

Main activities of the EGTC could be the following:

- Cross-border co-operation along internal EU borders;
- Transnational co-operation with ability to cover larger areas of co-operation in the Danube and the Mediterranean regions;
- Interregional co-operation programme (INTERREG IVC) and 3 networking programmes (Urbact II, Interact II and ESPON) cover all 28 Member States of the EU. They provide a framework for exchanging experience between regional and local bodies in different countries.
8. **Management (incomes/expenses)**

All the organizations mentioned above in the case study have own management and budget.
9. **SWOT-analysis (specifically with a cooperation base, instead of a territorial base)**

This part of the case study brings together all the acquired and collected information about the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border cooperation and the information is reflected through categorization into four clusters. These clusters include the following, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Ruse-Giurgiu cross-border cooperation, thus every possible aspect of cooperation is reflected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Interior features</strong></th>
<th><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>WEAKNESSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strategic position in the Balkans, the intersection of two pan-European corridors;</td>
<td>- Negative natural growth and migration - shrinking population;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Proximity to the city of Bucharest, a market of 3 million inhabitants;</td>
<td>- Intensive labor migration especially to the major cities of Romania and Bulgaria, but also to other countries of Western Europe;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Over 75% of the transit of goods (worth around € 10 billion per year) and passengers of Romania, the Balkans and Asia Minor pass through the territory of the Euroregion;</td>
<td>- The number of certified producers of organic agriculture is very small;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ruse is the main river port of Bulgaria;</td>
<td>- Abandoned construction of shopping centers in consequence of global economic crisis;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The only international station located along the Danube River, between Belgrade and the Black Sea, is in Ruse;</td>
<td>- Real estate market (especially housing) is in decline;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Large-scale cultural events are organized every year in the Euroregion Ruse-Giurgiu;</td>
<td>- High percentage of outdated homes that do not meet modern standards;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The area is very fertile agricultural land of more than 450,000 hectares (72% of the total area);</td>
<td>- Very small amount of energy is derived from renewable sources;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Skills in the workforce does not meet the needs of the modern economy;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## POSITIVE OPTIONS

- Availability of EU funding for major infrastructure projects and soft measures in agriculture, transport, human resource development, business support, tourism, protection of cultural and natural heritage, environmental protection, cross-border cooperation, renewable energy, communications, administrative capacity, etc.
- Increasing trade-off between Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece;
- Concession of the port and airport infrastructure in Ruse;
- Methane gas Pipeline under the Danube;
- Common projects of Romania and Bulgaria for the construction of new hydroelectric plants on the Danube;
- Availability of green certificates for production and use of energy from renewable sources;

## NEGATIVE THREATS

- Competition from the Asian producers;
- Increasing labor costs in both countries will redirect investors to other destinations;
- Migration of skilled workforce from the Euroregion will generate a deficit of workforce in certain areas;
- Economic instability of the two countries could negatively affect local investment climate;

After enumeration of the SWOT analysis, the next part of the case study reflects the future goals and plans of the cross-border cooperation, where it attempts to indicate some hypothetical and the already existing future orientation of the cooperation.
10. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

- Fostering / establishment of Bulgarian-Romanian border networks
- Tourism development support:
  - Mapping of existing tourism resources in the border region;
  - Development of common information and promotional materials to promote tourism and tourism opportunities in the border region / border area /;
  - Development of joint services in support of the tourism business in the future network;
  - Development of joint / common / strategy to promote tourism for the entire area of the Danube area - Bulgarian and Romanian;
  - Development of strategy for common tourist cluster;
  - Improving the information providing business and attraction of investments;
  - Infrastructure to support the entrepreneurship;
  - Development of alternative and organic farming and aquaculture;
  - Continuous training and adaptation of vocational education;
  - Utilization of the Danube as resource for Developing Cruise Tourism, Water Sports and Fishing;
  - Initiating projects of regional importance.

The analysis of future plans and goals of the CBC between the district of Ruse and the region of Giurgiu should be carry out in terms of the financing opportunities that will be provided within the current programming period 2014-2020. Financing will profoundly influence the implementation of projects in the area of various development spheres, like social, economic and/or territorial cohesion between the two neighboring regions.

In this regard we should mention the new Cross-border cooperation Programme Romania - Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020. This Programme is the main source of financing projects for CBC development. On the other side, the specific geographic location of Bulgaria /bordered by the Danube River at north/ determines its inclusion in the geographical scope of the Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020 - a new ETC\textsuperscript{12} programme.

\textsuperscript{12} ETC - European Territorial Cooperation
Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020 is a part of the legislative package for Cohesion Policy for the current funding period. In the period 2014-2020, the present area of the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme covers three transnational programmes - Danube Transnational Programme, South East Gateway (renamed later on Adriatic-Ionian) and Balkan-Mediterranean.

Areas of CBC are defined as priorities in the Danube Programme, it includes many traditional transnational development spheres: innovation, transport, environment, etc. This development areas will be supported under the following four priority axes that we re defined in the Programme:

**Table 9: Priority axes of the Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority axis 1</th>
<th>Innovative and socially responsible Danube region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority axis 2</td>
<td>Environment and culture responsible Danube region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority axis 3</td>
<td>Better connected and energy responsible Danube region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority axis 4</td>
<td>Well-governed Danube region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.southeast-europe.net/](http://www.southeast-europe.net/)
In relation to the territorial scope of this study, we should analyze the possibilities of CBC development, which will arise from the Danube Programme action within our target regions, including the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia.

We should mention that in the Territorial Development Concept of Bulgaria for the period 2013-2025 the following strategic objectives were defined:

- Territorial cohesion;
- European integration, competitiveness and innovation;
- Environmental protection.

The Danube, as a potential for transnational development, is already included in the vision of the Spatial plan of Serbia. According to the document, the cross-border and transnational cooperation with the neighboring regions will get a particular emphasis in the future. Considering the expansion of ecological networks and protected areas, the planning material dedicates a great role to the Danube and to its tributaries. In other words, CBC and its development follow the strategic objective which aims to interconnect the Danube region and environmental protection with transnational focus.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region was adopted in 2011. This Strategy has the same territorial scope as the Danube Transnational Programme /also known as the new Danube Programme/. However, the fact should be emphasized that the EU Strategy and the Danube Programme are two different instruments developed for similar aims but acting on different levels and principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danube Transnational Programme</th>
<th>EU Strategy for the Danube Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>developed for similar aims but acting on different levels and principles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transnational programme</td>
<td>macro-regional strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their matching territory and objectives provide great opportunities for cooperation between the two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Programme will contribute to the Strategy’s thematic goals by implementing relevant cooperation projects, and it might also support the institutional cooperation of stakeholders and institutions of the Danube Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.southeast-europe.net/
The Danube region strategy covers the following 4 pillars and 11 priority areas:

*Figure 19: Pillars and priority areas defined in the EU Strategy for the Danube region /EUSDR/
Source: http://www.danube-region.eu/*

Each one from the 11 priority areas is managed by 2 Priority Area Coordinators /PACs/. With regard to the roles of Bulgaria and Romania:

- Priority Area Mobility Waterways, "To improve mobility and inter-modality of inland waterways", is coordinated by Austria and Romania.
- Priority Area, "To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts", is coordinated by Bulgaria and Romania.
- Priority Area, "To manage environmental risks", is coordinated by Hungary and Romania.
- Priority Area of the EUSDR, "To work together to tackle security and organized crime", is coordinated by Germany and Bulgaria.

The new CBC Romania – Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020 aims to contribute to objectives which were defined in the Strategy “Europa 2020”, explicitly, to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The CBC Programme also interacts with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region through an integrated approach addressing common territorial challenges.

The strategic framework of the new CBC Programme takes into account the need from increasing of cross-border network, interactions and connections in different development areas: social, economic, environmental within CBC region in the period to 2020.
The three thematic priority areas defined in the Programme framework which will provide opportunities for CBC development and partnership establishment between two countries in the sphere of tourism sector in its role as a priority sector within the CBC region; social integration - focusing on the need of investments in youth, education and skills; and actions in the area of environmental protection - taking into account the climate change challenge.

As a result of the foregoing, we can conclude that the current programming period 2014-2020 will provide good opportunities for CBC development and partnership establishment between the territory of Bulgaria and Romania. In this regard, we believe that the future efforts in terms of CBC between should be aimed at the utilization of the existing good potential for cooperation in different development areas: economic, social, environmental protection.
11. Summary

The recent case study has attempted to study, analyze and investigate a specific cross-border cooperation which has been formulating between Ruse and Giurgiu. Case study collected all the needed information about this cooperation. It approached the cross-border cooperation from several point of view, like geographical frontiers, geographic determinants of cooperation; historical determinants of cooperation; institutional determinants of cooperation, reflection of the already existing institutional attempts of the cooperation; enumeration of the most important and most successful implemented and ongoing projects between Ruse and Giurgiu. Furthermore, the case study analyzed the cross-border cooperation through SWOT approach, where strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were described; and finally the future aims and goals were characterized. Some of the most important SWOT finding are the following, strategic position of the cross-border region within the Balkans, the region is an important transport corridor are the most important strengths; negative natural growth and negative impact of the global economic crisis constitute the most pressing weaknesses; availability of EU funding, increasing trade-offs are the most important options; strong tendency for weak economic performance and outward oriented migration which causes significant brain-drain are the most causing threats for the cross-border cooperation.

The important role of the Association Danubius was also briefly characterized because, its activity is confirmed by its participation in the implementation of CBC projects including the territory of Ruse District and Giurgiu County. In this regard, it should be mentioned that it is a driver for successful projects under the financial support of Romania - Bulgaria Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.

The PHARE Programme for CBC development between Bulgaria and Romania has a great significance in the region. The projects take into account the existing potential for tourism development within the CBC region. Final result of the projects elaborated a variety of touristic route at cross-border level including the territory of Ruse/Giurgiu. On the other hand, the successfully implemented projects under CBC have created the basic framework of successful cross-border initiatives between both countries in the area of tourism sector.

The ability of cooperation between Ruse/Giurgiu is influenced by several factors, either by historical linkages and connections, or through the capacity of these two regions to generate substantial interaction with the power to improve social, economic and/or cultural layers of the regions. This ability has been proved, either by implemented projects or by the still ongoing cross-border projects.

Transnational and cross-border cooperation is always a “bottom-up” initiative, where the local people articulate the need and desire for cross-border cooperation, irrespective of the level of decentralization. The need for cooperation of local authorities /cities, municipalities or group of municipalities/ leads to the creation of associated regional groupings, which often exceed
the limits of several administrative regions. It is important to underline that the region has the capacity and the need to establish a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation dedicated to Cross-Border initiatives. In addition, both countries may dedicate administration bodies to Cross-border initiatives and territorial cohesion.
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Case Study of Ruse-Giurgiu


CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

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Jaroslav Dokoupil
Milan Jeřábek
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK)
Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

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1. Introduction

This case study was elaborated in the framework of the project „Crossing the borders: Geographic and Structural Characteristics of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Danube Region”, a project led by CESCI - Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives. The case study was elaborated between June and November 2014 by the team of authors led by Hynek Böhm.

The cooperation of Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions under the TRITIA EGTC umbrella has been selected as an example of the cooperation managed by the territorial units at a higher than municipal but lower than national level. There are only 2 examples of a CBC at a higher than municipal level on the borders of the Czech Republic with Slovakia, Austria and Bavaria (countries or states covered by the Danube Strategy at the moment): apart from the EGTC TRITIA there is only one such cooperation, under the framework of CENTROPE project. There is also the new EGTC NOVUM, in which four Czech regions are partners (Pardubice, Hradec Králové, Liberec and Olomouc Regions), but the others partners from Poland and Germany do not belong to the Danube Macroregion territory.

CENTROPE is a joint initiative of the Austrian Federal Provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland, the Czech Region of South Moravia, the Slovak Regions of Bratislava and Trnava, the Hungarian Counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas as well as the cities of Bratislava, Brno, Eisenstadt, Győr, Sopron, St. Pölten, Szombathely and Trnava. On the basis of the Kittsee Declaration of 2003, they work jointly towards the creation of the Central European Region in this four-country quadrangle.

CENTROPE CAPACITY is the lead project funded under the EU programme CENTRAL EUROPE. In the period until 2012 it aimed to create a multilateral, binding and sustainable framework for the cooperation of local and regional authorities, enterprises and public institutions in the Central European Region. Specific goals consist of creating a polycentric cooperation framework which should allow all the partners to work jointly and more effectively on the cross border issues. The project also offers them new tools for a balanced spatial development as well as an integrated development strategy and action plan. CENTROPE CAPACITY builds on the results of two INTERREG IIIA projects concluded in 2007, which provided the necessary preparatory work and development steps to establish the Central European Region CENTROPE.

So why to choose TRITIA? The CENTROPE cooperation initiative is, due to its “Danube affiliation” composition, probably more relevant than the EGTC TRITIA, which is, apart from its Czech and Slovak members, also made up by two Polish members, Opole and Silesian Voivodeships. Nevertheless CENTROPE region has not been institutionalised yet and has not developed any major activities since the end of CENTROPE CAPACITY project. Moreover, according to several experts, the CENTROPE should be now little bit behind its own zenith. In contrary to the CENTROPE region, the EGTC TRITIA fulfils the criterion of institutionalisation
and can prove some activities. Moreover, the author of the case study has been directly involved in the TRITIA creation and could thus bring some direct insights.

Except for this reason and this case study another one is being elaborated by the author team, more concretely focusing on cross-border cooperation between municipalities in Czech-Austrian-Bavarian border region. The authors think that this might be interesting to present two case studies, one on the municipal- and the another one on regions-led cross-border cooperation.

For the purposes of this paper, CBC is understood as ‘an interaction between neighbouring regions within the EU (including Switzerland)’. Specifically, the interactions which will be considered are those which are initiated by public actors at regional levels (we will not deal with CBC conducted by civic society actors, despite this being also of importance).

After sixty years of European integration, European borders have become psychological rather than physical barriers. Van Houtum (2004) notes that this psychological barrier is the product of the interface between various administrative, legal and cultural systems. The newer EU member states – those which joined in and after 2004 – have a shorter experience with CBC and employ different approaches to the creation of frameworks for CBC governance than do the countries of the ‘old Europe’.

The single market, supported by the existence of the Schengen area, has European integration as its goal; that is, to ensure the freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services. The coming into existence of these four principal freedoms in turn encouraged the process which Boesler (1997) describes as ‘Entgrenzung’ (dissolution of borders). ‘Entgrenzung’ corresponds to a decreasing role for national states and the increasing importance of regions, which enter into CBC more actively. The ‘Entgrenzung’ process between the northern part of the Czech and Slovak borders will be analysed.

In the context of the increased importance of regions the concepts of paradiplomacy and new regionalism take on increased relevance. These concepts acknowledge the autonomy of local political actors and examine CBC from a bottom-up perspective; underlining local actors’ use of CBC as a tool to achieve their goals in cross-border regions. Some authors (e.g. Scott, 2000) refer to transborder regionalism, of which the emergence of new political communities is symptomatic. These new political communities cross borders and traditional mechanisms of international cooperation, developing new transfrontier models for advanced regional interaction which are capable of efficiently solving problems. According to Schmitt-Eggen (1998), a cross-border region is not only a territory, but is also its engine. This foresees the existence of a specialised body responsible for CBC management. Both analysed regions created with two other regions from Poland such a body - EGTC TRITIA. The contribution of this entity towards CBC conduct will therefore be assessed.

Knippenberg (2004, p. 618) and Perkmann (2003, p. 163) analysed the behaviour of politicians from border regions and identified a desire to avoid the limitations imposed by policies made
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Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

at the national level. Perkmann nevertheless does not consider this *cross-borderisation* to represent any kind of threat to the sovereignty of national states.

The regions are one of the key recipients of EU funds. When CBC was connected with EU funds via the INTERREG programme in the end of the 1980s, the number of cross-border initiatives dramatically increased. Some authors (i.e. O’Dowd 2002) contend that EU money is the only motivation for many cross-border initiatives; others (Scott 2000) consider working with INTERREG as a primary purpose of Euroregions. The role of EU funds as a motivation to establish an EGTC to use these funds more effectively will be analysed in the paper, more concretely relationship between OP CBC Slovakia-Czech Republic and its use by actors creating TRITIA EGTC will be analysed in more detail.

Amin and Thrift (1994) contributed with their „*institutional thickness“* concept to the group of institutional regional development theories. This partial theory says that institutions are not formal organisations only, but they mainly create informal conventions, habits, network of relations, which stabilise and stimulate performance of regional economies. Success of regions in the long-term horizon is then dependant on the ability of local actors to create such institutions, which can create good framework conditions for economic and social regional development. (Rumpel 2002, p. 25).

According to Powell and Dimaggio (1991, quot. Amin and Thrift, 1994) there are four conditions for institutional thickness at regional level:

1. Presence of classical institutions and organisations.
2. High quality of collective and cooperative behaviour between these institutions.
3. Precise definition of competences and tasks of individual institutions and the entire system they co-create.
4. Feeling of shared responsibility for the project in individual member organisations.

According to many authors (i.a. Rumpel 2002, p. 25) the last condition is the most important one. The authors of this study share the point and will try to verify this in this study.

In the very introduction it was mentioned why authors chose the relations of the Moravian-Silesian Region under the EGTC TRITIA for their case study, when arguing with its institutionalised statute. We have also mentioned several framework contexts which are important for cross-border cooperation. We believe that the quality of institutions and European funds are key factors for cross-border cooperation.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

Having written that we would like to state the following objectives of this case study:

The main objective of this paper is to show that the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation between Moravian-Silesian Region and Žilina Region under the EGTC TRITIA umbrella improved their mutual cooperation. This should be done by the following means:

- Description of the development of this cooperation, its setting-up and governance structures created.
- Interviews with stakeholders responsible for the cross-border cooperation between both regions.
- Analysis of the process of the EGTC creation and strategic documents helping to frame this cooperation.
- Analysis of the ways how these regions use the EU funded Cross-Border Cooperation Operational Programme Slovak Republic–Czech Republic in the 2007—2013 programming period. This will mainly focus on the analysis how did the fact that cooperation become institutionalised influence the approach towards using these funds in comparison to the past (programming period 2004-2006) and with other regions, which are involved in the cross-border cooperation in the centre and south of the Czech-Slovak border.
- Verification of the validity of several key concepts, mainly through the application of the institutional thickness concept in the cross-border cooperation in question.
2. Determination of geographical confines

The systemic cross-border cooperation between Moravian-Silesian Region and Žilina Region has taken place since the launch of the works leading towards the establishment of the EGTC TRITIA. Therefore this chapter will be started with the description of both regions, afterwards the description of the EGTC as the whole will follow. As the Polish neighbours from Silesian Voivodeship have played a prominent role in the process of the EGTC creation, the authors added also some short information about this region.

2.1 The Moravian-Silesian Region

![Figure 1: Localisation of the Moravian-Silesian Region](image)

The Moravian-Silesian Region is one of the 14 administrative Regions of the Czech Republic. Before May 2001 it was called the Ostrava Region (all newly emerged Czech regions, which were established in 2000, were named according to their biggest urban centres, except for the Central Bohemian Region which is around the City of Prague. The region is located in the north-eastern part of the historical country of Moravia and in the east of historical Silesia, which is currently divided between the Czech Republic and Poland, to which more or less 85% of Silesian territory belongs. The region borders the Olomouc Region to the west and the Zlín Region to the south. It also borders two other countries – Poland (Silesian and Opole Voivodeships) to the north and Slovakia (Žilina Region) to the east.

Once a highly industrialised region, it was called the "Steel Heart of the Country" in the communist era. There are, in addition, several mountainous areas where the natural landscape is relatively well preserved.
2.1.1 Physical geography characteristics

The geography of the region varies considerably, comprising many landforms from lowlands to high mountains whose summits lie above the tree line. There is the Hrubý Jeseník mountain in the west, with the highest mountain of the region, and all Moravia, Praděd, rising up to 1 491 metres. These mountains are heavily forested. There are also several ski resorts.

To the east, the landscape gradually descends towards the Moravian Gate (Moravská brána) valley with the Bečva and Odra rivers. The former flows to the south-west, the latter to the north-east, where the terrain spreads into the flat Ostrava and Opava basins (Ostravská a Opavská pánev), the most densely populated part of the area. The region's heavy industry, which has been in decline for the last decade, is located there too, benefiting from huge deposits of hard coal. The confluence of the rivers Odra and Olše is the lowest point of the region, at 195 m.

To the south-east, towards the Slovak border, the landscape sharply rises into the Moravian-Silesian Beskydy (often referred to just as Beskydy), with its highest mountain Lysá Hora at 1 323 m. The mountains are heavily forested and serve as a holiday resort.

2.1.2 Population

The total population of the region was 1 244 200 (men 48,83%, women 51,20%) in 2010 - but this is gradually decreasing since 1989. 86,9% are Czechs, 3,3% Slovaks, 3,0% Poles, 2,3% Moravians, 0,8% Silesians, 0,3% Germans and 0,2% Roma, though this last figure might be considerably higher as Roma often do not officially admit their nationality. 40,2% of the population are religious, mostly Roman Catholic, while 52,3% declare themselves atheists.

The population density is 227,3 inhabitants per km², which is the second highest in the country, after the capital Prague. Most of the population is urban, with 62 % living in towns with over 20 000 inhabitants.

2.1.3 Administrative division

There are 300 municipalities, of which 39 enjoy the statute of town. Population of 16 of these towns is over 10 000 inhabitants and 5 towns exceeded 50 000 ceiling. These are the capital of the region Ostrava (314 102 in 2002 – compare with 295 653 only in 2014), Havířov (85 271 - compare with 295 653 only in 2014), Karviná (61 146 – 2002, only 57 005 in 2014), Opava (60 731 in 2002, 58 054 in 2014) and Frýdek-Místek (60 603 in 2002, 57 523 in 2014).
Traditionally, the region has been divided into six Districts (Czech: okresy) which still exist as regional units though most administration has been shifted to the 22 Municipalities with Extended Competence and the Municipalities with Commissioned Local Authority.

- Bruntál
- Frýdek-Místek
- Karviná
- Nový Jičín
- Opava
- Ostrava-City

### 2.1.4 History

Until 2000 the current region did not exist as such. It was only a part of a larger administrative unit called the North Moravian Region (Severomoravský kraj), which was dissolved after the change of the regime and the fall of the Iron Curtain. The reform of public administration in 2000 established the Moravian-Silesian Region, next to other 13 regions of the country. Nevertheless there are still repercussions of the “communist period regionalisation”, and the previous regional structure as well as North Moravian Region still exist side by side, mainly in the organisation of justice and police.

Economic situation will be described later, in the part on cooperation strategy between the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions.

### 2.2 Žilina Region

![Figure 2: Localisation of Žilina Region](image-url)
Žilina Self-governing Region is situated in the north-west of Slovakia and it is the third largest from the eight Slovak regions, with an area of 6,808.87 sq. kms, 690,131 inhabitants and a population density slightly exceeding 101 inhabitant per sq. km. It borders with the Czech Republic in the west and Poland in the north. It shares borders with three other Slovak regions – Trenčín, Banská Bystrica and Prešov regions and comprises 5 historical regions (Horné Považie, Kysuce, Liptov, Orava a Turiec), 11 districts (Bytča, Čadca, Dolný Kubín, Kysucké Nové Mesto, Liptovský Mikuláš, Martin, Námestovo, Ružomberok, Turčianske Teplice, Tvrdošín a Žilina) and 315 municipalities, from which 18 have a town status. The region was established in 1923, however, in its present borders it exists only from 1996, when the reform of regional administration in Slovakia took place. It is a mix of industrial region with several large towns and a rural hinterland with mountains. The City of Žilina is the region’s administrative centre, whilst the City of Martin has also got a strong cultural environment, as it is also stated in the Slovak Constitution, describing this city as a “centre of Slovak national culture”.

2.2.1 Geography

The region is mountainous, belonging to the Western Carpathians. Some of the mountain ranges in the region include Javorníky, the Lesser Fatra and the Greater Fatra in the west, Oravská Magura, Chočské vrchy, Low Tatras and Western Tatras in the east. The whole area belongs to the Váh river basin. National parks on the region’s territory are the Lesser and Greater Fatra, as well as the Low and High Tatras; landscape protected areas are Strážovské vrchy, Kysuce and Horná Orava. The colorful character of the region makes it a very attractive tourism locality, often visiter by Czech and Polish tourists.

2.2.2 History

After the fall of Great Moravia in the early 10th century, the area became part of the Kingdom of Hungary by the 12th century and remained so practically to 1918. Before the break it was part of the Hungarian counties of Trenčín, Turiec, Orava and Lipto. After the incorporation into Czechoslovakia, the counties continued to exist under their Slovak names of Trenčín, Turiec, Orava and Liptov, but only until 1923, when they were replaced by (grand) counties. From 1928, it was part of the administrative unit "Slovak Land" and thus belonged to the short-lived Slovak Republic (1939-1945) before the land’s reincorporation into Czechoslovakia in 1945, when the pre-war state was restored. In 1949-1960 there was a unit with the name Žilina Region but it was abolished in 1960 and the area became part of the new Central Slovak Region, of which it was part until 1990 (except 1969-70) when it was abolished. After the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the current region was established in 1996. Since the administrative regions became autonomous in 2002, it is governed as Žilina Self-Governing Region since then.
2.2.3 Demography

The largest towns are Žilina, Martin, Liptovský Mikuláš, Ružomberok and Čadca. The level of urbanisation is relatively low, with about 50% of the population living in the towns, with the Námestovo District having the lowest urbanisation rate in the whole of Slovakia, amounting to merely 15% of the population living in urban areas. According to the 2011 census, the inhabitants of the region were almost entirely Slovaks (97.5%), with small minorities of Czechs (<1%) and Roma (<0.5%).

2.2.4 Economy

Compared to the stagnation in the 1990s, the region enjoys a period of relative prosperity now. Main employers belong to the sectors of industry and tourism. The river Váh valley, which runs across the entire region, forms a strong industrial base with wood pulp and engineering factories as well as the Kia and Volkswagen plants in Žilina and Martin.

The economic situation will be presented later, in the part on cooperation strategy between the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions.

2.3 The Silesian Voivodeship and its Metropolitan Area as an Attractor for Czech and Slovak partners

![Figure 3: Localisation of Silesian Voivodeship](image)

After the initial description of Czech and Slovak partner regions the picture must be completed by adding information about the strongest TRITIA founding member, the Silesian Voivodeship and its metropolitan area around Katowice. When looking at the characteristics of the Silesian
Voivodeship, it is clear that the process of the creation of TRITIA can be explained also as an opportunity to exploit the potential of the Polish Silesian Voivodeship with its cca 5 000 000 inhabitants and significant economic potential. The Silesian Metropolis, formally Metropolitan Association of Upper Silesia is a municipal association composed of 14 adjacent cities lying in the Silesian Voivodeship. The seat of the city council is Katowice, the largest district of the Silesian Metropolis.

Table 1: Cities of the Silesian Metropolis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katowice</td>
<td>312 201</td>
<td>164,67 km²</td>
<td>1 896/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sosnowiec</td>
<td>222 586</td>
<td>91,06 km²</td>
<td>2 444/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gliwice</td>
<td>197 393</td>
<td>133,88 km²</td>
<td>1 474/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zabrze</td>
<td>189 062</td>
<td>80,40 km²</td>
<td>2 352/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bytom</td>
<td>184 765</td>
<td>69,44 km²</td>
<td>2 661/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruda Śląska</td>
<td>144 584</td>
<td>77,73 km²</td>
<td>1 860/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tych</td>
<td>129 776</td>
<td>81,64 km²</td>
<td>1 590/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dąbrowa Górnicza</td>
<td>128 795</td>
<td>188,73 km²</td>
<td>682/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorzów</td>
<td>113 678</td>
<td>33,24 km²</td>
<td>3 420/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaworzno</td>
<td>95 520</td>
<td>152,67 km²</td>
<td>626/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysłowice</td>
<td>74 912</td>
<td>65,75 km²</td>
<td>1 139/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siemianowice Śląskie</td>
<td>71 621</td>
<td>25,5 km²</td>
<td>2 809/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piekary Śląskie</td>
<td>59 061</td>
<td>39,98 km²</td>
<td>1 477/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Świętochłowice</td>
<td>54 525</td>
<td>13,31 km²</td>
<td>4 097/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 978 479</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 218 km²</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 624.4/km²</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Silesian Metropolis also known as the Katowice area lies within one of the largest urban areas in the European Union. Its population is 2 039 454 (2008),\(^3\) within an urban zone, with a population of 2 746 460 according to Eurostat\(^4\) and is also part of the wider Silesian metropolitan area, with a population of 5 294 000 according to the European Spatial Planning Observation Network. The agglomeration is the centre of the largest urban area in Poland and one of the largest ones in the European Union. The area flourished in the 19th and early 20th centuries, thanks to industry and natural resources. The conurbation consists of about 40 neighbouring cities, and the Silesian metropolitan area includes over 50 cities with a total population of 5 million inhabitants. Katowice is also in the middle of a 7-million-population megalopolis stretching from the Kraków region through Katowice to the Ostrava region.

The area of the agglomeration enjoyed economic growth – as the most of Poland – even during the period of the global economic crisis started in 2008 (some sources suggest 2007), which was not the case for neither the Czech nor the Slovak Republic. This increased the attractiveness of the cooperation with Polish partners for both Czech and Slovak regions, which was also highlighted by several experts in the interviews.
2.4 Opole Voivodeship

The other territorial entity which currently co-creates the EGTC TRITIA is Opole Voivodeship. It is the smallest region in the administrative makeup of the country in terms of both area and population. About 15% of the one million inhabitants of this voivodeship are ethnic Germans which constitutes 90% of all ethnic Germans in Poland. As a result, many areas are officially bilingual in Opolskie, and the German language and culture plays a significant role in the education of the region.

The inclusion of Opole Voivodeship in the cooperation looks as the least integral one, as the region is far from the tripartite heart of the Czech-Polish-Slovak border. The problems faced by this Voivodeship are not the same as the one integrating mainly territories in the Katowice, Ostrava and Žilina triangle. The main reason for the inclusion of the region into the EGTC was probably due to the intensive cooperation of the units working in flood and risks prevention in the Moravian-Silesian Region, Opole and Silesian Voivodeships in the years of 2008 and 2009, when the decision to found an EGTC was taken.

2.5 The EGTC TRITIA

![Figure 4: EGTC TRITIA Cross-border region](image)
EGTC TRITIA is composed of the Moravian-Silesian Region (CZ), Silesian and Opole Voivodeships (PL) and Žilina region (SK), and the largest cities are Katowice (PL, 300 000 inh.) and Ostrava (CZ, 300 000 inh.). With an area of 34 069 km², and a population 7 855 000 inhabitants, the EGTC belongs to the biggest cross-border regions in Europe. There is a major concentration of heavy industry – coal mining and steel production – mainly in Silesian Voivodeship and the Moravian-Silesian Region. All of the regions involved have been undergoing economic reconstruction, not yet complete. In all of the regions manufacturing industry, mainly driven by the automotive sector, has newly emerged. Seven public universities and numerous private tertiary education institutions reinforce regional innovation potential.

There are smaller cooperation units – Euroregions - within the TRITIA territory:

- Těšínské Slezsko/Śląsk Cieszyński/Teschinensis,
- Silesia,
- Praděd/Pradziad,
- Beskydy.

Only the Beskydy Euroregion covers the territory of all three countries involved in the cooperation process; the other three are Czech-Polish initiatives.

All of the regional centres of the EGTC TRITIA are geographically substantially remote from the national capitals, most noticeably Ostrava (377 km from Prague) and Opole (313 km from Warsaw). The core area of the EGTC is an agglomeration around Katowice and Ostrava. Whereas the Silesian Voivodeship and the Moravian-Silesian Region represent the urban and densely populated part of the EGTC, the Opole Voivodeship and the Žilina Region are rather rural regions.

The regions constituting EGTC TRITIA miss major economic engine or metropolis within the EGTC’s territory. This is why there is no substantial cross-border labour market or cross-border flow of commuters in the TRITIA regions. This leads to the absence of specialised structures to deal with the cross-border labour market. Except for Ostrava, which is situated on the Czech-
Polish borders, all of the bigger cities are geographically at least one hour journey by car from the borders.

Neither the cooperation territory nor the actors involved in cross-border cooperation have changed since the cooperation’s beginning in 2009. As it will be explained in the following chapters, territorial units conducting cross-border cooperation lower than regional levels were offered a chance to comment on strategic development documents which have been developed during the phase of the TRITIA construction. Nevertheless, they have not been invited to become direct EGTC members for the moment.

The only other territorial unit who declared its interest in joining the EGTC was the Olomouc Region (Czech Republic). Their offer has been pending and remained unsolved, in the meantime thus Olomouc Region decided to join the newly constituted EGTC NOVUM, which covers the western part of the Czech-Polish border (thus no involvement of Slovak partners). For the EGTC TRITIA one must conclude that territorial expansion has neither been foreseen nor excluded.
3. The development of the cross-border cooperation

Each cross-border cooperation on the Czech-Slovak border is different compared to the other borders of the Czech Republic. Except for the non-existing physical, there are also almost non-existent or minimal mental and language barriers – yet the statement about the minimal language barrier cannot be applied for the young born in and after the 1990s. This is obviously caused by the long common history, presented by a joint co-existence in Czechoslovakia, which dates back to the years between 1918 and 1992, with the exception for the World War II period in 1939, when the independent Slovakia existed next to the Czech occupied territory (Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren). In the times of the common state there were functional links between the Czech and Slovak parts of the federation: daily commuting to work or school was a reality, public transport connections were in place and no mental barrier were perceived between both parts of the federal country.

After the division of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the two successors – the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic since 1 January 1993, these links started to disappear, moreover, a standard border regime was introduced between both countries. The period after 1993, was influenced by different developments in both counties: whereas the Czech Republic followed Poland and Hungary in their efforts to “return to Europe”, Slovakia was little bit behind due to the semi-authoritarian style of prime-minister Vladimír Mečiar. This led to the fact that the Czech Republic joined the NATO alliance together with Poland and Hungary already in March 1999, whereas Slovakia must have waited till 2004. Nevertheless in the same year both the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the EU in one big group with another 8 mostly ex-communist countries.

Nevertheless, in spite of the division both countries declared very similar ambitions in the foreign policy. Except for the above mentioned NATO and EU membership ambitions, which were successfully fulfilled, both countries belong to the Visegrad Group. As the web presentation of the V4 states, “the V4 was not created as an alternative to the all-European integration efforts, nor does it try to compete with the existing functional Central European structures. Its activities are in no way aimed at isolation or the weakening of ties with the other countries. On the contrary the Group aims at encouraging optimum cooperation with all countries, in particular its neighbours, its ultimate interest being the democratic development in all parts of Europe”. What is important for our paper, the cross-border cooperation belongs among top cooperation priorities, as it is mentioned in the lower paragraphs.

Visegrad cooperation is not much institutionalised. It is based solely on the principle of periodical meetings of its representatives at various levels (from the high-level meetings of prime ministers and heads of states to expert consultations). Official summits of V4 prime ministers takes place on an annual basis. Between these summits, one of the V4 countries holds presidency, part of which is the responsibility for drafting a one-year plan of action.
The only organisation within the V4 platform is the International Visegrad Fund. The Fund – established in 2000 with the aim of supporting the development of cooperation in culture, scientific exchange, research, education, exchange of students and development of cross-border cooperation as well as promotion of tourism – represents the civic dimension of the V4 cooperation. In the absolute majority of cases, the Fund provides financing to activities of non-governmental organisations and individual citizens. Apart from grant programs, the Fund awards individual scholarships and artist residencies which contribute to the exchange of views in the V4 region and the neighbouring countries. It is important to underline that next to the fact that this financial instrument has cross-border cooperation as one of its priorities, also big part of the projects in other domains – culture, scientific exchange, research, education, exchange of students and promotion of tourism – is implemented on a sheer cross-border perimeter, and had a clearly positive role in promoting cross-border cooperation.

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the division of both countries brought new borders and created physical barriers. These barriers resulted in the decrease of cross-border employment, which happened mainly in the very north of the Czech-Slovak border, where the labour force from the poor Kysuce (Slovakia) always commuted to the Czech side to work either in steel industry in Třinec and Ostrava, or in coal-mining in the Ostrava-Karviná black coal rayon. As the restructuring of industry took place in the 1990s and the early 2000s, the first potential released workers were foreigners – Poles and Slovaks.

The division of Czechoslovakia meant also the different development of public administration structures in both countries: both of them left regional levels of public administration and the only level between municipal and national was the district level – on the Czech side almost without changes, on the Slovak side the reform of districts was undertaken, in terms of which 79 smaller districts replaced the original 37 bigger ones. This environment was not favourable for the cross-border cooperation.

Moreover, no euroregions on the Czech-Slovak border were created in the 1990s: one could have observed the creation of euroregions mainly on the Czech-German (1991, Euroregion Nisa-Nysa-Neisse or 1992, Euroregion Egrensis) or Czech-Polish borders (1997 Euroregion Praděd, 1998 Euroregions Těšín Silesia and Silesia), but there were no Czech-Slovak euroregions. This was also due to the rather negative welcome of euroregions by the then Slovak prime-minister Mečiar (1992-1998) whose administration did not provide any motivation or incentives for creating euroregions.

Therefore, the first euroregions on the Czech-Slovak border were created only in 2000; Euroregion Bílé Karpaty, sheer Czech-Slovak euroregion; trilateral Euroregion Beskydy with Polish municipalities involved and also trilateral Euroregion Pomoraví-Weinviertel, where there are Austrian members too. All these euroregions were controlled by municipalities and regions had almost no influence.
Cross-border flows and connections between the Czech and Slovak parts of the federation were frequent and the border between both parts of the federation was no real limit or barrier in the times of Czechoslovakia. After the division of the country border crossings were established and the frequency of connection by public transport decreased dramatically, but was not stopped. This means that also cross-border flows were decreased but certainly did not stop. Nevertheless, one must add that its intensity was about to be restored mainly after the EU enlargement in 2004 and the removal of physical barriers brought along by the extension of the territory covered by the Schengen Agreement also in the countries which joined the EU in 2004, including the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Once the regions started their functioning, they must have firstly started to care for themselves. The first pre-condition for cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions was the signing of a treaty on joint work, which happened in 2003. In this agreement both regions identified the following cooperation areas:

- Economic cooperation and regional development,
- spatial planning and tourism,
- transport infrastructure and environmental protection,
- culture and sport,
- European integration and joint implementation of the EU funded projects.

As it is clear from the last point the European Structural Funds, which became accessible for both countries after the EU enlargement in 2004, brought new impulse into the relations between both regions. The Community Initiative Programme INTERREG 3A for the cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and mainly its successor, the cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Slovak Republic–Czech Republic 2007-2013 were the financial instruments, which led to the creation of the EGTC TRITIA and the institutionalisation of cooperation between both regions. This is nevertheless in more details described later in the text.

The first decision to establish an EGTC with the participation of the Moravian-Silesian Region, Žilina Region and two Polish regions came in June 2009, when presidents of all 4 regions met in the Moravian-Silesian Region and declared their will and preparedness to establish an EGTC, which was intended to be the first EGTC with Polish and Czech participation. The participation of Polish partners in the EGTC requires further explanation: Silesian Voivodeship and Žilina Regions have been partner regions since 2002, whilst the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Silesian Voivodeship signed their agreement in 2001 already. The participation of Opole Voivodeship cannot be explained with similar agreements as it was at first conducted with the Silesian Voivodeship. According to the experts interviewed their participation was also partly co-incidental.
3.1 The way towards establishing the EGTC

The primary motivation for selecting the legal form of EGTC was the possibility that EGTC TRITIA might have a significant role in the administration or at least the use of EU funds. However, because experience with this legal form was minimal in Slovakia and non-existent in Poland and the Czech Republic, the process of the EGTC’s approval with national authorities was slow.

One must stress that the first cross-border initiatives between Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic appeared in the second half of the 1990s, mainly involving municipalities of middle and smaller size. Almost immediately these euroregional initiatives were afforded the opportunity to cooperate on the administration of European funds with national ministries. This share of competences is still in place today. This was also the reason that the formation of the EGTC TRITIA with its flat structure ignoring other vertical public administration levels as well as economic actors and civic society organisations, accompanied by the unhidden ambition to have more control over the funds for cross-border cooperation, encountered a very hesitant welcome from national authorities and a direct refusal from the euroregions.

The process of the EGTC TRITIA’s establishment must be understood as a sheer application of the top-down principle. Despite the players at lower than regional level declared their interest in joining the activities towards the establishment of EGTC TRITIA, their voices have been ignored for a longer period. This, jointly with the very low level of communication with national levels, created an environment, which was hostile to the new CBC actor.

The initial meeting in June 2009, where the decision to establish an EGTC was taken, was followed by appointing a working group, which was composed of 5 technicians from each region – a total of 20 people. This working group was leading the works towards the final EGTC TRITIA establishment, which happened in December 2012. The founding process itself was very slow, as the founders and working group members encountered many difficulties at the level of national administration in all three counties. The only exception seemed to be the Slovak capital Bratislava, where due to the functional cooperation between southern Slovakia and Hungary there were some previous experience with this legal form, which was not the case for both Warsaw and Prague.

The principal impetus to establish an EGTC came, as previously mentioned in the upper paragraphs, from political leaders of all 4 involved regions. The most prominent role was probably played by the Marshall of the Silesian Voivodeship Śmigielski and the President of Žilina Region Blanár. Nevertheless, the work itself was done by the members of the working group, which was composed almost exclusively only from public servants of the relevant regional authorities or regional development agency representatives.

The working group members from the Silesian Voivodeship were well aware about their strong position and used it in negotiations. This was visible mainly during the discussion about the
legislation, according to which the EGTC was about to be established, and the question of the future seat of the grouping.

However, this changed when during the autumn 2010 the Marshall Smigielski did not defend his mandate in the elections. The new marshall declared his willingness to continue the works, but his personal interests were in different areas. The change of priorities of the strongest EGTC member was very visible. Moreover, the changed approach of the Silesian Voivodeship could also have been partly attributed to the fact that Polish regions managed to negotiate their continuation in the role of the managing authorities of regional operational programmes (by the way this was the role Slovak regions never had and the Czechs lost it after 2014). We can deduce that the representatives of the Polish partners were satisfied with that role and felt no more need to create difficult managing authority structures for the potential trilateral cross-border cooperation OP TRITIA.

The process of the EGTC creation has diverted from similar processes setting. As it was repeatedly mentioned in the text, the works of the creation began in 2009, when the working group of 20 technicians was created. The OP Slovak Republic – Czech Republic played an important role in this process, as it funded the project ‘Cross-Border Training Academy of Public Servants’. It was decided that parts of the training activities of the project should serve as a training about how to construct an EGTC. For this purpose, the INTERACT Handbook (Practical Handbook on the EGTC) has been exploited and the advice from this document was followed.

Already this initial phase has been except for the training used also for the definition of the joint cooperation areas. Their identification was difficult due to rather different competences of all partner regions. Final decision on cooperation areas was rather limited by this default setting. The working group identified and the politicians confirmed the principle cooperation areas, which were than described in two principle cooperation documents, the Statute and the Convention of the EGTC.

Drafting the Statute and the Convention of the EGTC were the key tasks of the working group. During this assignment, it came to numerous conflicts between lawyers who were representing all parties involved: it seemed that both Czech and Slovak legislation had many common points and principles, but the Polish legislation was found to be more complicated. This led to the prolongation of the whole process, which lasted over two years and resulted in the above mentioned documents, besides having agreed upon Poland as the country of registration and Cieszyn as the seat of the grouping. According to the lawyers it was the only possible solution; on the other hand some interviews with the experts show that Polish lawyers might have overargumented their Czech and Slovak counterparts.
The convention of founding the TRITIA EGTC identified the following core cooperation areas:

Thematic areas:
- Transport and infrastructure;
- Economic cooperation;
- Tourism;
- Energy and environment.

Horizontal area:
- Smart implementation of projects and programmes.

Apart from these above areas other fields of cooperation were also identified, such as:
- crisis management,
- culture,
- human resources development,
- cooperation of education providers with focus on tertiary education,
- cooperation of public institutions,
- cooperation in the field of sports.

The convention itself was signed in December 2012, and the registration act was done by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 2013 (www.egtctritia.eu). The statute was approved and it agreed mainly upon the main principles binding the functioning of the EGTC. It describes the bodies governing the EGTC, which are:
- the Assembly,
- the Director and secretariat, and
- the Supervisory Board.

It also sets the level of financial contribution by all its members; it is presented in chapter VII in more details.

3.2 Innovative use of the EU programmes

After the very first phase, during which the above mentioned cooperation areas were identified, the working groups decided to exploit cross-border cooperation programmes, which cover the TRITIA cooperation territory. The idea behind this decision can be, according to the interviews done with local experts, described as an ambition to use this programmes for more systemic approach to the cooperation.
Hence three projects were prepared and submitted into following operational programmes:

- Czech Republic – Poland
- Poland – Slovakia
- Slovakia – Czech Republic

All projects were focused at improving systemic cooperation between regional authorities of all four regions involved in the cooperation. These improvements should have been achieved mainly by a close cooperation of all regional authorities on joint development of systemic cross-border cooperation strategies between the regions involved.

This plan worked well. Three bilateral cross-border cooperation projects, with an ambition to construct three interlinked strategies, were approved and strategies were developed afterwards. The interviewed cross-border cooperation in the target region appreciated the elaboration of these strategies highly. The main asset was seen in the regular meetings of four working groups, which met during the strategy’s implementation regularly. This approach brought along the results promptly, as it will be showed in later chapters, because it led to more systemic approach towards the creation of new cross-border projects.

At that phase the four founding EGTC members decided to invite actors of cross-border cooperation also from lower than regional levels, mainly from euroregions on the Czech-Polish border (Euroregions Tesin Silesia, Silesia and Praděd/Pradziad) along with the trilateral Czech-Polish-Slovak Euroregion Beskydy. These partners were offered with the possibility of participation in the process of drafting all three strategies. The euroregions nominated their representatives, but their participation was rather imbalanced. Nevertheless, their proposals have been taken into account.

In the first half of 2012 three bilateral strategies were created. In the meantime the managing authority of the (Czech) regional OP of the NUTS 2 Moravia-Silesia Region decided to finance the merging of three bilateral cooperation strategies into one single EGTC TRITIA strategy. This work was undertaken until the end of 2013; the main author of this study was one of the elaborators of the EGTC strategy.

The bilateral Slovak-Czech and the joint EGTC TRITIA strategy will be in more detail treated with in the chapters on the main activity areas and future cooperation plans. They deserve detailed analysis, as they should serve as principal long-term strategic documents.
4. Organisational and institutional structure, operation level and management

The TRITIA organisational units followed the possibilities provided by 1082/2006 Regulation on European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation. Unlike its predecessors (such as Euroregions and working communities), EGTCs allow, within the same cooperative structure, the interaction of different institutional levels in a new form of multilevel governance, where more stakeholders can participate than before: regional and local authorities, Member States, and all those public or private entities (universities, chambers of commerce, foundations, etc.) that are subject to public procurement rules.

It allows them to interact on a regional (not only cross-border) basis. It establishes a legal personality, with binding decisions in potentially remarkably large territories over a wide range of cooperation areas. The legal personality enables it to have a budget and own managing organs, the capacity of employing staff, holding property, to actively participate in legal proceedings, as well as the “EU legitimation” to promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. This legal stability reinforces decision-making among the partners, their position in interaction with the EU institutions, their possibilities for launching or improving their international position and the effective management of cooperation programs and projects (Spinacci, Arribas 2009, EIPA). This Regulation concretises the institutions, which are obligatory for this legal form. In this chapter we will describe the bodies responsible for the strategic management of the grouping.

The Assembly

The Assembly should, according to the paragraph 10 of 1082/2006 Regulation, be a “body, which is made up of representatives of its members”. As a highest body of the grouping, it is currently composed by presidents of all four cooperating regions and no major changes are foreseen. Its competences include decision-making on the most important issues such as approving amendments to the Convention and the Statutes, which are the key documents according to the Regulation, approving the budget, election of the director, etc. The current chairman represents the Moravian-Silesian Region, as this was approved by all partners.

Assembly Composition

- Miroslav Novák – Chairman, Moravian-Silesian Region
- Andrzej Bula – Opole Voivodeship
- Mirosław Sekuła – Silesian Voivodeship
- Juraj Blanár – Žilina Self-governing Region
The 1082/2006 Regulation also says that statutes may provide additional organs with clearly defined powers. The four regions which founded the EGTC decided to use this option and established the **Supervisory Board** to control the overall operation and financial management of the grouping and provide the Assembly with advice. The chairman was nominated by Opole Region.

- Tomasz Kostuś – **Chairperson**
- Pavol Holeštiak
- Martin Sikora
- Dawid Pasek

Other bodies, operating within this EGTC, are expected to conduct the day-to-day work. Therefore they will be described in next chapter.
5. Composition of the working group

The EGTC Regulation 1082/2006 foresees that day-to-day management of the EGTC should be secured by the Director, who will be in her/his efforts supported by the Secretariat.

Secretariat of the EGTC

During the EGTC preparatory phase, partners decided to establish an EGTC according to the Polish legislation, as it looked as the only feasible option. To this end it seemed to be inevitable that the physical seat of the EGTC should also be located in Poland.

The secretariat of the Assembly was finally placed in Cieszyn, Poland. The choice of this town as a seat of the EGTC was done mainly due to the symbolic meaning of the place: Cieszyn (in Czech Těšín) was one town, which was divided between Czechoslovakia and Poland after the end of the World War I. The town is a seat of Cieszyn/Těšín Silesia region and since 1998 also Czech-Polish Euroregion bearing the same name (Euroregion Těšínské Slezsko /Ślask Cieszyński). Both the towns Český Těšín (CZ) and Cieszyn (PL) have been very active in the cross-border cooerperational work and they have developed some remarkable projects and products.

Probably the biggest current problem of EGTC TRITIA lies in the limited capacity of its current secretariat, which is combined – or probably also partly co-caused – by the decreased level of interest from the strongest EGTC partner, the Silesian Voivodeship.

The first director of the grouping, Mr Zacharides, was not allowed to conduct the job on a full-time basis by the President of Žilina Region. Next to that he has been working as a Director of the Regional Development Agency of Žilina Region, which nominated him to do the job, but instructed him to conduct the EGTC director’s function only up to a half-time basis. This limitation in capacity did not allow Mr Zacharides to dedicate the time to the TRITIA that it would have deserved.

Except for that the director was rather limited in the conduct of his role as a human resources manager. He was not allowed to select the employees freely, but had to accept nominations coming from the founding regions. Sometimes these nominations were made on political basis and the nominees had met very few of the preconditions to conduct the job properly.

As a result of this situation the secretariat was at a very uncomfortable position at the very beginning of TRITIA activities. The secretariat was composed from three persons, none of them on a full-time basis and at least one of them (in a position of project manager) was a sheer political nominee with very few preconditions fulfilled to do the job properly.

At the EGTC preparatory phase the discussion was led also about the possible involvement of the experts, which would be seconded for the EGTC’s use by the founding members. These initial thoughts were nevertheless not anyhow reflected into the mechanisms setting up the
EGTC TRITIA’s functioning. These seconded experts would have certainly been of a substantial help, nevertheless they have since then not been involved yet.

Despite the above mentioned limitations, the director Mr Zacharides managed to obtain some financial resources on a project basis. The projects were using the funds available: OP cross-border cooperation Czech Republic – Poland 2007-2013 and the International Visegrad Fund. They are described in a later chapter focusing on the main activities.

The current activities of the EGTC secretariat focus on the implementation of the approved projects. Except for that it has been engaged as a facilitator of the process of preparation and implementation of all mentioned strategies. As far as EU funding is concerned, there is a break between the calls of the two programming periods at this moment: the calls of 2007-2013 are over and the new programming period 2014-2020 will be – in terms of calls – launched in spring 2015 at the earliest.

The secretariat principally allows the balanced use of all three official and working languages of the grouping, Czech, Slovak and Polish. In practical terms the mix of all languages is applied, a translator from Czech/Slovak into Polish was used to be invited in the process of the statute, convention and strategies drafting. Now these professionals are used somewhat less. In practical terms the differences between Czech and Slovak do not require any external assistance, the differences of both languages to Polish are nevertheless more significant, here the language assistance is often needed, despite that the secretariat tries to save the money and use its own human resources.

At the moment the secretariat has four staff-members, each of them selected by one of the four founding regions: director Ms Sláviková, who is commuting from Slovakia, project manager representing Opole Region Ms Marzena Koral also commuting from Opole, project manager Anna Pilch from Cieszyn, who represents the Silesian Voivodeship, financial manager Ms Stepnikowska coming also from Cieszyn. The last member of secretariat from the Moravian-Silesian Region was from Český Těšín and also commuted (in fact walked over the border bridge from home) left the secretariat, right now the Moravian-Silesian Region is looking for his replacement. Except for the financial manager and project manager Ms Pilch, who have in the same building the seat of their other employer, staff-members commute to Cieszyn, but not on a daily basis. According to former director Zacharides they meet twice or three times a week.
6. Main cooperation plans, goals and activities

This chapter will focus on the main strategic documents, which determine the principal cooperation areas, activities and projects. It is the systemic approach towards cooperation, which distinguishes the cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions under the joint TRITIA umbrella from other initiatives cooperating across the borders. Except for this systematisation it is also the institutionalisation of cooperation, which makes a difference to other cooperation initiatives.

The use of three cross-border cooperation programmes was – to our knowledge – the first time when Objective 3 programmes have helped to finance the development of strategic documents for a future EGTC. Hence in this chapter we will describe how “The Cooperation Project” helped to formulate cooperation strategy between the Žilina and Moravian-Silesian Regions.

6.1 Key cooperation initiatives based on the results of the project
‘Cooperation – Strategy of systemic Cooperation Between Žilina and Moravian-Silesian Region’

The bilateral cooperation strategy between the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Self-Governing Region was funded from the SK-CZ OP. Its elaboration was done by the members of the four working groups, which copied the core cooperation areas (transport and infrastructure, economic cooperation, tourism, and energy and environment), the outsourced Regional Development Agency of the Žilina Region had responsibility for the final outline of the document. The document was elaborated between June 2011 and March 2012.

This partial cooperation strategy had an ambition to achieve the following global objective: “achieving by the means of mutual cooperation the needs necessary for the socio-economic development of border territory while respecting given assets of this territory and reflecting its needs”. This global objective should be achieved by the following strategic objectives:

1. Improving the transport network of the border region to ensure accessibility, increasing security and minimising negative environmental impacts.
2. Developing cross-border cooperation while working on an environment favourable for employment, entrepreneurship and innovation.
3. Exploiting the historical and natural assets of the territory for tourism economy development.
4. Increasing the quality of environment of the territory and using its potential for the exploitation of alternative energy resources.
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6.2 Proposals for the future cooperation in transport and infrastructure

6.2.1 Current situation

High traffic load of existing road links in the Žilina Region and the Moravian-Silesian Region, increased rate of accidents, as well as negative impact on the environment in the form of increased noise, emissions from mobile sources of pollution and the like, all caused by insufficient infrastructure of this border area and also its insufficient quality. This has a negative impact on the required connectivity and accessibility of the area on both sides of the border. Both partner regions have the second lowest number of kilometres of road infrastructure per capita in the national comparisons. At the same time, the volume of public road traffic in both regions shows above-average values in their countries. The traffic load of the existing road network is also increased by rapidly growing transport between both regions, whilst the border crossings Svrčinovec-Mosty u Jablunkova and Makov-Bumbálka belong to the most important border crossings at the whole Czech-Slovak border due to the intensity of the use of passenger and freight transport and the rate of its growth. This situation relates to the wider economic context after the integration of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the EU and with the increasing importance of the north-south European traffic corridor passing through both regions, while there is a slow advancement in building the superior transport infrastructure. High traffic load of the road network in both regions negatively impacts accident rate, in terms of which both regions rank among the leaders in this statistics in their respective countries, including fatalities.

Table 3: Selected transport data of both regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Žilina Region</th>
<th>Year of the data topicality</th>
<th>Moravian-Silesian Region</th>
<th>Year of the data topicality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of roads (I,II,III)</td>
<td>1 954,21</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3 377,6</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density of roads (I,II,III) per 100 km²</td>
<td>28,7</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>62,24</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of roads per 10K inhabitants</td>
<td>28,02</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27,9</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of highways and speedways</td>
<td>77,48</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>85,5</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density of highways and speedways per 100 km²</td>
<td>1,14</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,58</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of highways and speedways per 10K inhabitants</td>
<td>1,11</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0,69</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalities in traffic accidents</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Road transport has, in terms of the transportation sector, a dominant share in generating CO₂ and particle emissions and contributes to the fact that both regions rank among the most polluted ones in their respective countries. The rugged topography of this border area, caused by the Carpathian mountain range, is reflected by an increased number of structures, including bridges, in the road infrastructure. Lack of investments in road infrastructure contribute to the increase in emissions of pollutants in the atmosphere. Last but not least, they contribute to the high risk of accident rate, since many infrastructural elements increase the risk of collision of road traffic participants. On the contrary, alternative forms of transport, such as railway traffic, cycling and others, are not used sufficiently. There are free charging stations for electric motor vehicles. The cycle tracks’ network is poor, the tracks are usually running on the roads used by motor vehicles and the design of existing crossings does not take cyclists into consideration. At present, their condition is not satisfactory to serve as an alternative for the accessibility of the economic centres of the region. Although the railway network allows in its density and intensity for passenger transport the accessibility of urban centres, the greater share of this means of travel is prevented by the fact that the train station network is not sufficiently equipped with parking areas, as well as the fact that the synergy of public transport could not show in full extent due to the lack of coordination with bus services.

Table 4: SWOT analysis of the cooperation in the field of transport and infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Centres of both regions are connected to the national highway network</td>
<td>• Low intensity of joint strategic action in the development of the Pan-European transport corridor VI route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Construction of highway connection between centres of both regions is realised gradually</td>
<td>• Insufficient coverage of the territory in question with highway and speedway infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existing capacity of the railway traffic for transport of passengers and freight</td>
<td>• Routing of busy road links through the towns and villages with a negative impact on environmental quality in affected areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive experience of authorities with the implementation of reconstructions of existing traffic connections projects in border area</td>
<td>• Insufficient sequencing of public transport connections in border areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implemented projects of railway and road infrastructure development with EU support</td>
<td>• Lack of transport connections of airports via highway and railway infrastructures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existence of the Integrated Transport System (IDS)</td>
<td>• High rate of accidents including fatal traffic accidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Routing of the Pan-European transport corridor VI, connecting the north and the south of Europe through the territory of both regions</td>
<td>• Decreasing permeability of existing road network shown also by increased accident rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unused allocations from EU funds for the development of transport infrastructure</td>
<td>• Unresolved financing of regional railway passenger transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive impact of foreign direct investments on the development and improvement of transport interconnection of both regions</td>
<td>• Insufficient response to the need of increasing transport capacities of the regional road network due to the property and manufacturing program of linked foreign direct investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intervention from ESIF also in the programme period after the year 2013</td>
<td>• Increased cost of implementation of transport interconnection between the two regions because of the mountain ranges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existence of the plan aiming to build connections between the Danube and Odra rivers by a Vah water route</td>
<td>• Failure to ensure increased resources for the repairs and maintenance of road infrastructure due to the rugged morphology of the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connecting the public transport systems of the two regions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.2 Measures and indicative activities

Measure 1.1: Increasing permeability of road network and safety of road traffic participants

Indicative activities:

• Expansion of roads in critical sections
• Building of sidewalks in sections with increased rate of accidents
• Development of measures to promote the safety of pedestrians in settlement centres
• Removal of conflict points on road routes
• Implementation of bypasses in the developed areas
• Implementation of intelligent traffic signs and traffic elements
• Reconstruction of intersections in terms of increasing their safety
• Reconstruction of bridges, railroad crossings and other traffic elements in terms of increasing their permeability and decreasing a risk of collision of various road traffic participants
• Use of modern technologies for the monitoring and diagnostics of pavement conditions
• Acquisition of technical equipment for improving road maintenance
• Promotion of the completion of superior transport infrastructure with the emphasis on elements included in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)
• Enhancement of regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes with TEN-T infrastructure
Measure 1.2: Support of low-carbon forms of transport and increase of public transport efficiency

Indicative activities:

- Creation and update of plans for transport service of the area in terms of correlation of graphic timetables and capacities of various forms of passenger transport also in cross-border context
- Creation of studies, strategies and action plans for the introduction of low-carbon forms of transport
- Use of modern technologies to optimise the transport service of the area
- Modernisation of public transport means in terms of improving their ecologic features, comfort, efficiency and attractiveness for passengers, including passengers with various forms of disability
- Implementation of campaigns to promote alternative forms of transport
- Building cycle links connecting suburbs, small towns and villages in the wider surroundings with the centre via paved cycle paths separated from motor vehicle roadways, or within the expanded profile of the roads including their own traffic signs and traffic elements increasing cyclists safety
- Support in the building of infrastructure for transport utilising alternative sources of energy (e.g. charging stations for electric motor vehicles)
- Building of parking spaces near bus and train stations used for the transport to urban areas
- Development of environmentally friendly and low-carbon systems of transport and promotion of permanently sustainable urban mobility
- Development of a complex, interoperable railway system of high quality

6.3 Proposals for the future activities in economic cooperation area

6.3.1 Current situation

In the past two decades, both regions have undergone restructuring of their economic base accompanied by temporary increase in unemployment, increase in labour productivity, creation of favourable conditions for business development, creation of opportunities for foreign investments and intensification of connection between domestic and foreign markets. Business and entrepreneurship development becomes evident particularly in the Žilina Region that shows a more than twice higher number of companies per capita, compared with the Moravian-Silesian Region, where the preference to be employed has still prevailed mainly due to traditional big employers in mining and metallurgical engineering. Restructuring of economy was accompanied also by decrease of employment in agriculture and fishery. On the contrary,
both regions experienced over the last decade an increase of number of job-vacancies in construction industry and particularly in the services sector that today present more than 50% of jobs in both regions. This development also relates to the restructuring of the economic base of both regions and to their linkage to all-European economic trends. This intensification of connections to the economic space of the European Union, as well as its trends of development showed mainly during a significant negative development of all main economic indicators on both sides of the border area at the time of the onset of global economic crisis at the end of the first decade of the 21st century.

A particular phenomenon, common to both regions, is the creation of capacities in automotive industry, thanks to the acquired foreign direct investments connected with supply chains and networks consisting of domestic as well as foreign business entities. The second ones, as traditional suppliers of big automotive trusts, are building their sub-supplying capacities wherever new manufacturing plants of these trusts are created. Significant specific feature in this respect is the fact that the most important investments in this sector originate from investors linked together in terms of ownership, which partially leads to linkage between manufacturing programs and intensification of their cross-border cooperation. Despite this fact, the border region still has a spatial capacity, as well as skilled manpower for the development of further investments either in the industrial sector, or in that of the services, for which we need to adjust the preparedness of the territory and its human resources.

**Table 5: Selected economic data of both regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Žilina Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>M-S Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises total</td>
<td>12 246</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>16 540</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical persons – entrepreneurs</td>
<td>59 213</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>88 412</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs per 1,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees in R&amp;D</td>
<td>2 215</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3 191</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures per R&amp;D in mil. EUR</td>
<td>17 607</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CZK 3 030 mil. EUR 121 462</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures per R&amp;D per 1,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investments in Research and Development per capita in Moravian-Silesian Region are more than three times higher than in the Žilina Region, where respective values are even below the Slovak average. Similarly, the Moravian-Silesian Region outperforms its south-eastern neighbour in per capita terms by approximately one third in the number of human capacities in the Research and Development sector.

However, at a European scale this border area does not reach even average values and the development of pro-innovative environment remains to be an issue on both sides of the border. In the first decade of the 21st century, the development of mutual cooperation between
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subjects from both regions occurred in supporting the innovative environment, several common cross-border projects have been realised and there was a development in cooperation between founded clusters and other players in the field of innovation support. Also cooperation between the Žilina Regional Chamber of the Slovak Business and Industrial Chamber and the Regional Economic Chamber of the Moravian-Silesian Region has been established and resulted also in a joint project in the framework of Cross-border Cooperation of Slovakia and the Czech Republic called “Partnership-Development-Opportunities” that was aimed at the support of cross-border regions’ development, reducing differences between the involved regions, when achieving this goal through activities focused on promoting business, especially a series of free seminars focused on issues related to the foundation of business corporations and entrepreneurship in Slovakia, business generally, entrepreneurship of foreigners in Slovakia, issues of international contracts and their compatibility with EU legislation, participation of business subjects in the process of public tendering, etc. Awarding the regional brands (for example GÓROLSKO SWOBODA – regional product) also proved to be a positive turn for the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the field of local products. There are also traditional ties and contacts between research-development companies and universities. In the territory there are thus personal as well as institutional connections that can be utilised for the further strengthening of an innovative environment.

The support of business environment and the development of employment in the region is also linked to the need of providing the best quality education. There is a necessity to ensure that the schools will use the most effective methods and tools to ensure that pupils/students have an access to the empirical verification of their knowledge in practice. This issue affects specifically the vocational secondary education, as well as technically focused university education. The connection of the education to research and development is also important, mainly in the fields that relate to the economy of this area. The fact that many educational institutions in both regions have experience with partnerships, or joint projects is an asset. There is thus a room for development of these contacts in terms of identifying educational needs in the region and responding to them also in the form of cross-border activities. Abilities of individuals to assert on open EU labour market put increasing demands on the timeliness of his knowledge and skills in terms of their usability in practice constitutes a challenge for education providers.
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Table 6: SWOT analysis of the economic cooperation of both regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Traditional business ties because of the joint history</td>
<td>• Insufficient support for innovations and business development from public funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Restructured economy</td>
<td>• Insufficient permeability of cross-border highway and roads network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attractive territory for foreign direct investments</td>
<td>• Weak signs of innovative thinking in both regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience in implementing projects focused on business and investment developments</td>
<td>• Cross-border economy linked to a small number of big employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Established cross-border partnerships of subjects promoting the culture of innovations and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>• Insufficient use of foreign direct investments for the development of an innovative environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Linguistic proximity allowing the development of cross-border trade connections, as well as the development of cooperation between trade subjects</td>
<td>• Failure to cross barriers between the trade sector, research and development subjects and public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support of the development of an innovative environment by the European Union</td>
<td>• Failure of foreign subjects establishing production plants in the Moravian-Silesian Region and Žilina Region to invest in domestic Research &amp; Development structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connection of automotive plants in both regions in terms of ownership and production</td>
<td>• Complete removal of barriers in free movement of manpower within the EU and its impact on the drift of qualified manpower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intention of regional autonomies to strengthen and institutionalise cross-border cooperation also with a focus on the development of economic cooperation</td>
<td>• Failure to establish a supporting platform for the implementation of joint projects focused on business development and innovations in the Ostrava – Žilina – Katowice triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for the further development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in the border area</td>
<td>• Failure to remove barriers of communication and traffic systems in the border area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existence of cluster initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for cooperation and cross-linking of thematically similarly focused clusters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3.2 Measures and indicative activities

Measure 2.1: Building of joint business and innovative environment in border area

Indicative activities:

- Cross-linking of organisations representing enterprise subjects (business chambers, clusters, etc.) with Research & Development subjects and innovative players.
- Cooperation of regional players in supporting innovative culture in the border area (educational activities, cross-border innovative portals, awards, conferences, supporting schemes for innovating subjects from SME environment, joint activities to meet the innovative strategies, etc.).
- Development of green business, services, technologies and job positions in SME by supporting cross-border activities that reduce negative environmental impacts of entrepreneurship.
- Investments in public infrastructure necessary for the development of business and innovations (science and technology parks, business incubators, industrial parks, innovative centres, etc.).
- Creation of joint products to acquire investments in the area (catalogues and databases of investment opportunities, web pages, participation in trade fairs and conferences, building of regional brand of the area favourable to business, etc.).
- Cross-border cooperation in innovation of public administration aimed at increasing the attractiveness of business environment and innovative culture including increase in quality of public administration services in regards to business environment.
- Implementation of cross-border studies, creation of business environment analysis and strategies of business development.
- Organising events and participating in events creating a room for trade and business development.

Measure 2.2: Development of human capital and institutional and administrative capacities in border area

Indicative activities:

- Cross-border cooperation activities aimed at increasing the employability of the unemployed, young people and other vulnerable groups at the labour market and supporting cross-border labour mobility (labour exchanges, cross-border portals of job positions, cooperation of subjects working in job procurement, etc.).
- Activities of cross-border cooperation of the business sector, public administration and educational institutions aimed at the employability of graduates at the labour market, including innovations in education, increasing room for obtaining practical experience, etc.
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- Activities of educational institutions aimed at cross-border linking of educational programs and creation of joint cross-border educational products (study visits, distance education, creation of educational products that enable to complete a part of education on the other side of the border area, creation of cross-border education portals, e-learning products, databases of teaching material, etc.).
- Cross-border cooperation activities in Research & Development of subjects and business sector aimed at the development of innovative environment.
- Activities promoting gender equity, equal opportunities and cross-border social inclusion.
- Activities promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions, including e-Government, e-Inclusion, e-Participation and e-Democracy.

6.4 Proposal for the future cooperation in tourism:

6.4.1 Current situation

The characteristics and history of the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Region are dominant determining factors of the tourism development. The arc of the Western Carpathian Mountains, situated in both regions, has created excellent conditions for the development of mountain tourism in its summer and winter forms.

Histories of both regions and their preserved manifestations have common features, for example in the form of architectural styles, sacral buildings and mansions, but also differences, for example technical monuments related to the industrial development of the Moravian-Silesian Region, or network of castles and curia in the Žilina Region representing the evolution of mansions in Hungary. In terms of the rate of tourists visiting attractive sites in national comparisons, the number of sites in the Žilina Region rank to the forefront, while the Moravian-Silesian Region does not belong to the nationwide leaders, with the exception of sites presenting technical history. The economic crisis has significantly affected the tourism of the area, i.e. both regions have suffered a temporal decrease in visitors, however, this trend seems to be reversed since 2010, especially in the case of the Žilina region. The less positive development of visiting rate in the Moravian-Silesian Region is also related to the fact that the decrease in the rate of foreign clients, who often visited this region for commercial purposes, have not stopped yet.
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Table 7: Selected tourism data of both regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Žilina Region</th>
<th>Year of the data topicality</th>
<th>Moravian-Silesian Region</th>
<th>Year of the data topicality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation capacities (beds)</td>
<td>33 381</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>23 785</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guests</td>
<td>658 148</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>527 380</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight stays</td>
<td>2 135 892</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1 733 932</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight stays per citizen</td>
<td>3,06</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,39</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides traditional activities such as hiking and skiing, visiting museum expositions, traditional folklore, cultural events, tours of cultural and historical monuments, there is an increasing growth of the demand for other forms of tourism such as cycling, canoeing, equestrian and rural tourism, geocaching, discovering traces of technical history of the area (especially in the Moravian-Silesian Region), or spa tourism (especially in the Žilina Region) on both sides of the border.

The requirements of tourists on the quality of tourism services are also reflected in the demand for products that will provide a combination of several forms of tourist activities, while maintaining the desired comfort of the stay. In addition, if traditional ski resorts want to remain competitive, they must expand the services they offer by adding other forms of winter activities than just downhill skiing, as well as expand their offer by forms of summer tourism. It is therefore necessary to promote the creation of new tourism products and more complex service packages, which may also result in the extension of the visitors’ stay. Foundation of tourism clusters on both sides of the border and preparation of others in this regard may contribute to the improvement of the offer. In both regions, there is an emphasis on the local special characteristics of the tourism territory, on which the unique offer should be based. There is a room for the creation of cross-border products that will be either thematic or based on the needs of a particular clientele.

The quality of information and promotional resources of tourism has increased significantly in the past decade, however their quantity and variety is insufficient, whilst their availability is problematic. It is also necessary to create new sources of information presenting complex packages of services, as well as products specifically focused on particular categories of clients. At the regional level, there is a need to apply common tools for promoting partner regions and be a competitive destination in relation to wider Europe as well as to non-European markets.

The existing networks of tourist information offices and other entities providing information on tourism products has different founders and different standards. There is no comprehensive methodology to define the required level of knowledge and skills of their employees. Cross-border cooperation aimed at enhancing the quality of human resources and the standardisation of requirements for their knowledge and skills creates favourable conditions.
for the improvement of the quality of tourism services in the area as a whole. Infrastructure of tourist information offices does not fully utilise modern information and communication technologies to ensure greater availability, quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided. Museums and other cultural institutions have mostly permanent expositions that enable the interaction of the visitor with the exhibits to a limited extent and do not respond to the different needs of target groups.

Tourism infrastructure responds insufficiently to new forms of tourism development on both sides of the border. The territory still does not have a sufficient network of marked bike trails, bridle paths, trails for cross-country skiing, culinary routes, etc. Appropriate tourism infrastructure does not reflect to the needs of clients with various forms of disability.

Table 8: SWOT analysis of the cooperation in the field of tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Implemented investments in tourist centres and in new accommodation capacities</td>
<td>• Insufficient quality of human resources in tourism services, including their language skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existence of tourism clusters in the border area</td>
<td>• Insufficient complexity of services for year-round tourist activities in tourism centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preservation and gradual development of traditional events</td>
<td>• Lack of cooperation between business entities in tourism in the border area with the aim to extend the stay of their visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience of subjects from both sides of the border with implementation of tourism promoting projects</td>
<td>• Insufficient information on attractive tourist places in the area and lack of pictorial marks (so-called “brown boards”), as well as on places of main contact with travelling public (airports, main train and bus stations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Variability of resources for promoting tourism, including cross-border cooperation programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Existence of joint presumptions in areas suitable for the building of cross-border thematic trails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sufficient accommodation capacities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Natural and cultural-historical potential of tourism development for creating a new variety of products</td>
<td>• Globalisation of tourism enabling the availability of previously unknown destinations (outside the EU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase of visitors in Central Europe in the medium term</td>
<td>• Poorly managed harmonisation of nature conservation and tourism development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for further connecting of hiking, running and cycling trails on both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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sides of the border, as well as for the creation of joint cross-border tourism products

- Cooperation between institutions preparing future specialists in CR for labour market

- Risk arising from unresolved system of financing the public bus transport and regional rail service, which may primarily affect the border area if the need to reduce their capacities arises

### 6.4.2 Measures and indicative activities

**Measure 3.1: Developing the quality of services in tourism responding to local product**

Indicative activities:

- Creation of studies, strategies and action plans to implement comprehensive tourism products and service packages in the area with the use of its particularities.
- Development and implementation of comprehensive products of tourism and packages of services in the area with the use of its particularities.
- Development and implementation of joint cross-border training products focused on the development of human resources in tourism.
- Innovation and expansion of the services of tourist information offices.
- Cooperation in creating information and promotion for tourism products.
- Implementation of joint marketing campaigns.
- Cross-border linking of clusters and other entities in tourism.

**Measure 3.2: New and modernisation of existing tourism infrastructure responding to the needs of the 21st century**

Indicative activities:

- Building and modernisation of nature trails, cycling routes, running trails, bridle paths, roller-skating circuits, etc., their information systems and other accessories (benches, rest areas, children’s playgrounds, bike racks, etc.).
- Construction of bigger elements of infrastructure in relation to existing trails or trails under construction (piers, bike bridges, parking places, lookout towers, etc.).
- Implementation of measures aiming at increasing the comfort of users with various forms of disabilities.
- Preservation, promotion and development of cultural heritage.
- Modernisation, innovation and building of exposition and information capacities with the use of information and communication technologies in terms of increasing experience and perception of displayed exhibits, adjustment of expositions to various target groups and higher accessibility, quality and comprehensiveness of the provided information.
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6.5 Proposal for the future cooperation in the environment area

6.5.1 Current situation

In the case of Žilina Self-Governing Region and the Moravian-Silesian Region, there are several areas of environmental issues that are common to territories of both regions and where cross-border cooperation can bring mutual benefits. First of all, it is poor air quality, associated with the concentration of heavy industry in the Czech-Polish border region of Silesia, as well as an extreme load of vehicle transport in this border area, which is related to the fact that the Baltic-Adriatic transport corridor runs through this area.

Emissions in the form of greenhouse gases and other air polluting components exceed the national level in several locations of both regions and show proportions exceeding the European level in the long term. Aside from measures to reduce emissions from transport (for more details see also Measure 1.2) it is necessary to focus the cooperation on reducing the energy demand of the economy, including the increase of the energy efficiency of buildings and other infrastructure (e.g. public lighting) and development of such alternative forms of energy production that are less harmful to the environment, particularly in relation to the air quality. The households have also the share of harmful compounds emission into the atmosphere. It is appropriate to form conditions, as well as to raise awareness aimed at reducing burning of such waste components, which have an especially negative impact on the air. Similar activities focused on supporting the forms of life that have a minimal impact on the environment are also desirable for water protection (e.g. for the reduction of the amount of oils released into the public sewer system) and waste management (focused mainly on increasing the volume of separated waste components, increasing the volume of waste recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill).

On both sides of the border are series of areas with an increased level of protection. Those are often areas used intensively for tourism purposes since they have an increased incidence of a variety of nature beauties and diversity of habitats. It is necessary to promote cross-border cooperation, the exchange of experience and the transfer of best practices between entities in environmental protection. It is also necessary to develop strategic planning and the implementation of measures in these areas that will ensure the development of tourism respecting and ensuring the preservation of precious natural elements in the area. Last but not least, it is appropriate to extend the cooperation in environmental protection issues also by the problems of modern forms of pollution, whether it is a matter of noise, visual advertising, etc. Implementation of measures in the field of landscape protection, including the protection and preservation of unique (identical) landscape and natural elements have been poorly utilised within the dimension of cross-border cooperation so far.
### Table 9: SWOT analysis of the cooperation in the energy and environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Existing cooperation of environmental protection bodies in the border area</td>
<td>• Poor air quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implemented investments and projects for environmental protection, or better say improving its quality</td>
<td>• Insufficient support of Research &amp; Development in issues of environmental innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unique nature with rich ecosystems and a number of preserved areas and landscape creating elements</td>
<td>• Low level of separation and recycling of waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many water resources (primarily in the Žilina Region) and sufficient capacities for the ensuring of drinking water supply</td>
<td>• High percentage of public buildings showing low degree of energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Insufficient sewage of small villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High energy dependence on fossil fuel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• EU funds for implementation of sustainable cohesion policy after 2013</td>
<td>• Increase in the volume of traffic in the regions and its possible impact on the increase of noise and air pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suitable conditions for the increase in biomass and geothermal energy used for generating power in the border area</td>
<td>• Insufficient increase of awareness about efficient and purposeful waste management and also about the importance of environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New technologies in energy savings, waste management and environmental protection</td>
<td>• Extinction of rare animal species due to the failure to provide conditions for their natural reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interest of population in alternative forms of transport, as well as energy-efficient forms of housing</td>
<td>• Implementation of large infrastructural buildings, primarily in transportation, energetics or production with poor respecting of environmental protection requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intensification of cross-border cooperation between players from both sides of the border caused also by frequent impacts of natural disasters and other forms of environmental pollution</td>
<td>• Increase in the pollution of the ground as well as surface water due to a failure to deal with old environmental burdens, including failure to remove defects in old sewage systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intense implementation of environmental education at elementary and high schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intensification of cross-border cooperation between players from both sides of the border in landscape preservation based on the utilisation of landscape-creating elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5.2 Measures and indicative activities

Measure 4.1: Increase in the energy efficiency of public infrastructure and development of the usage of renewable resources of energy in public sector

Indicative activities:

- Implementation of measures for increasing energy efficiency of claddings and roofs of buildings (external insulation, exchange of windows, etc.).
- Activities to increase the quality of heating regulation in public buildings, thermostatic features and metering.
- Implementation of innovative solutions to decrease energy consumption.
- Implementation of progressive technologies of combined power generation, heat and cold.
- Implementation of innovative solutions of public buildings heating.
- Introduction of renewable energy sources to the public sector infrastructure (small water power plants, photovoltaic panels, etc.).
- Reconstruction of public lighting with the aim to decrease power consumption.
- Informative activities focused on increasing the awareness about possibilities how to decrease energy demands of buildings and use renewable sources of energy.
- Implementation of activities for the assessment of energy efficiency of public infrastructure and preparation of proposals coping with that problem.
- Creating information databases of public infrastructure focused on energy efficiency.

Measure 4.2: Introduction of measures for increased environmental protection

Indicative activities:

- Activities focused on the distribution of good cross-border practice examples in environmental protection.
- Activities focused on identifying and preserving rare landscape elements in the area.
- Activities focused on reducing the proportion of mixed municipal waste and increasing the volume of separated compounds and waste recycling.
- Activities focused on the protection of surface and ground water purity.
- Cooperation of crisis management actors and implementation of activities focused on risk prevention in the border area.
- Cooperation of environmental protection bodies, forest management subjects, hunting associations and other actors involved in environmental protection, including fighting with cross-border criminality in environmental protection (illegal dumps, water pollution, nest robberies, poaching, etc.).
- Activities for promoting environmentally focused research & development.
- Creating basis for spatial planning with cross-border elements.
7. Management and budget of the cooperation activities

In this chapter we will describe how the cooperation is financed and managed. This will cover two principal levels: the first one is the cooperation between both regions, and the second one is then the level of the whole EGTC.

7.1 The cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Self-Governing Region

The cooperation between both regions is managed by units responsible for the international cooperation, which are in place in both regions. The officials of these units follow the text of bilateral cooperation agreements between both regions and set work-plans to achieve the goals. This is financed from the own sources of both regions, as the international cooperation costs create parts of their budgets.

More relevant bodies for the implementation of measures and projects are the departments responsible for the implementation of development projects of both regions, which act in close cooperation with departments responsible for concrete sectoral policies (such as transport, environment or education). This is then financed mainly from external sources, primarily by the European Structural Funds and co-funded by own sources.

7.2 The cooperation at the EGTC TRITIA level

The EGTC level operates with its own budget. Despite all four founding regions vary in terms of the number of their populations (from less then one million of the Žilina Region up to five million inhabitants of the Silesian Voivodeship), the annual contribution was set up to 22 000 Euro for each of the four founding regions.

The EGTC can work with sum of almost 90 000 EURO annually (according to the EGTC’s ex-director Mr Zacharides, part of this money has already served for the pre-financing of development projects; the intention to use them for co-financing and pre-financing is still valid). This principle is different from for example euroregions on the Czech-Slovak border, where the member fees are calculated on the basis of the number of inhabitants of the member municipalities. Nevertheless, the main income of the EGTC come from successful projects. This already starts to happen and it is described in chapter nine.
8. Analysis of the strong and weak cooperation points

The key part of this case study will focus on the two main points: the first one will be the analysis showing how has the cross-border cooperation conduct between the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Self-governing Region changed during the process of establishing EGTC TRITIA. This will be done in two ways: the first will analyse the successfulness of both regions in using the funds from principal financial tool supporting cross-border cooperation, OP CBC Slovakia-Czech Republic for the programming period 2007-2013. This will be based on the work with the table of projects supported until the date of the elaboration of this study, November 2014. The second way is presented by qualitative research, which was based on the interviews with actors involved in the CBC conduct. Both ways will be commented separately in the subchapters A and B, but there will also be some cross-references, mainly showing the opinion of experts on the influence of the EGTC creation and thus intensification and systematisation of relations between both regions on the use of the financial instrument mentioned.

8.1 Analysis of the work with European funds

Context information about the territory: the entire length of Slovak-Czech border is 251,8 km. There are 4 822 803 inhabitants on the territory of 32 000 km2. The average population density is 150,5 inh./km², which highly exceeds the average density of both the Czech (133 inh./km²) and the Slovak Republic (110,3 inh./km²).

The landscape is rather diversified, which influences both character of the settlements of the region and its economic diversity. Geographically it involves the rivers in valleys (Váh, Kysuca, Turiec, Orava, Bečva, Morava), agricultural rural lands and forests or uninhabited mountain terrains of both the Tatra and the Fatra Mountains, along with the Beskydy, Jaborníky and Bílé/Biele Karpaty.

The real contribution made by TRITIA for the development of mutual relations between its members, in this context mainly the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Self-Governing Region, can be measured by the amounts raised for the cross-border cooperation of subjects from both regions. This subchapter will try to verify the hypothesis that EGTC TRITIA as platform for mutual contacts between experts responsible for the regional development of both regions helped in the process of raising the funds for CBC. The establishment of this platform brought along a mechanism of regular meetings. These meetings mostly copied the process of making the bilateral Slovak-Czech Strategy and also the strategy of the whole EGTC, but except for the development of these strategic documents it created space for the drafting of projects, which were afterwards successfully submitted and funded by the Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme between Slovakia and the Czech Republic for the period 2007-13.
The analysis will be partly comparative. We will compare the successfulness of cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Region with moneys raised by other 4 regions, which co-create the programme territory. When comparing we will also try to take into account the geographical factors influencing the use of the programme, such as the very short and, moreover, mountainous section of the borders between the Moravian-Silesian and the Žilina Regions, compared to the significantly longer borders between other 4 more southern border regions (moreover with very few geographical barriers in the southern part of the Czech-Slovak borders. We will also take into account another networks influencing cross-border cooperation on the Czech-Slovak border, mainly Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty will be mentioned. The other comparison will focus on the use of the Slovak-Czech programme in 2007-2013 and the previous programming period 2004-2006.

Figure 5: All regions eligible for Slovak-Czech cross-border cooperation programmes (source draft OP 2014 – 2020)
8.1.1 Community Initiative Programme INTERREG A Slovak Republic – Czech Republic 2004-2006

The principal financial tool supporting cooperation on the Czech-Slovak border was offered to both countries after their EU accession on 1 May 2004. The whole programme covered the territory of 6 regions, which are situated on the Czech-Slovak border:

- Trnava Region (Trnávský kraj), Trenčín Region (Trenčianský kraj) and Žilina Region (Žilinský kraj) in Slovakia;
- Southern-Moravian Region (Jihomoravský kraj), Zlín Region (Zlínský kraj) and Moravian-Silesian Region (Moravskoslezský kraj) in the Czech Republic.

The programme offered for all these regions and eligible applicants 13 667 229 Euro from the ERDF funding; jointly with national co-funding the programme achieved the amount of 18 223 066 Euro, which was significantly less than its successor, which offered an amount exceeding 93 000 000 Euro from the ERDF in the 2007-2013 programming period.

The programme was divided into the following priorities:

- Social, cultural development and networking
- Protection of the landscape, environment and tourism promotion
- Technical assistance

Both countries involved in the programme approached its implementation differently: Slovakia divided the funds equally in advance among the three regions, which co-created in the programme area, whereas the Czech Republic allowed the regions to compete.

The “absolute winners” of the programme on the Czech side were subjects coming from Zlín Region. These subjects, including the Regional Authority of Zlín Region itself, managed to obtain some 85 % of the funds distributed in the whole programme. In contrary, the subjects from the Moravian-Silesian Region obtained with their 11 successful projects mere 457 000 Euros, which is slightly above 3 % of the allocation. This number can be moved up to 5 % when counting the projects submitted in the microprojects’ scheme for projects up to 20 000 Euro (there were 10 successful microprojects, which could have obtained some 150 000 Euro at a maximum. Nevertheless, the microprojects’ scheme as such is a systemic project submitted by Zlín Region).

The success of Zlín Region must be attributed to the fact that is managed to establish and support an efficient network – the Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty and the Regional Development Agency co-managed a part of the whole programme via the microprojects’ scheme. Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty is in more details described in the next subchapter of this study dealing with the use of the EU funds for CBC in the end of the 2007-2013 programming period.

To conclude the first programming period (2004-2006), which the Czech Republic and Slovakia experienced as full EU members, it should be said that the equal distribution to the Slovak
regions helped to all the involved regions evenly, nevertheless, the Czech “laissez-faire” approach of a free competition constituted a significant and decisive advantage for Zlín Region, which had in place the networks which helped their members in using the funds heavily. The usefulness of these networks can be demonstrated also by the fact that principal successful project promoters from the Moravian-Silesian Region came from Beskydy Euroregion – another though somewhat smaller cross-border network.

8.1.2 Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Slovak Republic-Czech Republic 2007-13

The Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme between Slovakia and the Czech Republic for the period 2007-13 has provided Community support as part of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the same 6 regions on the Slovak-Czech border as its predecessor:

- Trnava Region (Trnavský kraj), Trenčín Region (Trenčianský kraj) and Žilina Region (Žilinský kraj) in Slovakia;
- Southern-Moravian Region (Jihomoravský kraj), Zlín Region (Zlínský kraj) and Moravian-Silesian Region (Moravskoslezský kraj) in the Czech Republic.

The Operational Programme fell within the framework laid out for the European Territorial Cooperation Objective and has had a total budget of around €109 million. Community funding through the ERDF amounts to some €93 million, which represents approximately 1.1% of the total EU investment earmarked for the European Territorial Cooperation Objective under the Cohesion Policy 2007-13.

The description of the previous programming period, mainly with weak performance of the Moravian-Silesian Region and entities from this region requires some deeper explanations. Except for the undoubted success caused by the preparedness of Zlín Region (and its counterpart, Trenčín Region) thanks to the functional network presented by Euroregion Bíllé/Biele Karpaty there are also other aspects which make the cross-border cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Region difficult.

8.1.3 Default Geographical Disadvantage for cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions

The disadvantages came from geographical settings: the Czech-Slovak border between both partner regions, the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions, is significantly shorter than the borders between other regions of the Czech-Slovak borderland. It is only 45 km of the 252 kilometres of the whole border. Moreover, the cooperation there is quite complicated as being a mountainous area with rather low population density at both its parts. The borders between Zlín and Trenčín Region can also be characterised as mountain areas, but it is significantly longer with more cross-border road and railway connections. The southern part of the Czech-Slovak
border, between the Southern-Moravian and Trnava Regions, is the longest one without major physical barriers.

There are 6 districts with a total of 300 municipalities in the Moravian-Silesian Region. CBC with Slovakia is hardly thinkable for many of the municipalities (mainly in districts Bruntál, Opava and Nový Jičín), as they are all quite far from national borders (one and half hour of a car drive on average for Opava and Nový Jičín and even more than two hours for Bruntál – for example from Osoblaha one needs to drive 154 kilometres to arrive at the Slovak-Czech border, which takes two and half hours; not to speak about the fact that the shortest way is via Poland).

In Žilina Region there are 11 districts. There is a similar problem that more than a half of all these districts are geographically very far from the Czech-Slovak border. District Čadca is the border district with the Czech Republic (and Poland), districts Bytča, Kysické Nové Mesto and Žilina can also be achieved from the border in less than one hour. For another districts the Czech border is far away.

The geography of both regions thus sets some default limits to the mutual cross-border cooperation. One must also add that all districts in both regions far from the Czech-Slovak border are very close to the Czech-Polish, respectively Slovak-Polish borders, hence they tend to prefer Czech or Slovak/Polish cross-border cooperation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moravian-Silesian</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zlín</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern-Moravian</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenčín</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trnava</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having in mind the weak performance in the 2004-2006 CIP SK-CZ, the regional authorities decided to invest some technical assistance funds and they prepared the series of meetings with representatives of all partner regions. This resulted in the decision to apply more actively for the funds coming from the European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3) programmes. Opportunities in mono-national programmes offered more finance with a more straightforward grant process, thus the regions decided to change their attitude. The Moravian-Silesian Region conducted an analysis of “missed opportunities” and cross-border cooperation programmes had a very prominent role in this document. Therefore, it was decided to utilise
the newly called “European Territorial Cooperation Programmes” more systematically than before.

Objective 3 programmes were in 2007-2013 period presented by programmes organised in 3 strands:

- cross-border cooperation programmes (here represented mainly by repeatedly mentioned Slovak-Czech OP),
- interregional programmes (represented by Central Europe programme),
- transnational programme (represented by INTERREG 4A programme).

The preparatory meetings helped to prepare some projects. These submitted into B and C strand of the Objective 3 programmes failed to obtain funding, but they assisted in deepening the cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions (and Silesian Voivodeship). The principle of regular meetings brought new dimension in preparing the projects. This was followed and rewarded by significantly higher success rate in obtaining grants from the SK-CZ operational programme, compared to the previous period.

This study considers that it was the decision to approach toward the phenomenon of territorial cooperation and work with European funds more systematically which led to the EGTC TRITIA’s establishment and intensified cooperation of both regions. Knowing about the bad result of subjects from mainly the Moravian-Silesian Region in the programming period 2004-2006, the authors decided to conduct a more detailed analysis about the Slovak-Czech programme in the 2007-2013 period.

The authors of this study worked with the information on all projects, which were supported from the Slovak-Czech programme. 258 projects obtained funding from the programme in the period of its implementation. There was also the last call for projects with its deadline on 20 November 2014, therefore the projects to be selected in this final call are not taken into account.

The authors analysed the group of these projects and divided them into two main categories:

**Systemic or technical assistance projects** – these are either technical assistance projects for both ministries responsible for the programme implementation, joint technical secretariat or contact points functioning or macroprojects securing the operations of the microprojects’ scheme. These projects are not selected upon the competition principle, as the beneficiaries are clearly defined in advance, except for the microprojects’ scheme these are programme’s transaction costs. We can say that these projects were awarded over 16 % of the programme allocation (over 14 out of 92 million Euro coming from the ERDF funding).

The rest of the allocation was nevertheless distributed in a **free competition of projects**: the programme organised 7 selection rounds (the last eighth is closed in January 2015). In these selection rounds there was a competition between the most common beneficiaries of the
cross-border cooperation programmes: public and non-profit actors functioning in the whole programme territory.

After having eliminated the above mentioned systemic or technical assistance projects, the remaining ones were analysed according to their “region of origin”. Firstly we compared the projects which were submitted by Regional Authorities (kraje – krajské úřady) themselves. We realised – and this presumption was also confirmed via the interviews with experts - that the participation of both regions in TRITIA’s construction had a huge impact on the performance of both regions in the use of the SK-CZ programme funds: the projects prepared by both cooperating regional authorities or organisations controlled by them amounted up to 6,68 million Euros of ERDF funds obtained, which is around 7,3 % of the whole allocation, but it mainly almost equals the funds obtained by four other regions, respectively their regional authorities, involved in the programme implementation in the southern part of Czech-Slovak border (projects prepared by them or organisation controlled by them obtained 6,9 million Euro).

*Table 11: The list of projects approved to both partner regions or organisation controlled by them directly thanks to the systemic cooperation of both regions and the creations of TRITIA:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead partner</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Žilina Region / Road Administration Moravian-Silesian Region / Road Administration ŽSK /</td>
<td>Reconstruction of road Bílá - Kokočov - Turzovka</td>
<td>2 680 206,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region / Road Administration Žilina Region / Road Administration Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Reconstruction of road Čadca-Milošová-Mosty u Jablunkova</td>
<td>1 319 897,96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>City of Ostrava Library.</td>
<td>Information without Borders Constructing Information Society by the Means of Connecting Librarian and information Systems</td>
<td>264 202,61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region / Road Administration Of Žilina Region / Road Administration Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Reconstruction of road Turzovka – Bílá II. Etap</td>
<td>2 092 226,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INOVA NOVA, n.o.</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency</td>
<td>Innovation Through border (InNOBorder)</td>
<td>324 134,53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6 680 668,31**
The money obtained by Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions were for the implementation of projects mainly in the field of infrastructure, connecting both countries/regions plus innovation projects.

Except for the projects implemented by six regional authorities, there were also other project categories identified. With the knowledge of TRITIA construction process plus the interviews made with experts from the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions, we were able to identify projects which appeared mainly thanks to the process of TRITIA construction. These projects amount slightly over €10 million of the ERDF support, which is almost 12% of the entire allocation. The prominent role has been played here by the Technical University of Ostrava, assisted by two minor regional universities and its counterpart in Žilina with more than 4 million Euro of ERDF support obtained.

Concerning the other project promoters, the municipalities are the most numerous project applicants. The municipalities from the Moravian-Silesian Region along with with the municipalities of Žilina Region (but this is more about Moravian-Silesian Region) much less active than their counterparts in the other four regions, which are eligible to apply for the OP SK-CZ financial support. The reason for this must primarily be seen in the number of municipalities, but mainly also in their geographical remoteness from the Czech-Slovak border.

8.1.4 Other project promoters in regions creating a programme territory of the OP SK-CZ

Municipalities

Role of networks and networking is extremely important in cross-border cooperation, which is obviously true not only for the Czech-Slovak border. From the table containing information on all approved projects under the SK-CZ programme for the 2007-2013 period, it is very clear that the highest number of projects and cooperation initiatives come from the municipalities in the middle and south of the Czech-Slovak border. Except for the geographical reasons, which are described in the paragraphs above, there is also another cause, e.g. these municipalities have been active in cross-border networking and cross-border structures, which have thematically been focused on the Czech-Slovak cross-border cooperation.

The SK-CZ programme supported 258 projects so far. 129 of them – exactly half of the entire number - were projects managed by municipalities or organisations, acted as lead-partner or there were at least one project partner. 66 of these projects were done with the participation of municipalities (or organisations – mostly schools - fully controlled either by one or a union of these municipalities) which belong to the Euroregion Bílé Karpaty/Biele Karpaty, the body gathering subjects – mainly municipalities – with an interest in cross-border cooperation, from the Zlín and Trenčín Regions.
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This is in a sharp contrast with the performance of municipalities from the Moravian-Silesian Region, which are not directly involved in TRITIA’s cooperation network: there are only 10 projects with the participation of municipalities from the Moravian-Silesian Region or organisations controlled by them (municipal libraries, elementary schools, etc.). Half of these projects have partners from Euroregion Beskydy, the only Czech-Slovak institutionalised structure in the field of cross-border cooperation. The participation of municipal subjects or organisations controlled by the Žilina Region is somewhat higher; there are 16 projects with the participation of municipalities from Žilina Region; some of these projects have partners from Zlín region, as there are joint borders between both regions.

The factual dominance of municipalities belonging to the cross-border network Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty should act as an example of good practice: it shows that cross-border networks – here presented by Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty – have clearly positive role in promoting cross-border cooperation. Except for these larger cooperation networks, partnerships of municipalities act as an incentive as well: there are several projects between such municipalities or organisations coming from these municipalities, for example the partnership Valašské Meziříčí – Čadca, Vendryně – Čierne, Turzovka – Metylovice etc.

Universities

Universities and tertiary education belong among potential project promoters. In contrary to the cooperation of municipalities from the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions, the universities from both regions, mainly the Technical University of Ostrava and Žilina University dominate in using the funds for cross-border cooperation: there were 21 projects with at least one participants being as university identified. 8 of them were bilateral projects between the two above mentioned universities, moreover, they have also been involved in projects where their partners were not universities.

The consortium was created also in parallel to the TRITIA creation: its core mission is to create links among the universities of the Moravian-Silesian Region, the Žilina Region and the Silesian and Opole Voivodeships with regard to scientific research and innovation. The goal of these links is to concentrate research and innovation capacities; this concentration should facilitate more effective planning, management and practical implementation of research projects and their technical applications. The Consortium will create the necessary conditions for the intensive sharing of research outcomes and experiences of innovation-based activities, and will complement the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) TRITIA which exists on the level of national ministries.

They should create conditions enabling the regions involved in the Consortium to achieve higher competitiveness. At the moment PROGRESS 3 consortium gathers 14 universities mainly from TRITIA territory and the regions nearby – mainly Trenčín and Trnava Regions in Slovakia.
The anchoring of 4 public universities from the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions in cooperation networks nevertheless helped them to be successful within the Czech-Slovak cross-border cooperation: there are 16 public universities in 6 regions covered by the Slovak-Czech programme (6 of them in Brno, seat of the South-Moravian Region). Those from both analysed regions clearly dominate in the programme use. (On the other hand some universities from Brno have been very successful in use of the mono-national Structural Funds programme for research and development and created large structures with the ERDF funding; they might have decided to focus on these programmes and ignore CBC at this stage. But this was not subject of this research).

8.2 Qualitative part - interviews with experts

Interviews with experts were conducted during the preparation of this case study in the course of October and November 2014. The main target group were representatives of regional authorities from both regions, but also other stakeholders with different backgrounds were asked; their full list and questions are available in the annex of this study.

All experts agreed with importance of the Schengen regime and internal market, but as a principle motivation for the CBC, they see the EU programmes supporting cross-border cooperation. They believe that these programmes were the impulse for improving and sometimes establishing functional relations between both regions.

Except for the principal tool, Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Slovak Republic-Czech Republic 2007-13, its predecessor and successor underlined also the contribution of other programmes, mainly those supporting the cooperation of schools – current Erasmus+ Programme, ex-Life-Long Learning and Socrates Programmes.

Interviewed experts representing both regional authorities underlined that the process of the EGTC TRITIA creation was the real impetus to improve the quality of relations between both regions, having signed a cooperation agreement already in 2003. Nevertheless they think that European funds and the related process of the TRITIA creation brought along the “upgrading of these relationships” – this is felt more intensively by the people who implement the CBC directly. At this moment they perceive the relations of both regions as better as with their other partner regions. To illustrate that we are quoting the interviewed experts: “but there is a strong personal cooperation. Recently a numerous delegation with the representatives of many departments from our authority have visited Žilina. Representatives of the Education, Youth and Sport Department have visited Žilina several times and they have discussed especially the topic of the support of talented students and the cooperation in sport activities. The recently mentioned journey was not focused on projects, but on finding common topics and ideas for a future collaboration. Representatives from Transport Department, Environment and Agriculture Department, Regional Development, Education, Youth and Sport Department and Tourism.
Department and European Projects Department visited Žilina. We can say that crucial departments from our authority participated in this visit and they met their counterparts from the Žilina Self-Governing Region. We often meet counterparts within the meetings of EGTC TRITIA and I think there is a lot of space for more intense cooperation. Mostly, the above mentioned meetings result into concrete actions – for example the reconstruction of the roads on the Czech-Slovak border is really perceptible and I think the cooperation in education is successful too.”

Rather concrete answers on the contribution of the process of regular meetings during the development of joint strategies brought interviews with experts representing transport departments of both partner regions: “We made a common strategy with the Žilina Self-Governing Region (a definition of common goals, cooperation of various transport branches etc.) and this has evolved into specific investment projects. We succeeded in the reconstruction of all roads which are straight cross-borders connections between our region and the Žilina Self-Governing Region. Nowadays all roads, leading through the saddles in the Beskydy Mountains, are reconstructed (within the cross-border programme CZ-SK). And for the next period we are preparing a reconstruction of the rest of the roads. There are no differences between the roads on the Czech and Slovak side of the border, every aspect is unified.”

The cooperation of both regions under the TRITIA umbrella influences also the process of preparation of both regions for the 2014-2020 programming period: “...our region is preparing for a new programming period. Nowadays we have identified the roads which need a reconstruction within cross-border projects – we talk about concrete sections with specific financial proposals. There is a similar situation in the sphere of tourism (a propagation of attractive locations like castles, ski grounds and paths, cycling paths, technical heritage, culinary tourism). These investment and non-investment project proposals are similar on the Czech-Slovak border and the Czech-Polish border. It's important to transform these specific proposals into projects after the approval of the operational programmes”.

The cooperation of regional authorities themselves was valued quite highly among interviewed experts. Nevertheless, they still feel many gaps in the cooperation of other subjects, the criticism was (despite the finding mentioned in the previous subchapter) also directed towards the local universities: “... despite a lot of money has been spent within EGTC TRITIA, some strategies have been prepared, a lot of people have met their counterparts, but I miss big projects. We cooperate successfully in tourism, but in the sphere of technical innovations (and the cooperation of main universities of our regions) I see a lot of insufficiencies. And these scientific sectors, as we know from the border area between Germany and France, are crucial for the development of whole regions. I know some cooperation between universities exist, but it doesn’t lead to big important projects. Moravian-Silesian region is populous and there aren’t language barriers in relation to Slovakia and there is a great cultural similarity with Slovaks. So there is no reason not to deepen the cooperation between universities and scientific centers. Usually two or three universities participating at the PROGRESS 3 agree and prepare some
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project. However, I do not know if universites can be involved in big projects within the framework of cross-border cooperation.”

The interviewed experts were invited also to think about cooperation barriers, which was done in trilateral Czech-Slovak-Polish context. The problems they identified were much more related with Czech/Slovak-Polish rather than Czech-Slovak context: „Another potential hindering factor can be the difference in the competences on the level of cooperation between our regional authority and that of the Žilina Self-Governing Region. Official departments and sections may not match and sometimes there is a need to find partners from non-regional organisations. However, due to common history within Czechoslovakia these problems are quite rare (unlike with Poland)... There are also so-called mental barriers. Especially in the sector of environmental protection and air pollution problems where Poland has less rigorous norms and limits. This fact hinders cooperation.”

When being asked the questions on potentially interesting cooperation areas, the joint labour market and cooperation of education providers scored highly in many answers of the experts. These areas were underlined both with accent on the current situation or the situation to come soon: “...I should mention the existence of numerous Slovak minority groups in our region. This minority lives here for generations and it’s related to the industry in the Ostrava-Karviná coal basin. Many members of this minority have relatives and property in Slovakia. Secondly, the area called Kysuce (cities Čadca, Krásno nad Kysucou) is quite poor, without developed industry or services, so people move to our region because of the employment. They used to migrate for centuries. Another important fact is daily commuting which is possible thanks to the improvement of the cross-border road network. We should realise that the distance between Ostrava and Nošovice, as well as Čadca and Nošovice is similar”. In the future, “…there is a great potential in a cross-border labour market. Nowadays people from Slovakia work in our region. The cooperation between schools from the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Self-Governing Region is in its infancy and the lack of information and cross-border cooperation between schools influences labour market. Some fellowships and foreign stays can contribute to some kind of familiarisation of the host region and to possible employment in this region. Long-term stays abroad should be supported in high schools and universities.

Some of the answers signalled that relations between Czech and Slovak public actors differ from “usual or good cross-border relations”: We are in a very good relationship with the Transport Department of the Žilina Self-Governing Region. We can solve detailed problems and share our experience. Many people from our department (including me) and from Roads Administration of Moravian-Silesian Region studied in Žilina, because there was the only school focused on transport in our federal country. So we have friendly relations and we speak the same expert language. We maintain a federal identity. We should thank the projects which led to our regular mutual meetings while working on joint strategies – be it the bilateral Czech-Slovak or the complex EGTC one.
8.3 Chapter conclusion

The manifold comparison, implemented in the first part of the chapter, clearly showed that more systemic approach towards this issue brought clear results for the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions: mainly the Moravian-Silesian Regional Authority managed to obtain more funds and helped to co-initiate many projects in 2007-2013 period than in the previous 2004-2006 shorter one. Moreover, the amount of money raised for the Regional Authority is itself outperformed the results of the other two regional authorities on the Czech side of the border, which were, from the point of view of cross-border cooperation, of less favourable geographical default setting.

The positive impact of existing cross-border networks on the ability of their members to conduct cross-border cooperation, measured in this paper by capacity of members of these networks to obtain external financial sources for mutual CBC, as also clearly shown in the chapter: the most successful CBC actors within the Czech-Slovak actors have been from Trenčín (SK) and Zlín (CZ) Region, where the Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty has been conducting its activities since 2000. This network has been the most successful one. Only in the 2007-2013 programming period, the other cross-border networks helped their members to achieve better results; these new networks are the TRITIA EGTC and PROGRESS 3, a consortium of universities. The union of municipalities, working in the north of the Czech-Slovak border and involving also Polish partners, such as Euroregion Beskydy, has shown its role mainly in the 2004-2006 programming period, although, during the 2007-2013 period, it has achieved somewhat worse results, but still defended its right to exist.

The second subchapter describes the qualitative part of the research based on interviews with CBC stakeholders from the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions, i.e. the interviews have tried to complement the existing picture with opinions of the experts involved in the cross-border cooperation mostly at regional levels.

The sample of interviewed experts showed their positive attitude to the cross-border cooperation, roles of networks and institutions in it. On the other hand, the authors were not able to identify any major opponent of the CBC contribution. The interviewed experts have identified clear contribution of the process of the EGTC TRITIA creation, which meant a more systemic and better planned conduct of the cross-border cooperation. The newly introduced systemic approach has also helped to establish functional and friendly interpersonal relation between stakeholders responsible for the cross-border cooperation in both regions.

The networks are already created and the human capital is ready to undertake ambitious cooperation projects between all partners who created the EGTC TRITIA. In both strategies described in this paper there are many potential projects outlined, which should be financed from the INTERREG 2014 – 2020 programmes. The new generation of these programmes took into account the fact that EGTC has developed its own cooperation strategy and there are some cross-references in all three relevant drafts of the INTERREG programmes (CZ-PL, PL-SK and SK-
CZ). What was missing during previous programming periods was the possibility to design and implement trilateral development projects. At the moment, it seems that theoretically this should be – according to Regulations - possible in 2014 – 2020 period, but the question is, whether national controllers will be able to set appropriate mechanisms which support trilateral projects.

We must conclude this chapter with a clear statement that cross-border networks really help their members to engage in implementation of the cross-border cooperation. These networks also help to build trust and functional relationships among their members, thus they contribute to the higher level of institutional thickness in cross-border regions.

In the following chapter, we will shortly outline the cooperation projects formulated for the EGTC TRITIA as a whole. This will be followed by description of several projects of the EGTC which are currently under implementation.
9. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

This chapter will try to outline the future cooperation goals. As it was mentioned in previous parts of the study, the main purpose of all three bilateral cooperation strategies, including the Slovak-Czech one, was to serve as a resource for creating one single EGTC TRITIA strategy. The works were undertaken between June 2012 and the end of the year 2013. The works were done by external consultants, who consulted the strategy with the members of the TRITIA working group twice. Nevertheless the process of the strategy creation has not been satisfactory finished yet and it has remained unfinished.

As far as TRITIA is concerned, its cooperation vision was embedded into the strategy, as it is described:

"The Moravian-Silesian Region, the Silesian Voivodeship, the Opole Voivodeship and the Žilina Self-governing Region form, through their institutional cooperation, a functional social, economic and prosperous cross-border region with existing connecting infrastructure, able to eliminate negative barrier effects of borders and to use mutual complementarities thanks to their joint effort."

Global and specific objectives of the EGTC TRITIA cooperation:

The EGTC TRITIA trilateral cooperation strategy identified the following cooperation activities, which were developed by the means of global and specific objectives.

Transport and infrastructure

Systematic cooperation of the EGTC TRITIA in the field of transport and infrastructure should according to the elaborated strategy lead towards meeting the following objectives in the years 2014-2020:

**Global Objective 1:**

Maximising the use of the geographical position of the partner regions for their economic development supported by appropriate development of cross-border transport infrastructure and transport using endogenous potential of the cooperating regions and taking into account the needs of transport accessibility and safety, while respecting friendly approach towards the environment.

**Specific objective 1.1:**

Establish and operate an expert platform which is able to identify common priorities for infrastructure, transport and logistics solutions.

**Specific objective 1.2:**

Improve local and regional transport accessibility.
**Specific objective 1.3:**
Support low-emission forms of transport and more efficient public transport.

**Economic cooperation**
Systematic cooperation of the EGTC TRITIA in the field of economic cooperation should lead towards the following objectives in the years 2014-2020:

**Global objective 2:**
Creating an environment suitable for a common, business attractive cross-border economic area based on the use of innovation, support of entrepreneurship and business. To create an area that will make the best use of its geographical location, availability and qualifications of local human resources, common history and mutual complementarity of all regions, and ensure high levels of employment of its inhabitants.

**Specific Objective 2.1:**
Create conditions for development and institutionalisation of existing elements and the creation of other cooperative elements leading to the formation of cross-border economic area.

**Specific objective 2.2:**
Support the development of human resources and administrative / institutional capacity of the border region.

**Specific objective 2.3:**
Promote cross-border initiatives in research, development and innovation.

**Tourism**
In the field of tourism, the following objectives were identified:

**Global objective 3:**
Maximising the use of geographical, historical, cultural and natural resources of the partner regions for tourism development.

**Specific objective 3.1:**
Build and modernise the infrastructure for tourism.

**Specific objective 3.2:**
Implement targeted marketing and promotion of cross-border tourism and cooperate in the field of Destination Management.

**Specific objective 3.3:**
Develop tourism based on the use of local products.
Specific objective 3.4:
Improve the quality of tourism services.

Energy and Environment
In the field of energy and environment the EGTC TRITIA strategy should fulfil the following objectives:

Global Goal 4:
Reduction of environmental burden in the territory of cooperating regions and to increase the quality of the environment in the border area with the use of energy-efficient solutions.

Specific objective 4.1:
Improve environmental quality in cross-border regions.

Specific objective 4.2:
Cooperate in the search for energy-win solutions especially in the domain of waste disposal.

Specific strategic objective 4.3:
Promote the use of renewable energy sources.

Project fulfilling the strategy:
The strategic part of the document is based on findings of the analytical part, related with global and specific strategic targets defining the main directions of cross-border cooperation of partner regions. The actual implementation of the strategy will be ensured through the projects of regions and entities operating there. The list of proposed projects is divided into the following categories:

- **Key (flagship) projects** – projects generating significant effects in social, economic, spatial-infrastructural areas and environmental protection, their implementation in practice is closely involved in the implementation of strategic objectives. In addition to its large scale and diversity, they offer innovative, unique solutions whose attributes are multiplicated. They are actually building the image and identity of the cross-border region, playing a role of “local magnets”. These projects should mainly, but not exclusively (as in the areas of transport, energy and environment) be characterised by involving partners from all three countries whose regions are involved in the cooperation.
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- **Other projects** – additional tools introducing changes in society, economy and environmental protection, their successful implementation is often a condition for success of strategic and flagship projects.

- **Additional bilateral projects** – the bilateral projects of three bilateral strategies to which this synthesis refers.

- **Horizontal projects** – create a specific category thanks to their character, passing through individual areas of cooperation.

It should be noted that the attached list of projects represents an initial catalogue of the proposed solutions for the analysed territory. In no way it excludes the recognition and implementation of other projects that directly reflect on the strategic objectives and activities defined within the strategic provisions for the development of institutional cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian region, Opole Voivodeship, Silesian Voivodeship and Žilina Self-governing Region.

**Projects in “Transport and Infrastructure” area**

**Key projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name:</th>
<th>Monitoring platform for the development of superior transport infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project owner:</td>
<td>EGTC TRITIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief description:</td>
<td>The objective of this activity will be to process a joint synthesis of documents stating the conduct of transport policy and development of superior transport infrastructure, which will, in the long term, serve as a basic document determining the direction of further mutual cross-border connections. For this purpose, representatives of partner organisations of public authorities and their proposed experts will form an expert committee that will jointly process this concept. The platform shall be technically provided by the Secretariat of EGTC TRITIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of funding:</td>
<td>CZK 0,6 million, resources of program for transnational cooperation and partner regions, EGTC TRITIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial impact:</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Project name: Development of cycling transport in TRITIA functional urban areas and between them

Project owner: EGTC TRITIA

Brief description: The aim of this activity will be to identify several problematic places in terms of cycling development in EGTC TRITIA urban areas, to ensure exchange of experience with promoting the importance of cycling in Europe and process a joint document of cycling development as one of the forms of low-carbon transport within the EGTC TRITIA territory.

Sources of funding: CZK 0.6 million, EGTC and partner regions funds, ERDF

Territorial impact: Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region

Projects in “Economic Cooperation”

Key projects

Project name: Czech – Polish – Slovak business platform

Project owner: EGTC TRITIA

Brief description: The aim of this project is to support SME sector operating in the cross-border area, e.g. by the means of creating cross-border economic forum; which will help in networking; paid internships for unemployed; B2B meetings for entrepreneurs, etc.

Sources of funding: OP CBC CZ-PL, OP CBC SK-CZ, International Visegrad Fund

Territorial impact: Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Self-governing Region

Project name: Automotive TRITIA

Project owner: EGTC in partnership with founding regions

Brief description: The aim of the project is the development of educational programs for secondary and tertiary education providers that will respond to the needs of automotive industry in the regions creating EGTC and to create a competence centre in automotive industry

Sources of funding: OP of multinational or international cooperation 2014-2020

Territorial impact: Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region
### Other projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training program in entrepreneurship for secondary schools – “Education for business”</td>
<td>The aim of the project is promotion and popularisation of the idea of entrepreneurship between secondary school students, together with encouraging the young people to develop their own business and freelance activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform of cooperation in scientific research and academic field, cross-linking of scientific and academic centres in cross-border area</td>
<td>Aim of the project is to deepen the cooperation between research and academic centres in exchange of skills, experience and knowledge in order to improve innovations. Aims of the project relate also to several other domains: providing systematic and comparable knowledge related to trends of EGTC cross-border area for politicians and practitioners; increase in mobility of university employees; cross-border transfer of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to cluster organisations within the ClusterNet initiative – workshops for inter-industrial cooperation of clusters in R&amp;D (in M-S region and outside)</td>
<td>The objective is to provide expert support in cluster management within the two meetings of cluster managers, establishing cooperation with foreign cluster organisations and information service on European</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Cluster policy. The meetings will also be focused on the initiation of cooperation of cluster organisations from partner regions of the European Territorial Cooperation TRITIA, primarily in Research & Development.

**Sources of funding:** OP CBC CZ-PL and SK-CZ 2014-2020, private funding, EGTC TRITIA

**Territorial impact:** Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region

### Projects of cooperation in “Tourism”

#### Key projects

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<thead>
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<th><strong>Project name</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hiking without barriers – network of buildings and tourism attractions in EGTC TRITIA accessible to disabled persons</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project owner</strong></td>
<td>EGTC and partner regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brief description</strong></td>
<td>The aim of the project is the improvement of accessibility of tourism attractions of the cross-border EGTC TRITIA region for the disabled persons with utilisation of the joint touristic product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sources of funding</strong></td>
<td>ERDF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Territorial impact</strong></td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project name</strong></th>
<th><strong>Specialised tourism</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project owner</strong></td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Self-governing Region or relevant entities in this region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brief description</strong></td>
<td>The aim of the project is to adapt the offer of services for disadvantaged tourists. The project may continue the already implemented project in the Moravian-Silesian Region, “Barriers-free Moravian-Silesian Region” (<a href="http://www.jedemetaky.cz">www.jedemetaky.cz</a>), within which a unified certification of accommodation and catering facilities, monuments and other objects attractive in terms of tourism is created. This certification system could be promoted and expanded in terms of the area within this project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territorial impact:</th>
<th>Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Project name:** Jointly coordinated marketing surveys

**Project owner:** Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Self-governing Region

**Brief description:** The aim of the project is to coordinate or introduce joint marketing surveys in tourism. It is possible to coordinate surveys of satisfaction and loyalty of the visitors to the whole TRITIA territory or survey of target groups and their needs. Based on executed surveys and recommendations within the project, it is also possible to create a common TRITIA “Corporate Design Manual” as the basic elements of unified visual style of the whole region. But this can be created only more closely for the marketing tourism needs, and not as the official general logo of the region as such.


**Territorial impact:** Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region

**Other projects**

**Project name:** Cross-country skiing trail (interconnection of cross-country skiing trails)

**Project owner:** Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region or relevant entities in these regions

**Brief description:** To achieve real or at least marketing connection and visibility of existing machine treated cross-country skiing trails in all partner regions. Follow-up of existing projects in the Moravian-Silesian Region “Beskids cross-country highway” and “Jeseníky cross-country highway” and activities within the EGTC and others in the Žilina Self-governing Region (Slovakia), connection to other activities of entities in these regions. The areas concerned:

1) Silesian Beskids – Beskid Ślaski
2) Jeseníky – Góry Opawskie
### Project name: Professionalisation and modernisation of tourism industry in Slovak-Polish-Czech border area

**Project owner:** Regional touristic organisations

**Brief description:** The aim of the project is professionalisation of workers in tourism industry in the border area (including language preparedness) and modernisation of operational standards and customer service in this field. Other objective is laying the foundations for cross-border cooperation of entities operating in tourism industry and local self-administrations in promoting touristic attractions or joint touristic offers in the border area. These objectives will be achieved through the implementation of learning modules designated for entities in tourism industry (touristic information centres, travel agencies), for associations conducting activities in this thematic field and for units of local self-administration.


**Territorial impact:** Opole Voivodeship, Silesian Voivodeship, Moravian-Silesian Region, Žilina Region

### Project name: Wooden architecture trail

**Project owner:** Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region, or relevant entities in these regions

**Brief description:** The aim of Wooden Architecture Trail is to create a network of historical structures made of wood and having indisputable historical benefit for the visitor. The most ideal solution is to connect objects with all-year lasting, or at least seasonal, accessibility; those can be then partially amended with inaccessible objects. The trail will contain unified informative promotional material in all involved objects. This trail will be promoted by leaflets (information centres, wooden structures...
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name:</th>
<th>Gastronomic Trail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project owner:</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region, or relevant entities in these regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief description:</td>
<td>The aim of Gastronomic Trail is to create a network of gastronomic facilities that will offer and serve specialties of their region in unified form and high standard. The project will be based on the motto, “Taste Local Specialties and Specialties of Our Neighbours”. The trail will include also so-called regional gastronomic products typical for area like cheese, milk products, bakery products, regional specialties, etc. This trail will be promoted by leaflets (information centres, gastronomic facilities) and by other communication channels – internet, newspapers, radio, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of funding:</td>
<td>Regional ROP, EGTC TRITIA, OP CBC 2014-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial impact:</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region, Silesian Voivodeship Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projects in “Energetics and Environment”

Key projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name:</th>
<th>Map of renewable sources of energy – Trail of experience with the use of renewable sources of energy in EGTC TRITIA territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project owner:</td>
<td>EGTC and partner regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief description:</td>
<td>The aim of the project is to popularise experience and good practices leading to the increase of interest in the use of renewable sources of energy in the cross-border EGTC TRITIA region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of funding:</td>
<td>OP CBC CZ-PL 14-20, OP CBC SK-CZ 14-20, Horizon 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

Territorial impact: Silesian Voivodeship, Moravian-Silesian Region, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Self-governing Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name:</th>
<th>Joint strategy of air quality management in the TRITIA Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project owner:</td>
<td>The main project owners are partner regions preparing EGTC TRITIA and EGTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief description:</td>
<td>Improving air quality on all sides of the border in areas with impaired quality of air by creating a joint strategy and its implementation. Enhance exchange of information and experience with the aim to find common tools applicable on both sides of the border. Implementation of measures and tools assembled in joint strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of funding:</td>
<td>OP CBC 2014 – 2020; other sources of financing (national, regional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial impact:</td>
<td>Silesian Voivodeship, Moravian-Silesian Region, Opole Voivodeship, Žilina Self-governing Region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projects implemented by the EGTC TRITIA nowadays

Except for the projects, which were planned and were described previously, the part of them has already achieved their implementation phase. Nevertheless, these are just minor projects mostly funded from the International Visegrad Fund.

Local products belong to the marketplace

The project, led by ISTER - GRANUM EGTC and funded from the International Visegrad Fund, has focused on creating more suitable conditions for local products and their access to the market. The task of the EGTC TRITIA, the project partner, was to bring 18 experts including two speakers to the conference. Its objective was to compare the legislative background for the operation of local producers in the V4 cross – border areas.

Promotion of technical history in an innovative way

Aim of the project “Discover your industrial past” is to raise awareness about the industrial heritage located in the area of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation TRITIA: Silesia Voivodeship, Opole Voivodeship, Moravian-Silesian Region, and Žilina Self – governing Region.
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Within the project running from August 2014 to June 2015, several activities are planned: to design an educational desk game in Polish, Czech and Slovak, concerning the industrial heritage of the listed regions, competitions for the youth of the neighboring countries associated with the educational game, an international conference and an exhibition. The project focuses on educational activities that bring people from Poland, the Czech Republic and from Slovakia, bring their knowledge of the industrial heritage of the neighboring countries, which is nowadays one of the most important branches of tourism at the Polish-Czech-Slovak border area.
10. Unique, regionally specific features of cooperation

The cooperation between both cooperating entities, the Moravian-Silesian Region (the Czech Republic) and the Žilina Self-Governing Region (Slovakia), and their engagement in the EGTC TRITIA has many features which make the cooperation at both levels very unique and pioneering.

It was for the first time when the cross-border cooperation at higher than local level was treated systematically and with the planned use of the EU funds in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (and Poland, should we speak about the EGTC level). This approach was then followed by other entities, for example all Czech-Polish euroregions in their project Euregio PL-CZ, in which they also used the INTERREG funds to draft their cooperation strategy for 2014-2020 period.

Compared with other cooperation entities at higher than local levels – for example Czech-Bavarian-Austrian European Region Danube-Vltava/Moldau or the Hungarian-Austrian-Slovak-Czech initiative CENTROPE, it enjoys the highest level of institutionalisation – thanks to the EGTC brand. The other difference is in the economic similarity of regions cooperating under the TRITIA heading: whereas both other cooperation groupings – Danube-Vltava/Moldau and CENTROPE – can count on presence of highly developed regions and cities from the “old” EU and thus to rely on “pull” effect and the efficient use of cross-border complementarities. But the regions creating TRITIA cannot experience those pull effects because their economic levels are rather similar and there is no clear development pole which can act as a cooperation engine. To eliminate this, the sophisticated cooperation mechanisms should be put in place.

There are also some other unique features, which reflect on the need of the concerned cooperation territory. These needs were identified in cooperation strategies and were addressed by the form of identified joint cooperation measures and concrete projects. The accent on territorial needs makes also a difference compared to other cooperation entities.

There are also features, which are rather negative and should be improved. The main failure is a lower capacity of cooperation founders and their ability to involve also other actors, mainly from municipal level of public administration. This is also accented in the summary of this paper. Insufficient capacity to enter into a cooperation in other initiatives and with transregional interests is another failure, as an example, we can mention the absence of connections with the Central European Transport Corridor (CETC EGTC), which is a grouping interested in the same North-South corridor which is also vital for EGTC TRITIA.
11. Summary

The paper dealt with the cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian Region (the Czech Republic) and the Žilina Self-Governing Region (Slovakia) and the qualitative change of that cooperation which came with the process of the EGTC TRITIA creation. The authors dealt with the initial premises that the character of each cross-cooperation between Czech and Slovak subjects slightly differ from the cross-border cooperation on the other borders of both countries. This is mainly due to the joint history in one state, Czechoslovakia (1918 – 1992, with the break during World War II) and almost non-existing language barrier. The common history brought along frequent border-crossing – to work, study or spend leisure-time on the other side of the borders. These characteristics have co-caused the fact that mental barriers between inhabitants of both countries are low and perception of otherness is not so strong (as vis-à-vis other neighbours of Czech and the Slovak Republic, with possible exception on Slovak-Hungarian borders, where the authors expect rather low level of mental barriers between Hungarians living in Slovakia and their southern neighbours).

The main objective of this paper was to show that institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation between the Moravian-Silesian Region and the Žilina Region under the EGTC TRITIA umbrella improved their mutual cooperation. In the part describing the ways towards current cooperation of both regions, we mentioned that division of Czechoslovakia introduced a set of border regime, including physical controls. The division of Czechoslovakia meant a negative development for all regions lying on the newly emerged borders: the number of public transport cross-border connections between both countries dramatically fell down and complicated the situation of cross-border commuters. Moreover, the economic restructuring which started in 1990’s, drastically changed the employment structure of the inhabitants of both analysed regions: the shift from primary or secondary sectors of the economy into the third service sector was accelerated also by enclosure of large heavy industrial factories and coal-mines in Moravian-Silesian Region, consequently, many commuters from the Žilina Region, mainly Kysuce sub-region, lost their jobs. When coming to this restructuring and layoffs, mostly the foreign (Slovak and Polish) workers were the first victims in Moravian-Silesian Region. Also these developments led to the fact that many job-vacancies in tourism industry in the Žilina Region were co-caused also by the restructuring in the Moravian-Silesian Region.

Despite of the fact that both countries were members of the Visegrad Group and declared the same ambitions vis-à-vis future membership in “western” structures, mainly NATO and the EU, their development was slightly different. Whereas the Czech Republic managed to follow Hungary and Poland in kind of a “good pupils regime”, the Slovak ambitions were handicapped due to the Mečiar’s government, which slowed down for example process of the Slovakia’s entry into NATO, which came 5 years later (2004) than for the Czech Republic (1999).
The cooperation between subjects from both countries were complicated also due to different structures of public administration: whereas Slovakia introduced regional structure and self-governing regions already in 1996, the Czechs made the same changes only in 2000. The non-existence of regions of similar type and competences offered no space to create cross-border contacts at lower than national and higher than municipal levels. Moreover no euroregions on Czech-Slovak borders were created in 1990s. This was due to the negative welcome of euroregions by the Slovak 1992-1998 Prime Minister, Vladimír Mečiar, whose administration did not provide any motivation or incentives for creating euroregions.

Therefore the first euroregions on the Czech-Slovak border were created only in 2000, controlled by municipalities, hence regions had almost no influence, which is explained in previous paragraph as regions were introduced in both countries at different times. This means that they could not influence the beginning of cross-border cooperation under the euroregional umbrella and also had no possibility to obtain for European funding (which in the form of Phare CBC appeared on the Czech-Slovak border in 1999).

In 2000, the regional level of public administration was introduced in the Czech Republic and Slovak regions, existing since 1996, obtained their natural counterparts. During the first years of their functioning, the regions were occupied mainly by their own establishment and processes, for example, the issue of expected EU enlargement and the possibility to work with the EU Structural Funds was also a part of their agenda, but just partially.

The beginning of 21st century was in the field of regional policies influenced by ideas of new regionalism (Keating, 1998) and paradiplomacy, which both acknowledge the higher importance of regions as actors of “small foreign policy”. This international element can be seen in their mutual cooperation and agreement signed in 2003. In this agreement, both regions identified several areas of joint interest, including “European integration and joint implementation of the EU funded projects”.

Since 2003 both regions should be understood as bound by an agreement on institutionalised cooperation. Nevertheless, only the European funds for cross-border cooperation brought some real and tangible cooperation, this happened only in 2007 – 2013 programming period. Until that time the cooperation was rather in the realm of declaration of political leaders than in reality.

The analysis conducted in the 8th chapter of this paper showed that systemic approach towards mutual cross-border cooperation brought very positive results for the Moravian-Silesian and Žilina Regions: mainly the Moravian-Silesian Regional Authority managed to obtain more funds and helped to co-initiate more projects in 2007 – 2013 period than in the previous 2004 – 2006 shorter one. Moreover, the amount of money raised for the Regional Authority itself outperformed the results of other two regional authorities on the Czech side of the border, which was due to the – from the point of cross-border cooperation – less favourable geographical default setting – quite unlikely.
The possibility to use the EU funds for cross-border cooperation brought both regions – and also four regions creating EGTC TRITIA – to the joint extensive work on common cross-border development strategies. Except for the strategies elaborated concrete cross-border cooperation projects and their concrete promoters. The most important contribution has been the whole cooperation process as such, when the representatives of both regions plus other CBC actors from both regions have regularly met and worked on beforehand planned issues. The created cross-border Czech-Slovak network, in the very north of the border, is probably more valuable asset than funds already raised or projects identified in the strategies, as it shows the potential to approach the existing problems of both regions in appropriate way which respects the potential of this potentially cross-border region.

The strategies, which were developed thanks to the process of the intensified cross-border cooperation among both regions and also all four regions creating the EGTC TRITIA, are all extensive documents with parts analysing existing relationships between the regions involved. All these documents, in their both analytical as well as strategic parts, take into account existing socio-economic situation in the concrete cross-border region. The project proposals identified in these strategies and engagement of the newly emerged cross-border networks have the significant potential to affect the development of the region. Nevertheless, this is probably most likely in the areas of tourism and cross-border labour market.

The positive impact of existing cross-border networks and their ability of to conduct cross-border cooperation was proved by the analysis in chapter 6, not only on the example of cooperation between both analysed regions, but also on the case of universities gathered in consortium Progress 3 or municipalities and other actors creating the Euroregion Bílé/Biele Karpaty.

Except for the positive evaluation of cross-border networks in helping their members to obtain the EU funds for the mutual cross-border cooperation, we also carried out qualitative research among practitioners in the field of cross-border cooperation. These experts confirmed the findings done by the quantitative methods. The euroregional cooperation in the form of Euroregion Beskydy and mainly Bílé/Biele Karpaty contributed to the institutionalisation of cross-border relation on the Czech-Slovak border in the first decade on 21st century, at the time when the newly emerged regions were quite weak after their construction. Now it seems – but it is rather a slow process – that there can be a division line between the (smaller) projects by Euroregions and bigger ones by the regions. The positions of the EGTC TRITIA and Euroregion Beskydy, situated fully in TRITIA territory and involving municipalities from all three concerned countries, are slowly becoming to be rather cooperative.
The implemented cross-border projects, the measures and projects planned in the strategies of cooperation between both analysed regions or in the framework of the whole EGTC TRITIA act according to the Boesler’s Entgrenzung – de-borderisation – theory and they try to overcome the national burdens by cross-borderisation of their activities. Nevertheless, no part of the research identified any newly born feeling of a joint cross-border identity. Maybe the territories are too big or some kind of “federal Czechoslovak identity”, as mentioned by one interviewed experts, are enough for the CBC stakeholders or the inhabitants of the both regions.
12. Bibliography


Google maps: maps.google.com

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</tr>
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<td>Table 9</td>
<td>SWOT analysis of the cooperation in the energy and environment</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Number of municipalities of regions covered by the Slovak-Czech CBC OP</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>The list of projects approved to both partner regions or organisation controlled by them directly thanks to the systemic cooperation of both regions and the creations of TRITIA:</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Annex

Annex 1 (list of interviewed experts)

Interviewers: Hynek Böhm, Artur Boháč

List of the interviewed experts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Public official at regional level</th>
<th>Political representative at regional level</th>
<th>Practitioner of the CBC at municipal level</th>
<th>Other subject involved in CBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CZ</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ivan Strachoň</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>David Sventek</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jana Drobilová</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petr Ksenič</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hynek Orság</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libor Částka</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petra Koláčková</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriela Kalužová</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomáš Fiedler</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Petr Kolčárek</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alena Kolčárková</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabriela Niedoba</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michal Banot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lukáš Szlaur</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lukáš Kisza</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Viliam Šuňal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jana Braciníková</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branislav Zacharides</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Jakubčík</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michal Laktiš</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michal Polák</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirka Poláková</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian Chlebana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Šustrová</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirka Petříková</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marián Remenius</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivana Bobrovská</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katarina Katínová</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ľubica Turčanová</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Bytčanek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2 Questionnaire used

Name: 
Position: 
Date: 

Introduction

How long have you been working in your current position? Did you deal with similar questions before entering this current position?

Cross-border relations, partners, clients in your activities

In what cooperation(s) is your institution involved?

What about the frequency/intensity of the common work?

How do you find the efficiency of the cooperation in the light of its initial objectives?

The importance and evaluation of cross-border interactions

Is there any cross-border commuting in your region of activity (for others)?

What are the positive effects of commuting?

Are there any negative effects of commuting?

Reasons, conditions and targets of cross-border movements

Who are involved in cross-border movements?

What is their motivation?

Where do they regularly come from? (which areas, municipalities)

What are the main targets? (which areas, municipalities)

Temporal changes in reasons, conditions and targets

How do you see the characteristic changes of cross-border traffic in recent years?

What are the reasons of the changes?

What do you think about the future prospects?
The effects of recent changes (EGTC TRITIA construction, Schengen accession, introduction of euro in Slovakia)

Did the EGTC TRITIA establishment result in significant changes in your activities?

Did the Schengen accession result in significant changes in your activities?

Did the introduction of euro in Slovakia result in significant changes in your activities?

Factors helping or hindering cooperation

What factors do hinder more intense cross-border interactions?

In your opinion what could contribute to the deepening of cross-border cooperation in the future?

What kind of cooperation would you support?

What is the difference between cooperation CZ-SK and CZ-PL, respectively SK-PL?

What was the main contribution of intensified cooperation between both regions and the process of the TRITIA EGTC creation?

Own ideas for the promotion of cross-border cooperation

Other (personal questions)

In the times of federation, did you study or live in the other part of it?

How often do you travel to the other side of the border?

What are your main targets on the other side?

What are the reasons of your visits?
### Annex 3: Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Slovak Republic-Czech Republic 2007-13 - List of Supported Projects with Participation from at least one partner region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead-partner</th>
<th>Cross-border partner(s)</th>
<th>Project area</th>
<th>ERDF support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orava Culture centre v Dolnom Kubíne</td>
<td>Vallachian Museum of Rožnov pod Radhoštěm / Municipality Kozlovice</td>
<td>Crafts of both regions</td>
<td>61 252,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Friends Nový Jičín</td>
<td>Alcedo / Zoo Ostrava</td>
<td>Comeback of the eagle into the Czech landscape</td>
<td>283 607,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava,</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Best technology transfer in energy resources</td>
<td>352 367,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Internation TV in DVB-H system</td>
<td>799 224,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microregión Terchovská dolina</td>
<td>Inion of River Stonávka Municipalities</td>
<td>Euro Net</td>
<td>244 189,70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostrava University</td>
<td>Trnava University</td>
<td>Diagnosis of skills of pupils from both parts of the borders</td>
<td>352 755,26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina regional Chamber SOPK</td>
<td>Regional Economic Chamber of Moravia-Silesia</td>
<td>CBC partnership-development-opportunity</td>
<td>99 076,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava,</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Supporting local heating with biomass</td>
<td>233 197,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Žilina Region /</td>
<td>Road reconstruction Bílá - Klokočov - Turzovka</td>
<td>2 680 206,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Road reconstruction Čadca-Milošová-Mosty u Jablunkova</td>
<td>1 319 897,96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region Beskydy SK</td>
<td>Region Beskydy CZ</td>
<td>Cross-border tourism in Euroregion Beskydy</td>
<td>75 031,20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Silesian University in Opava</td>
<td>Innovation for regional competitiveness</td>
<td>489 798,90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Frýdlant nad Ostravicí</td>
<td>Town Turzovka</td>
<td>CBC in Region Frýdlantsko - Horné Kysuce</td>
<td>364 390,75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO for leire-time in Ostrava</td>
<td>elementary school Rázusova Čadca</td>
<td>III.Skiing and Snobarding Eurourse</td>
<td>255 298,35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institut EuroSchola, o.s.</td>
<td>Union of municipalities Martin, Training Centre</td>
<td>APVS - Academy of Cross-Border Training of Public Servants</td>
<td>200 480,49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Self-governing Regions in the EGTC TRITIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead-partner</th>
<th>Cross-border partner(s)</th>
<th>Project area</th>
<th>ERDF support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>City of Ostrava Library.</td>
<td>Information without Borders - Constructing Information Society by the Means of Connecting Librarian and information Systems</td>
<td>264 202,61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech union of nature protectors -MS branch</td>
<td>Slovak union of nature protectors</td>
<td>Nature does not know any borders</td>
<td>370 487,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology Park Žilina</td>
<td>Institut EuroSchola, o.s./ RDA of Trenčín regio./ Slovak centrum ofproductivity</td>
<td>Jointly for innovations</td>
<td>460 001,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Cluster Liptov</td>
<td>KLACR o.s.</td>
<td>Jointly in the border region!</td>
<td>209 114,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Reconstruction of road Turzovka – Bílá II. phase</td>
<td>2 092 226,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Krásno nad Kysucou</td>
<td>Town Frenštát pod Radhoštěm</td>
<td>Let us visit via monitor</td>
<td>138 926,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institut EuroSchola, o.s.</td>
<td>Science and Technology Park Žilina</td>
<td>Don’t be afraid of making business</td>
<td>112 936,31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INOVA NOVA, n.o.</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency</td>
<td>Innovation Through border (InNOBorder)</td>
<td>324 134,53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keric</td>
<td>Institut EuroSchola,o.s.</td>
<td>Connect with Nature</td>
<td>68 391,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICM Orava</td>
<td>Institut EuroSchola,o.s.</td>
<td>Centre od education - Opportunity to educate without borders</td>
<td>189 911,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region Firemen and Rescue Service</td>
<td>Moravia-Silesia Region Firemen and Rescue Service</td>
<td>Creating joint information exchange platform for extraordinary interventions in both regions</td>
<td>350 619,62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Turzovka</td>
<td>Municipality Metylovice</td>
<td>Environment protection in border regions</td>
<td>480 662,67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina Region</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Cooperation and systemic co-ordination of self.governments in both regions</td>
<td>85 960,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation KRTEK</td>
<td>Council of Youth of Žilina Region</td>
<td>MOLE IN NET</td>
<td>338 243,34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z@ict</td>
<td>IT Cluster,</td>
<td>Integrated regional information system - IRIS</td>
<td>377 189,62</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK)
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<th>Cross-border partner(s)</th>
<th>Project area</th>
<th>ERDF support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microregion Bystrická dolina</td>
<td>Union of municipalities of Stónávka river</td>
<td>Let us inform each other!</td>
<td>231 707,45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Cooperation in the field of training and HR development in electrotechnics</td>
<td>210 396,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elementary school and gymnázium Vítkov, p.o.</td>
<td>Elementary School Vrbové, Školská 4, Vrbové,</td>
<td>Let us look for nice hidden places!</td>
<td>89 424,59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>CBC development in the field of historical architecture</td>
<td>195 049,90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality Zborov nad Bystricou</td>
<td>Municipality Mosty u Jablunkova</td>
<td>We want clean water in both regions</td>
<td>214 643,58</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tourism Cluster Liptov</td>
<td>KLACR o.s.</td>
<td>Learning Regions</td>
<td>308 909,27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INOVA NOVA, n.o.</td>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Creativity and innovation globally - KreatIN</td>
<td>174 516,11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community work centre of Moravian-Silesian Region</td>
<td>Centre of environmental Activities</td>
<td>20 independent years in border region municipalities</td>
<td>44 437,06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car cluster SK</td>
<td>Moravian-Silesian Automotive Cluster</td>
<td>Automotive without borders</td>
<td>90 302,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Joint study against pollution</td>
<td>113 689,06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>HR Development in alternative energy sources</td>
<td>88 604,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KERIC, o.z.</td>
<td>Institut Euro Schola, o.z.</td>
<td>ECOmmunication</td>
<td>74 445,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Čzech Union of nature protection</td>
<td>Alcedo</td>
<td>Support of endangered species</td>
<td>183 482,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality Čierne</td>
<td>Municipality Vendryně</td>
<td>Let us get familiar with beauties of both places</td>
<td>33 934,97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Development of cooperation of both schools in building in the transport field</td>
<td>82 301,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Development Agency Ostrava</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency of Žilina Region</td>
<td>Technical Talent CZ-SK</td>
<td>36 965,51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private secondary vocational school VIA HUMANA</td>
<td>Higher vocational school DAKOL and secondary school DAKOL, o.p.s.</td>
<td>The presence breathes the past</td>
<td>55 734,54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

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<th>Project area</th>
<th>ERDF support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical university Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Cross-border labour market chances for workforce from both regions</td>
<td>214 404,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical university Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Waste management in both regions</td>
<td>114 945,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Martin</td>
<td>Beskydská tvorba</td>
<td>System of motivation of town Martin employees as a tool to increase their competitiveness</td>
<td>35 168,92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality Stará Bystrica</td>
<td>Municipality Řeka</td>
<td>Let us renew tourism infrastructure objects to help to re-initiate CZ-SK relations</td>
<td>199 900,68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnázium Antona Bernoláka Námešto</td>
<td>Wichterlovo gymnázium, Ostrava-Poruba,</td>
<td>Our-your O(ST)RAVA</td>
<td>47 194,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality Oravská Lesná</td>
<td>Municipality Huslenky</td>
<td>International cyclo-track</td>
<td>370 169,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Ostrava</td>
<td>Žilina University</td>
<td>Increasing skills of future workforce in the field of metrology and metal-processing</td>
<td>81 668,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality Košťany nad Turcom</td>
<td>Municipality Zašová / Municipality Žabokreky</td>
<td>Let us explore water and its biotops</td>
<td>59 841,17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prievidza Regional Culture Centre</td>
<td>NGO &quot;Kunovján&quot;</td>
<td>On the wings of music</td>
<td>26 480,56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
2016

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AND JUSTICE

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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
The Tourism Zone Haloze-Zagorje

Written by
Superna Ltd (Croatia)
Andrea Vugrinović
Andrej Dominko
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of the Tourism Zone Haloze-Zagorje

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1. Introduction

The Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje (TZHZ) represents an example of a long-lasting cross-border cooperation between Croatian and Slovenian municipalities. From the start of its establishment until today, it has extended over a period of more than one decade, which makes it one of the most experienced, formalised cross-border cooperation between municipalities in Slovenia and Croatia in the field of tourism.

The foundation of the cross-border tourism zone has acted as a catalyser for cooperation between various actors in Croatian and Slovenian local communities in the region and has contributed to the economic, social and cultural development of the cross-border region, which was previously considered relatively underdeveloped. Renewing and enhancing the cooperation as well as the mutual cultural, economic, and social ties, weakened by the process of disintegration of the ex-Yugoslavia that took place in the 1990s, was the main objective as it has been emphasized at numerous occasions by the project partners in both Croatia and Slovenia.

Since its foundation, as one of the first formalised cross-border cooperation initiatives of this kind in the region, the Tourism zone has provided an operational and institutional framework for additional cross-border cooperation activities, especially in the field of economic activities and additional tourism-related projects. There are examples of economic and touristic projects that have been prepared and implemented as a direct continuation of the tourism zone project, that are going to be further elaborated later. It is important to underline that those projects/actions – as repercussions of the TZHZ – have played an important role in the overall economic and social development in the cross-border region.

The Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje provides an excellent example of best cross-border practices in the region and can be considered as an example for other cross-border efforts in the EU context together with its achievements as well as the problems it is facing. This is why it has been chosen for further elaboration within this case study.

The study gives a brief historical overview that demonstrates the deep historical and social links between Slovenia and Croatia, and gives an insight into the geographical confines of the border region. Moreover, it looks at the development of the cooperation from a letter of intent until concrete projects and their implementation. Using the acquired knowledge and information, the study puts together a SWOT analysis (where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the cooperation are demonstrated). Finally, the research attempts to inform the readers about possible future plans of the cooperation as well as to identify its uniqueness.
1.1 Methodology and approach

This case study is based on the combined findings of desk research on the one side and direct contacts with representatives of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje on the another. The desk research included a thorough analysis of various documents about the selected topic; i.e. study and analysis of project documentation, reports, articles, developmental strategies and other official documents of the municipalities included in the Tourism zone, as well as statistical reports and reviews. YouTube videos of the recorded events have also provided an appropriate source of information since many of the television broadcasts related to the zone were uploaded on this service as part of TZHŽ’s dissemination activities.

The case study uses a methodology of direct contacts, too, which includes meetings with representatives of the Tourism zone that were organized via telephone conversation and Skype conferences as well as via personal meetings. During these direct contacts (telephone, Skype, and personal meetings), interviews previously conducted by Superna were used so that additional information regarding the cross-border cooperation could be acquired. We have interviewed:

- Jernej Golc – Director of the developmental agency of the Municipality of Cirkulane Halo Ltd,
- Danijela Kos – employee at the Municipality of Cestica,
- Mirko Korotaj – mayor of the Municipality of Cestica,
- Dijana Katica, head of the Croatian Farmer Association, and
- Sonja Golc – project manager for the project „Tourism zone Haloze- Zagorje“ on the Slovenian side.

It is also important to point out certain facts regarding the selection process of the existing cross-border cooperation forms that were to be taken as examples of the best practices in cross-border cooperation. Prior to the selection of the best practice examples, a thorough research was conducted in order to define the existing cross-border cooperation networks between actors in Croatia and surrounding countries that are institutionalised and operational. Once a list of the existing cross-border cooperation networks was put together, a detailed assessment regarding their activities, consistency of engagement, impact, and overall relevance was conducted so that only the best examples could be chosen for the case studies.

The following cross-border cooperation networks were identified during the selection process:

- The Adriatic Ionian Euroregion;
- Euroregion “Drina-Sava-Majevica;”
- Alps-Adriatic Alliance;
- Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje;
- Euroregion “Danube-Drava-Sava;”
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- The Transfrontier Euro-Institute Network;
- Cross-Border Municipal Working Community Dežela pod Peco-Petzenland.

In addition to the aforementioned cross-border cooperation networks, numerous networks of twinned towns were also scrutinised but were immediately excluded from further assessment due to their extremely poor visibility element and a severe lack of joint activities as well as accessible information regarding these activities.

During the selection of the cross-border cooperation that would be included within the case study, the main selection criteria were put on the following:

- A consistent history of activities conducted jointly by the members of the cross-border cooperation followed by concrete results;
- The cross-border cooperation had to be initiated by the local and/or regional actors;
- The main focus of cross-border cooperation must be on the countries primary covered by the contract under which the case studies were prepared;
- A good visibility element and accessible representatives.

After the selection process, the following two cross-border cooperation networks were selected for case studies: the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje and the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava. Other defined cooperation forms were either initiated on a state level or simply represented purely formal networks with no real background in terms of organized and implemented cross-border activities and achieved results during the time of their existence.
2. Determination of geographical and demographical confines

2.1 Haloze region

Haloze is a Slovenian geographical sub-region, situated in the northeastern part of the country, in the Lower Styria region. It is a mostly hilly area, bounded by the rivers Dravinja and Drava in the north and by the Croatian border to the south. The area of Haloze is approximately 300 square kilometres and is inhabited by some 21,000 people, who communicate in the Haloze dialect, specific for the region. The climate of the region is very similar to the rest of the area in the Drava Valley. Yet the area is rather different in a geological sense.

Haloze is renowned for its fruits and wine and represents one of the seven districts of the Podravje wine region. The most renowned wines of this region are: Traminer, Pinot blanc, Sauvignon, Riesling and Pinot noir. Haloze is also renowned for its historically valuable monuments and sites, such as the Borl Castle, in writing first mentioned in 1199.

Figure 1: Landscape with vineyards typical for the Haloze region (Slovenia) \(^1\)

\(^1\) Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haloze](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haloze)
2.2 Zagorje region

Zagorje (full name: Hrvatsko Zagorje) is a Croatian region and a separate natural and geographical entity, situated in the northwestern part of Croatia. Zagorje is divided into two areas: North Zagorje is part of the Varaždin County, and South Zagorje covers the entire territory of the Krapina-Zagorje County as well as the northwestern part of Zagreb County. On its northwestern side Zagorje is bounded by the Slovenian border. The entire Zagorje covers an area of 2,300 square kilometres.

Zagorje is rich in historical and cultural assets, shaped by the influence of various historical processes. It is rich in castles, churches and other monuments, as well as thermal spas. Zagorje is internationally renowned for the archaeological site related to the Krapina Early Man. People in Zagorje mostly speak in Kajkavian dialect, which has many parallels with the Slovenian language.

Figure 2: Landscape typical for the Zagorje region (Croatia)²

² Source: http://www.vuglec-breg.hr
2.3 The Tourism Zone Haloze-Zagorje

The cross-border activities conducted by the Slovenian and Croatian municipalities came as a natural consequence of many distinguished parallels between the local communities on both sides of the border. Historical and cultural factors played a vital role in this sense, since people from Haloze and Zagorje have much in common. Their languages are very similar and people from both countries are able to mutually communicate and understand each other without language barriers. They share many historical and cultural influences for several centuries. Residents from Haloze and Zagorje regions lived in the same empires and states: the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918), the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1944), as well as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1992).

The Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje area covers approximately 600 square kilometres. About 200 settlements from 14 municipalities and a town are included in the zone, whilst around 55,000 inhabitants in total live in the area. On the Slovenian side, seven municipalities are included in the zone, while on the Croatian side, seven municipalities and (partially) one town are included. The border area of the zone is contiguous and defined by the bilateral cross-border co-operation accord (SOPS) between Slovenia and Croatia. The geographic map of the TZH can be found in Annex I of this case study.

The territory of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje covers seven out of 428 municipalities in total and one out of 128 towns in total on the Croatian side, as well as seven out of 212 municipalities in total on the Slovenian side.

The Tourism zone is almost equally distributed on both sides of the border. Given the fact that the territory of Slovenia in total covers an area of 20,273 square kilometres, while Croatia’s territory covers 56,594 square kilometres, the coverage area of the zone equals approximately 1.48% of Slovenian and 0.53% of Croatian territory. The share of the zone’s territory in the sum of the territories of the two countries equals approximately 0.78%.

Figure 3: Logo of the Tourism zone³:

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³ Source: http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu/images/logos/logo-haloze-zagorje-SI.png
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Slovenia; 115 km$^2$ (38%)
Croatia; 186 km$^2$ (62%)

Total territory: 301 km$^2$

Figure 4: Territorial structure of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje$^4$

Slovenia; 21,932 (39%)
Croatia; 33,796 (61%)

Total population: 55,728

Figure 5: Population of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje$^5$

$^4$ Source: authors' work
$^5$ Source: authors' work
2.4 Historic antecedents of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje

The mutual ties between the areas and their related communities that are now covered by the local self-government bodies (i.e. municipalities) within the TZHZ have to be analysed from a historical perspective. The establishment of the Tourism zone cannot be fully understood without the historical premise since that premise represents the basis on which today’s cross-border cooperation has been built on. As we have already mentioned, the municipalities and communities grouped under the tourism zone had established close and friendly relationships well before the establishment of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje. The municipalities from the two countries had together been part of three states throughout the 19th and the 20th centuries. The most important period in this context is that of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), within which Slovenians and Croats coexisted for more than 40 years. Because of the importance of the Yugoslav era for building and enhancing mutual links between the municipalities and communities, an overview of this era is given within this subchapter.

Even though both Slovenia and Croatia have their national identities on their own, the sense of shared joint identity is strongly related to the Yugoslav era and the then-proclaimed “brotherhood and unity”. The latter stands for an ideological slogan, a state practice and, in a general sense, a socially accepted way of life between the nationalities of Socialist Yugoslavia. One of the most important historical events that served as a base for growing unity of different nationalities was World War II, where a great part of the Slovenians and the Croats (in addition to others, e.g. Serbs, Macedonians, etc.) gathered under the resistance movement and the National Liberation Army, where they fought as Yugoslav partisans against German nazis, Italian fascists, and their collaborators.

After World War II, the “brotherhood and unity” was as a principle built within the foundation of the new Yugoslavia, and the majority of people of different nations from the republics that had found themselves in the new state have accepted it. In the following decades, industry and thus economies of the Yugoslavian republics were stable and growing, and the Slovenian and Croatian ones were the strongest. A high quality of life led to the establishment of a strong middle class on the federal level and the creation of a common modern identity, which had even more catalysed the feeling of one joint identity between Croats, Slovenes, and other nationalities. This situation lasted until the 1990s when Yugoslavia disintegrated and independent states within the former Yugoslavian territory were created.

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6 The „brotherhood and unity” was not related only to Slovenians and Croats in Yugoslavia, but also other Slavic nations within the Yugoslavian state: Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Bosniaks etc.
The roots of today’s efforts in Croatia and Slovenia towards mutual cooperation in various fields (i.e. tourism, entrepreneurship etc.) can be traced to the more than fourty-year-long Yugoslav era where nationalities and communities were not only co-existing but were actively living together, cooperating and developing the close mutual ties, identities and a generally positive orientation towards the creation of a joint space of social and economic cooperation. The Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje as a cross-border initiative between the Croatian and Slovenian municipalities must also be considered within this context in order to achieve an appropriate and deeper understanding of the basis of its establishment.
3. The development of the cross-border cooperation

3.1 From a letter of intent to project proposals

As a formalized cross-border network, the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje came as a result of locally initiated cooperation efforts of the municipalities in the Slovenia-Croatia cross-border space in Haloze and Zagorje regions. Even prior to the formalization of their cooperation initiative, the municipalities established semi-formal mutual links and communication with the purpose of exchanging ideas and suggestions for future and to concrete more joint actions and exchange of best practices with the purpose of enhancing their local economies in line with modern standards established in the European Union and globally.

The municipalities and especially their local actors (small producers, farmers, entrepreneurs, non-governmental associations, and accommodation providers) recognized the significant potential of the cross-border space in the field of economy, with a special emphasis on tourism. This potential of the area was greatly tied to a shared history between the communities, similar cultural influences and, especially, their similar languages.

The idea of enhancing the economic potential of the communities in the cross-border space through taking advantage of historic and cultural factors, historical and architectural heritage and/or preserved natural resources were the main driver for the conducted efforts in establishing and maintaining closer mutual ties between the municipalities in the Haloze-Zagorje cross-border area. The municipalities and their communities in Croatia and Slovenia already cooperated during the period when both countries belonged to Yugoslavia. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, they searched for new ways and possibilities in order to renew their former cooperation as independent states. Consequently, the entire framework of the cooperation changed.

3.2 The Tourism Zone Haloze-Zagorje as an early example of the LEADER PRINCIPLE in the region

Due to the fact that the municipalities created and maintained their mutual links by their own local initiative, the Tourism zone came as a result of a bottom-up approach rather than a top down decision from the state bodies. Prior to the establishment of the tourism zone, project partners from both sides of the border conducted a survey amongst local actors in the areas that were planned to be included in the future cross-border cooperation network. This survey included a wide area of local actors from the public, private, and civil sectors; namely small producers, accommodation providers, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations in the field of culture, sports, youth, and environmental protection, as well as local residents. The
survey was conducted with the purpose of obtaining information on existing tourism and economic resources and the potential of the cross-border area in order to assess the main course of development and the promotion of the zone. The surveying of local actors was conducted via a series of workshops organized by partners in their respective locations, both in Slovenia and Croatia. The main conclusions of the survey can be divided into the following premises:

- Private, civil and public actors from both sides of the border are interested in establishing closer mutual cooperation with the purpose of enhancing their competitiveness as well as overall development of the cross-border area;
- Local actors are interested in the preparation and implementation of joint activities in a long-term period;
- There is a critical mass of identified local actors from various fields in both countries that will ensure their significant contribution to the overall cross-border cooperation efforts;
- Local actors are interested in taking part in the promotion of the regionally specific features of the area in their daily activities and are ready to include those features in their products, offers, and services.

In addition to surveying local actors, municipalities in the cross-border area identified a wide spectre of existing potentials in their respective regions. The purpose of this process was to include and promote local features within the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje and to ensure that as many as possible of these features are included in the integral offer of the tourism zone.

That means the establishment of the cross-border cooperation Haloze-Zagorje can be considered as an early example of the development of the LEADER principle approach in this region. This is important to mention since both Croatia and Slovenia were relatively new to the LEADER concept at the time of the establishment of the tourism zone. Croatia and Slovenia, both as former Yugoslav republics, were under the influence of state- or government-controlled practices at that time (end of the 90s\(^7\)), on national, regional, or local level. The establishment of a network based on decisions of various local actors is considered as a pioneer venture in this part of Europe.

There are seven main pillars that define the integral LEADER approach and each of them can be identified as working principles during the process of establishment of the TZH:

- **The LEADER approach is based on specific local and regional features of a given area**, and it takes into account a small, socially connected territory which is often characterized by common traditions, local identities, and joint needs and expectations. The establishment of the Tourism zone is greatly based on this approach.

\(^7\) The letter of intent for establishment of the cross-border zone was issued in 1999.
• **LEADER underlines the importance of the bottom-up approach** as it ensures that local actors are involved in decision-making processes, they reflect on the priorities for the development of the area where they live and operate. As we already showed, local actors from Haloze and Zagorje regions were noticeably involved in the establishment of the cross-border zone.

• **LEADER promotes an establishment of local partnerships (local action groups)** with the purpose of the joint engagement of actors from public, private, and civil sector in defining local development strategies. Although the Haloze and Zagorje regions did not establish a joint cross-border local action group, various actors from the civil, private and public sectors from both areas were cooperating and involved in the establishment of the cross-border zone.

• **LEADER stimulates and encourages innovative approaches and solutions** for rural development. Here it is important to mention the significance of such innovations when it comes to the preservation of local traditions and their representation on the open market in a competitive way. The cross-border Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje as a project represents an innovative approach of its time in the region, and is greatly oriented towards the valorisation of local traditions and heritage of the included areas and their positioning on the tourism market in a new way.

• **The LEADER approach includes the networking** of different stakeholders with the purpose of exchanging knowledge, experience, and best practices. The TZHZ included this principle in its programmatic objective and encouraged the cooperation and networking of various stakeholders from the cross-border area, which includes the joint promotion and implementation of transborder activities.

• **LEADER represents an integral approach** that underlines the importance of cooperation between different sectors involved and engaged in developmental activities. The process of establishing the TZHZ included activities that involved the cooperation of various actors from the civil, private, and public sectors.

• **LEADER encourages cooperation** between different LAGs with the purpose of preparing and implementing joint projects and actions. However, Haloze and Zagorje regions did not establish a joint, cross-border local action group. One of the main intentions of the partners was to establish and maintain cooperation links with other similar zones in the European Union. The purpose of this was to encourage local actors within the zone to get engaged in joint actions with other actors on the EU level.

All of the municipalities included in the tourism zone closely cooperated and were directly engaged in the project of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje as project partners. There are two municipalities that distinguished themselves in the process of initiating the first steps of further cooperation. The first signs of bringing the semiformal cooperation to the level of formal and institutionalized cross-border cooperation network are tied to the efforts conducted by the Municipality of Zavrč (Slovenia) and Municipality of Cestica (Croatia). The local self-government
bodies of these two municipalities are the main responsible partners of the project and they conducted the initial steps in gathering human and other resources needed for project preparation.

The first steps towards the formalized development of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje took place in 1999. In that year, the ‘Letter of intent’ was signed in Trakošćan, Croatia, by the representatives of the municipalities within the future tourism zone. In 2003, an agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism was signed and the administrative zone Haloze-Zagorje was established, which marked the start of the preparation of the project called “Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje”. Since the beginning of the project preparation, Mr. Dragutin Čehok (M.Eng) from the company INTER IN Ltd. played a key role in the project preparation process, both as lead consultant and coordinator of the project. During the 2003/2004 period, the ‘Elaborate on the establishment of TZHZ’ was prepared alongside with the tourist zone maps. In the same period, the zone was physically marked with road signs on both sides of the border. After the technical inspection of the area and approval of the responsible bodies, a meeting took place in Koper (Slovenia) in April 22nd 2004, where the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje was officially declared by the SOPS commission.

3.3 The SOPS Agreement on frontier trade and cooperation

Since its establishment the cross-border tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje is on a higher decision level, regulated by the Agreement on frontier trade and cooperation between Croatia and Slovenia. Consequently, it is necessary to present the basic principles of the agreement document.

The Agreement on frontier trade and cooperation (SOPS) between Slovenia and Croatia is a document that defines a general framework and terms of cross-border cooperation between the two countries in the areas (local self-government bodies) near the common border. The Agreement is issued by the legislative bodies in Croatia (i.e. the former Croatian House of representatives) and Slovenia (i.e. the National Assembly).

The Agreement on Frontier Trade and cooperation was jointly defined and agreed upon by the Slovenian and Croatian governments, and was signed in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on 28th of April 1997. The signatories of the Agreement were Mate Granić (Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Zoran Thaler (Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs). On the 29th of September 1997, the Agreement was approved by Franjo Tuđman, then President of the Republic of Croatia.

The Agreement on Frontier Trade and Cooperation does not define specific cross-border structures (i.e. existing euroregions, tourism and entrepreneurship zones, etc.) but only defines

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8 For the list of included municipalities, please refer to Table 2 of this document.

9 Croatian “Sporazum o pograničnom prometu i suradnji” – Agreement on frontier trade and cooperation
cross-border areas (municipalities and settlements) as well as segments of territorial seas of Croatia and Slovenia where the Agreement is applicable. The list of settlements on the Slovenian and Croatian side is very long and the full version can be found in the Official Gazette Nr 15/97\(^\text{10}\).

Within the context of cross-border cooperation networks, the Agreement on Frontier Trade and Cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia will soon become obsolete. Namely, in the time when the Agreement was signed, neither Slovenia nor Croatia were members of the European Union\(^\text{11}\). As non-EU countries, national borders between Croatia and Slovenia were strict. However, after the entry to the EU, national borders have lost their strict relevance and rigidity. The Agreement on Frontier Trade and Cooperation has remained in force even after Slovenia and Croatia entered the EU, but the borders will become obsolete, especially when Croatia will be a member of the Schengen area. In this context, certain obstacles that the Agreement on Frontier Trade and Cooperation puts towards the acceptance of new members within the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje are expected to end within that period.

The Agreement defines the terms for cross-border travel and trade in the defined areas that were formally recognized and confirmed by the SOPS commission. For tourism zones, the Agreement grants issuing tourist licences for visitors that makes their travel between the defined cross-border sections much easier. The holders of such tourist licences are able to travel within and remain in the cross-border area without having to undergo more complex procedures that apply to other visitors (i.e. without the licence). Hence, all the activities for tourists in the area are conducted more easily, which has a substantial positive impact on activities that include crossing the borders (e.g. bicycling, sightseeing, hiking etc.).

However, there is a specific limitation that the SOPS agreement brings to (tourism) zones. Namely, the SOPS lacks flexibility, and the cross-border tourism zones are definite, which means that no additional areas can join the defined zone without complex negotiation procedures on state level. This fact puts several limitations to the tourism zones in the cross-border area, since the legal framework for such zones is defined on state level.

### 3.4 The project Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje

The project proposal was submitted for the first call of the INTERREG III A cross-border programme. After the elaboration process, the project was highly ranked (only 13 out of 96 projects in total applied by Croatian partners were chosen for funding) due to its quality design, impact on the target groups, innovative approach, and its relevance for the development of the

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\(^{10}\) A direct link to the Croatian version of the Official Gazette Nr 15/97 can be found in the Bibliography of this case study.

\(^{11}\) Slovenia entered the European Union in May 2004, and Croatia in July 2013.
Slovenia-Croatia cross-border area. On May 19 2006, the contract was signed between the EU and the lead partners from Croatia and Slovenia. The Municipality of Cestica was the main project partner on the Croatian side, while the Municipality of Cirkulane was the main project partner on the Slovenian side as well as the lead partner as well. Each of the main partners in Croatia and Slovenia were responsible for coordinating the project partners and activities, spending the funds in line with the budget and reporting project progress to the responsible bodies.

Apart from the aforementioned lead institutions, the following entities were also project partners: municipalities Gorišnica, Cirkulane, Podlehnik, Videm, Zetale and Zavrč (on the Slovenian side); municipalities Bednja, Donja Voća, Đurmanec, Jesenje, Klenovnik, Lepoglava and Vinica (on the Croatian side) as well as the Municipality of Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina). As the Municipality of Tuzla is an area which is geographically located far away from the cross-border space of Haloze-Zagorje, it was not supposed to become a part of the new tourism zone, but it participated in the project as an associate partner. Consequently, the Municipality of Tuzla played a minor role in the project of establishing the Tourism zone; its engagement was limited to attending project meetings and taking part in some of the activities. This way the exchange of best practices on cross-border cooperation efforts between the Slovenian and Croatian municipalities, within the context of EU programmes, was ensured for the Municipality of Tuzla as well. The total budget for the project was 394,371 EUR, while the EU contribution was 295,778 EUR. The project duration was 24 months in total.

**Figure 6: Project management meeting organized during the implementation of the project (October 2006)**

*Order of appearance (from left to right): upper row: Vladimir Pernek, President of the Municipality of Đurmanec; Anton Buloten, County Prefect of Žetale; Dragutin Čehok, project advisor; Rado Radošek, representative of the*

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12 Source: [http://www.cestica.hr](http://www.cestica.hr)
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Municipality of Marčane, Ivica Lukaček, representative of the Municipality of Gornja Voća; lower row: Vera Borak, project leader on the Croatian side; Mirko Korotaj, Mayor of the Municipality of Cestica, Jasmina Grabar, secretary of the Municipality of Bednja, Sonja Golc, project leader on the Slovenian side.

On May 29 2006, the project “Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje” was announced to the wider public. High expectations were put towards the implementation of the project by both project partners and by the residents of the Haloze-Zagorje area. In addition to this, the project was also funded by the EU, which contributed to an overall positive attitude of the residents towards the European Union integration process.

Figure 7: Presentation conference for the Tourism zone, Babinec, Croatia, 2008

The activities carried out gave the needed momentum to the economic, social, cultural, and overall development of the Haloze-Zagorje tourism region. The project created the framework for creating new tourism offers in the region that would contribute to creating new job opportunities for entrepreneurs, small producers, local residents, and investors. The sector of culture and heritage has also made a profit from the project since it included activities of preservation of cultural heritage and ensured its integration as a part of integral tourism offer of the area. Moreover, for the sake of its sustainability the project ensured a basic framework for future cooperation among a wide spectrum of different economic and non-economic stakeholders, generating better connection between local communities from both sides of the Croatian-Slovenian border.

13 Source: http://www.cestica.hr
Traditions of the local communities have been included in the integral tourism offer, which positively contributed to ensuring sustainability of local folklore and traditions. Namely, local residents, especially traditional crafts and arts were now given the opportunity to link their activities into the commercial offer of the zone, which opened the path for better financial sustainability of the local economy and gave a boost for the preservation of local traditions in the area.

Due to the fact that the TZH had been previously declared by the Agreement on frontier trade and cooperation Commission, tourists in the zone were now given the opportunity to obtain tourist licence and travel from one to another side easily and without unnecessary administrative burdens. This way, visitors were given the chance to move freely throughout the entire area of the cross-border tourism zone, visit places and sites in reasonable time, without unnecessary and, more importantly, often time-consuming obstacles. Moreover, by moving freely through the zone, visitors were able to experience the area as a unitary and organic unity.

The main result of the project was the establishment of a joint cross-border management structure of the Tourism zone. This way, a long-term organizational and operational framework for the zone was established and ensured. Also, during the project, there were several other activities implemented in order to catalyse the development of tourism in the cross-border region. All activities were closely tied to the main objective and so ensured complementary outputs necessary for the appropriate establishment of the zone. The project activities were:

- training courses for the area's tourist guides;
- establishment of a register of local tourist guides;
- writing a draft of the Development strategy for the Tourism zone;
- creation of valuable ethnographical collections;
- partial rehabilitation of the Dominkova and Vukova farmhouses, of the wine museum in Velika Gorica and a votive monument in Stogovci, Ptujska Gora.

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• establishment of the office as well as additional facilities for meetings and promotional activities related to the zone;
• reconstruction and renewal of the DVD15 Babinec facilities;
• marking bicycle routes in the area for GPS systems;
• marking the zone with road signs.

![Ptujska Gora, one of the attractions in Haloze-Zagorje](image)

*Figure 9: Ptujska Gora, one of the attractions in Haloze-Zagorje*:

Various promotional materials were produced in three languages\(^\text{17}\) in order to disseminate the purposes of the project. These promotional materials were the following: tourism zone brochure, guides with tourist destinations including bicycle routes, culture monuments and sites of great natural value in the zone, as well as events calendars and posters. Furthermore, the TZHZ was actively presented on numerous regional fairs as well as local and cross-border manifestations.

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\(^{15}\) In Croatian “Dobrovoljno vatrogasno društvo”, in English „volunteer fire brigade”

\(^{16}\) Source: [http://www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info)

\(^{17}\) in Slovenian, Croatian, and English
Moreover, it is necessary to mention that the zone was promoted at the Zagreb Fair in the capital of Croatia, which is one of the most renowned international fairs in the wider region. What is more, a promotional film was produced in four languages (Croatian, Slovenian, English, and German) together with the tourist guide, info points, and other promotional materials. Video commercials were produced and transmitted on the Croatian and Slovenian national televisions (HRT and TV Slovenia). In addition, an internet site was established with information about the project and a detailed overview of the Haloze-Zagorje region, its history, culture, traditions, food and architectural heritage.

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18 Source: http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu
Prior to and during the establishment process of the Tourism zone, project partners had already cooperated with different stakeholders in the region (such as with small producers, grape growers and wine makers, family farms, accommodation providers, traditional craftsmen, small farmers, unemployed people, etc.) in order to address the main issues to be dealt with within the project. The main pros and cons that were identified during the consultations are presented in the following table.

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19 Source: [http://www.cestica.hr](http://www.cestica.hr)
3.5 Pros and cons regarding the establishment of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje as defined in the process

Pros

- the zone will be able to utilize specific natural, cultural and economical advantages from the both sides of the border
- institutionalized cross-border cooperation will enhance best practices exchange between its members
- cross-border cooperation will serve as an excellent basis for future joint cross-border initiatives
- cross-border cooperation has a major overall potential to significantly contribute to the development of tourism, economy, culture and society
- cross-border cooperation will take advantage of the opportunities granted via the SOPS Agreement and ensure easier trade and travel within the zone for tourists and local residents
- The financing of the project will have a major positive impact of ensuring positive attitudes from the local population towards the European Union and its policies.
- The tourism zone will ensure the inflow of tourists and visitors (consumers), and further stimulate local producers to improve their activities in order to gain competitive advantage. The zone will also have a great impact on stimulating more people to start their own businesses.

Cons

- none defined during the process

3.6 The post-implementation period

Following the project implementation period, project partners continued with planning, organizing and conducting activities in order to ensure the zone’s operations and sustainability as well as its positive impact on defined target groups. Representatives of the municipalities included in the zone were primarily interested in funding opportunities for future actions related to the zone. The main priority was to further stimulate members to further cooperate on preparing projects for applying for various EU funds in the field of tourism and entrepreneurship.

Project partners continued to organize meetings and joint events, which provided a good opportunity for them to survey the process of the development of the zone in the post-project period. The meetings and events were organized regularly, approximately once every six months.
One of the examples of such meetings took place in 2010, when the representatives of the municipalities (mayors and municipal prefects) included in the tourism zone met in Lepoglava, in the premises of the Tourist and cultural information centre. The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the “Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje” project staff, in order that suggestions and ideas for future actions are ensured from all relevant actors.

During the meeting, attendants were analysing existing funding opportunities related to EU programmes and encouraged their members to work together and submit their joint project proposals. The main focus was put on future projects related to the economy, with a special emphasis on tourism development projects. Also, the organization of future joint events and manifestations for tourists and the local population was underlined as an important method for ensuring the future activities and overall life of the TZHZ in the long term.

The meeting also served as an appropriate ground for project partners to cooperate in defining the principles of the newly established Council of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje, which included mayors of the municipalities as well as the representatives of the project staff. The defined purpose of the Council was to assess the possibilities and opportunities related to the zone as well as to define the plan and programme of the activities.

3.7 The follow up of the establishment of the tourism zone: The project Entrepreneur zone Haloze-Zagorje and Wine road “Klampotic”

As we already mentioned, the establishment of the cross-border Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje has provided an organizational and operational framework for additional projects, either as actions initiated by the municipalities alone or as joint actions between some or all of the municipalities. The fact that the municipalities continued joint preparation, submission and implementation of additional projects underlines the major developmental influence and the multiplicative factor of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje project results.

The most notable example of such activities is related to the establishment of the Entrepreneur zone Haloze-Zagorje. The project represents a direct follow-up to the establishment of the TZHZ. The project was initiated by the Municipality of Cestica (the lead partner for the tourism zone establishment on the Croatian side of the border) in 2007, and it included municipalities in the Tourism zone. The project was realised within the PHARE programme and the European Union contributed to its realisation with 88,000 EUR. Moreover, as a part of the Entrepreneur zone, the Economy zone of the Municipality of Cestica and City of Lepoglava was also established. The project of the establishment of the Entrepreneur zone Haloze-Zagorje is an example of a successful, jointly prepared and implemented project proposal conducted by the municipalities in the Haloze-Zagorje region after the establishment of the tourism zone.
In addition to the Entrepreneur zone, the project Wine road “Klampotic” also represents a direct follow up of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje project. The main partner of this project aimed at establishing the wine road was the Municipality of Cestica, while the project was co-funded by the European Union with 300,000 EUR within the period 2010-2014. This project came as the result of the initiative of various family farms in the region, which showed their interest for the integration of their wine products in a unique tourism destination offer in the Zagorje region.

Table 1: Croatian and Slovenian municipalities with their related settlements included in the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje21:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Municipality/city</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Municipality of Bednja</td>
<td>Varaždin county</td>
<td>Bednja, Benkovec, Brezova Gora, Cvetlin, Jamno, Jazbina Cvetlinska, Ježovec, Mali Gorenec, Meljan, Osonjak, Pašnik, Pleš, Podgorje Bednjansko, Prebukovje, Purga Bednjaska, Rinkovec, Sveti Josip, Šaša, Šinkovica Bednjanska, Šinkovica Šaška, Trakoščan, Veliki Gorenec, Vranojelje, Vrbno, Vrhovec Bednjanski</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Source: http://www.cestica.hr
21 Source: authors’ work
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Municipality/city</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality of Donja Voća</strong></td>
<td>Varaždin county</td>
<td>Budinščak, Donja Voća, Fotez Breg, Gornja Voća, Jelovec Voćanski, Plitvica Voćanska, Rijeka Voćanska, Silvarsko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City of Lepoglava</strong></td>
<td>Varaždin county</td>
<td>Kamenica, Žarovnica, Zlognje, Donja Višnjica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality of Klenovnik</strong></td>
<td>Varaždin county</td>
<td>Dubravec, Goranec, Klenovnik, Lipovnik, Plemenšćina, Vukovoj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality of Vinica</strong></td>
<td>Varaždin county</td>
<td>Donje Vratno, Gornje Ladanje, Goruševnjak, Marčan, Pešćenica Vinička, Vinica, Vinica Breg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality of Đurmanec</strong></td>
<td>Krapina-Zagorje county</td>
<td>Donji Macelj, Đurmanec, Goričanovec, Gornji Macelj, Hlevnica, Hromec, Jezerišće, Koprivnica Zagorska, Lukovčak, Podbrezovica, Prigorje, Putkovec, Ravninsko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality of Jesenje</strong></td>
<td>Krapina-Zagorje county</td>
<td>Brdo Jesenjsko, Cerje Jesenjsko, Donje Jesenje, Gornje Jesenje, Lužani Zagorski</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slovenia</strong></td>
<td>Municipality of Zavrč</td>
<td>Administrative unit Ptuj</td>
<td>Belski vrh, Drenovec, Gorenjski vrh, Goričak, Hrastovec, Korenjak, Pestike, Turški vrh, Zavrč</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipality of Gorišnica</td>
<td>Administrative unit Ptuj</td>
<td>Cunkovci, Formin, Gajevci, Gorišnica, Mala Vas, Moškanjci</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Municipality/city</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Cirkulane</td>
<td>Administrative unit</td>
<td>Ptuj</td>
<td>Muretinci, Placerovci, Tibolci, Zagojiči, Zamušani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Videm</td>
<td>Administrative unit</td>
<td>Ptuj</td>
<td>Brezovec, Cirkulane, Dolane, Gradišča, Gruškovec, Mali Okič, Medribnik, Meje, Paradiž, Pohorje, Pristava, Slatina, Veliki Vrh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality of Žetale</td>
<td>Administrative unit</td>
<td>Ptuj</td>
<td>Žetale, Dobrina, Kočice, Nadole, Žetale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the changes in the shape of the territory of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje, no municipalities from either side of the border had left or joined the zone after its establishment. As previously said, the territory of the tourism zone is defined by the Agreement on frontier trade and cooperation between national bodies in Slovenia and Croatia, and it is not subject to change. There have been, however, requests from other municipalities on the Slovenian side for joining the zone, as the interviews conducted for the purpose of preparing this case study have shown. On the other side, in Croatia there were no requests for joining the zone.
4. Main activity areas/profile

Regarding the activities of the cross-border cooperation, such as academic research and educational activities conducted within the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje cross-border cooperation, there are examples for education activities. These activities were prepared and implemented in order to enhance the skills and knowledge of stakeholders operating in a wide range of areas in the economy of the zone. Examples of educational activities conducted in the TZH are:

- A series of trainings for tourist guides were organized in cooperation with the Tourist guides association\(^{22}\). Training activities were held on both sides of the border and included all municipalities within the zone. The trainings consisted of a theoretical and a practical part. In total, 13 tourist guides participated and at the end of the educational process, licences were issued to them and they became official guides for the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje. The ceremony took place on December 3rd 2006 in the Municipality of Cirkulane (Slovenia).

- Within the project *Economic zone Cestica*, which is a continuation of the project *Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje*, educational activities were organized for stakeholders relevant in the field of economic development.

- Within the project *Education*, education was conducted for the entrepreneurs, tourism actors, farmers, and civil society organisations’ representatives.

- Within the project *Wine road “Klampotic”*, which is a continuation of the project *Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje*, wine producers were educated in order to meet the criteria for including their offers in the wine road.

- Within the project *Preserving traditional crafts*, small traditional producers were educated in the field of marketing.

- Within the project *Development and promotion of the tourism potentials of Bednja*, various stakeholders were educated in the field of tourism.

- Within the project *Organizing small farms for conducting tourism activities*, members of small family farms were educated.

- The establishment of the *Museum-education centre “Vindija”* involved educational activities for its staff. Today, the centre itself provides education for visitors.

- The project *Economic zone Cestica* included education for stakeholders in entrepreneurship.

- Within the project *Entrepreneurship in Haloze-Zagorje*, education was organized for entrepreneurs.

---

\(^{22}\) In Croatian: „Udruga turističkih vodiča“
• **Organizing family entrepreneurship in Bednja** included education for family entrepreneurs.

• Within the project *Traditional items from Podlehnik*, a series of workshops related to production of traditional items was organized.

• Within the action *Informing local population on the importance of preventive healthcare*, a series of educational activities were organized for the local population.

• As part of the action *Knowledge for development of LAG Haloze*, educational activities were conducted for stakeholders.

• During the action of *Enhancing tourism sector in Haloze*, stakeholders in tourism were educated.
### Table 2: Table of additional projects prepared and implemented by two or more members of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Name of the project</th>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2000 - 2006 | Dostupnost - Haloze | **Lead Partner:** Obcina Videmu  
**Project partners:**  
HALO EDIL ING – economy interest association for development of entrepreneurship and tourism  
Municipality of Zavrc  
Municipality of Cestica  
Municipality of Gorisnica  
Municipality of Majsperk  
Municipality of Podlehnik  
Municipality of Zetale | **Total budget:**  
74.871 EUR  
**EU funding:**  
56.153 EUR | The project’s general objective was to improve cross-border mobility and accessibility for all people residing along the border. The improvement of cross-border accessibility and the reconstruction of roads near the border produce favourable conditions for the development of business, agricultural and tourist activities in the area. The project provided the necessary essential elements for the future improvement of cross-border traffic networks that will enable people from both sides of the border to have better access to services | Documents necessary for the upgrading of several road sections in the area of the participating municipalities were prepared, as follows: documents concerning three projects for the area of Videm municipality, six for the area of the Majsperk municipality and one each for Zavrc and Podlehnik municipalities. The objective was to improve cross-border traffic networks and increase cross-border mobility with Croatia. |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
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<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2006 Slovenia - Hungary - Croatia (SI-HU-HR)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship - HZ</td>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Municipality of Cestica&lt;br&gt;<strong>Project partners:</strong> Municipality of Bednja&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Donja Voca&lt;br&gt;City of Lepoglava&lt;br&gt;HALO EDIL ING – economy interest association for development of entrepreneurship and tourism&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Klenovnik&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Gorisnica&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Majsperk&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Podlehnik&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Zetale&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Gornje Jesenje&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Videm&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Vinicka&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Durmanec&lt;br&gt;Municipality of Zavrc</td>
<td>Total budget: 117,345 EUR&lt;br&gt;EU funding: 88,009 EUR</td>
<td>A joint economic and social cohesion and the development of human resources is expected through the stimulation of cooperation and the improvement in business dynamics within the Haloze-Zagorje cross-border area. A better cross-border cooperation among municipalities and companies was established and regional support structures were given with the purpose of reestablisshing a supporting environment for economic development of the area, including a larger number of companies at a single location and an opportunity for a safe and rapid development of the companies and an improvement of the social and economic situation in the Haloze and Zagorje areas. A foundation has been established for more active and determined resolution of the entrepreneurial problems in the area; networks of the Haloze-Zagorje entrepreneurial zones have been established; joint marketing and promotion of entrepreneurial zone; an increase in the number of businesses thereby economically strengthening the area; new opportunities for the employment have been developed and the unemployment level of the area has decreased; the influence of the border on local population has decreased.</td>
<td>A brochure and a DVD for the needs of the Haloze-Zagorje Entrepreneurial Zone project were produced; feasibility studies for Otok Virje, Cestica and Lepoglava entrepreneurial zones were completed; a development strategy and a marketing strategy were completed; a concept design and an unclassified road plan for the Cestica entrepreneurial zone were completed; a concept design for the entrepreneurial zone, an access road plan, the main drainage, water supply system and telecommunication network projects; a feasibility study for the Lepoglava entrepreneurial zone was completed; two cooperation meetings were held where each entrepreneurial zones were presented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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### Case Study of the Tourism Zone Haloze-Zagorje

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
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<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **PHARE 2005** | TCIC – Tourism and culture information centre | Lead partner: The city of Lepoglava  
Project partners: Zadruga lepoglavska čipka  
Nezavisna udruga mladih  
Gradska knjižnica  
Lepoglava  
Zajednica športskih udruga Grada Lepoglave  
Pučko otvoreno učilište „Đuro Arnold“ Ivanec | Total budget: 981,000 EUR  
EU funding: 74,15% | The general objective of the project was to improve the competitiveness of the Lepoglava region in accordance with the Micro-regional development strategy for tourism. The specific aim of the project was to develop the tourism infrastructure and new tourism products through establishing Tourism and culture information centre in Lepoglava. Within the project, building of the Tourism and culture information centre was renovated and equipped, tourism marketing strategy was developed, new tourism packages were created, seminars and workshops for tourism stakeholders were held, and various promotional materials in English, German, Italian, and Croatian were designed and issued. | • Renovated and equipped premises of the Tourism and culture information centre  
• New tourism services developed  
• Enhanced of the attractiveness of the Lepoglava region  
• Improved human resources capacities in the tourism sector |
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<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe for Citizens</td>
<td>Creating European identity through joint culture and sports traditions</td>
<td>Lead partner: Municipality of Cestica Project partners: Municipality of Cirkulane (Slovenia) Municipality of Heiningen (Germany) Municipality of Molnari (Hungary)</td>
<td>Total budget: 56.448 EUR</td>
<td>In total of 4 project events were organized within this project, 1 event per project partner. During the project, representatives of the partner regions and their associated sports and culture organizations/CSOs organized various cultural and sport events, where they enhanced their mutual links and exchanged best practices.</td>
<td>At the end of the project, included project regions (municipalities) signed a town twinning agreement. Within the agreement, the framework for future joint activities between the twinned municipalities was defined for the fields of culture, sports, and recreation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding publication activities, TZH has its own website ([www.haloze-zagorje.eu](http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu)) where a wide spectrum of information is provided to the wider public. However, the website has not been updated for a few years now, and the cross-border cooperation is not engaged in any additional publication activities directly tied to the tourism zone. On the other hand, municipalities included in the zone are actively engaged in publication activities related to their respective regions (municipalities), which they use to promote their regions and often the Haloze-Zagorje zone, too. In addition to that, municipalities are engaged in informing local actors about actual calls for proposals as well as other funding opportunities. The municipalities can also provide legal assistance to the actors of their respective regions.
5. Management and budget

During the project implementation period, the Tourism zone had its own separate budget for project activities. After carrying out the project activities and spending the budget in line with the project’s financial plan, the final report was issued and accepted. The post-implementation activities in the tourism zone continued to be financed from the budgets of the participant municipalities in the zone. As a consequence of the ongoing economic global crisis, the budgets of the municipalities available for funding activities related to the tourism zone are scarce. The main consequence is that the activities related to the joint promotion of the tourism zone are relatively rare today, and are often carried out by one or two partner municipalities included in the tourism zone.

Although the establishment of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje represents an example of best practices related to joint cross-border cooperation in this part of Europe, probably the main weakness related to the zone is that the project partners from both sides of the border did not manage to ensure financial sustainability for the tourism zone. After the establishment of the zone, partners continued to finance activities related to its promotion and further development. Nevertheless, the means of financing the zone have not sufficed to ensure a high level of competitiveness of the tourism zone on an open market and in line with modern tourism needs.

Although the activities of TZHZ are today conducted relatively rarely compared to the project implementation period, when sources of financing these activities were ensured via the project budget, there are some activities conducted today by project partners.

The main activities conducted by the tourism zone in the post-project period are related to organizing various cultural events, cultural associations (KUDs) meetings, hiking excursions, carnivals (fašnik), degustation of local products (local wine and food), etc. Not all of these activities are being carried out via cooperation between the municipalities included in the Haloze-Zagorje tourism zone, and it is often the case that only one of the municipalities conducts such activities on its own. On the other hand, the activities are well focused, keeping in mind the specific local features of the cross-border area. All of the activities strive to take advantage from the cultural, historical and natural resources and assets of the region in order to promote its potential and present it to the wider tourism-related public.
Organizational structure and composition of the working Body

When it comes to the structure of the working body of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje, it is important to mention that the organization does not have a formally employed and professionalized employee structure. The main organizational unit from the beginning of the establishment of the zone is the Council of the Tourism zone, composed of the mayors of the municipalities included in TZHZ as well as the representatives of the project staff that was engaged in the process of preparing and implementing the establishment of the zone. The organizational structure has not changed since its first establishment.

There is one main seat of the Council on each side of the border. In Croatia, the seat of the Council is stationed in the premises of the Municipality of Cestica, while on the Slovenian side the seat is part of the Municipality of Cirkulane. Both Cestica and Cirkulane were lead partners of the project Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje in Croatia and Slovenia. As lead partners and the most active members of the cross-border cooperation, they continued to act as leaders of the tourism zone.

There are two persons who act as leaders of the Council: on the Croatian side is Mirko Korotaj, the Mayor of the Municipality of Cestica, while on the Slovenian side is Janez Jurgec, the Mayor of the municipality of Cirkulane. Mayors can appoint additional staff. All of the people engaged in conducting operations and activities related to TZHZ are highly educated persons with experience in tourism, economy and EU projects. Depending on the person, the staff can communicate in English, Slovenian, Croatian, and German.

The role of the Council as the body of the representatives of the member municipalities of the Haloze-Zagorje region is related to the planning of the zone’s future development. This planning is primarily oriented towards identifying available EU funding opportunities for future joint projects in the field of tourism and economy. The Council organizes staff meetings on a regular basis (usually one every six months) with the purpose of exchanging ideas and reviewing possibilities for future projects, defining priorities for future cross-border cooperation, and exchanging best practices in the field of EU projects prepared and/or implemented by the municipalities. The Council also contributes to ensure additional media coverage for the Tourism zone by organizing conferences and preparing statements for local and regional media.

The municipalities included in the Council are also responsible for providing information about the available EU programmes and other funding opportunities to local actors in their respective regions. Each municipality has a special person (a member of the municipal staff) whose role is to help potential applicants (entrepreneurs, producers, non-governmental organizations, etc.) in preparing their project proposals.

Since the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje does not have its separate budget plan, and since the activities conducted by the zone are funded via the budgets of municipalities included in the
zone, the Council of TZHZ conducts their work as part of their primary employment in the municipalities included in the zone. In line with that, the members of the staff of the Council are compensated for their work related to the zone via their monthly payments (which they receive from their respective municipalities).

In total, there are 17 persons operating as members of the Council of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje: 15 of them are official representatives of the municipalities (8 from Croatia and 7 from Slovenia), and another two persons are representatives of the staff engaged in the project “Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje”.
6. SWOT analysis\textsuperscript{24}

This case study analyses a specific cross-border cooperation. The information and knowledge was gathered through interviews with representatives of the partner organizations involved in the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje. The main purpose of these interviews was to gain information from first hand regarding the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing TZH. Most of the interviews were conducted via telephone conversation with representatives of the tourism zone member organizations.

The SWOT analysis was prepared for four fields. To be specific, the analysis looks at the areas of economy; tourism; natural and cultural resources/heritage; management and coordination/governance.

**Economy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• good communication and geographic location</td>
<td>• relatively low level of competitiveness of some enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• stable entrepreneurship activities</td>
<td>• relatively low growth of new enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• presence of a qualified labour force</td>
<td>• an insufficient promotion of the region in international context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• experience of stakeholders in the field of EU programmes</td>
<td>• migration of local population outwards from the zone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• interest of enterprises from other regions for cooperation and networking</td>
<td>• high level of competitiveness of products and services in other EU countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• available programmes and initiatives for entrepreneurship</td>
<td>• global financial crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the EU market ensures business networking with other countries without administrative and tariff barriers</td>
<td>• a relatively low economic rating of the Croatian economy when compared to other EU economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• possibilities of CBC cooperation in the field of economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{24} All SWOT tables were compiled by the authors of the case study.
Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• a high proportion of cultivated lands</td>
<td>• inadequate utilization and promotion of the natural and cultural potential of the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• renowned agricultural products</td>
<td>• a lack of coordinated activities in the field of tourism with other members of the Tourism zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• transfer of knowledge and experience with other European regions</td>
<td>• a lack of financial resources available for the tourism zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• preserved natural resources</td>
<td>• a relatively low level of networking between tourism stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• established formal cross-border tourism zone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• existing bicycle route within the area appropriate for sport and recreational tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Opportunities                                                             | Threats                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                                                           |
| • a growing interest of tourists for Croatia                              | • promotion of Croatia primarily as a country of coastal tourism offer    |
| • a growing demand for rural tourism offers                               | • no developmental strategy for the tourism zone                          |
| • growing interest of other tourism destinations in the wider area for networking and cooperation | • a relatively high level of competitiveness of other tourism zones in the wider region |
| • high demand for differentiated and specialized tourism offers on the market |                                                                           |
Natural and cultural resources and heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• preserved traditional landscapes, rivers and forests</td>
<td>• insufficient usage of renewable energy sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rich architectural heritage, monuments, and historical sites (in some cases even legislatively protected)</td>
<td>• degradation of soil due to the usage of pesticides in agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• preserved old traditional houses in villages, suitable for tourism</td>
<td>• insufficient awareness of the local population of the importance of preserving natural and cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• preserved old traditions in the field of culture and folklore</td>
<td>• inadequate promotion of natural and cultural heritage of the area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• EU funds available for projects in the field of preservation of nature and cultural heritage</td>
<td>• global climate change could have a negative impact on the eco-system of the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• renowned cultural and historical sites in the area</td>
<td>• high costs of initial investments in renewable energy sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• interest of NGOs in the field of nature and cultural heritage for cooperation and joint activities</td>
<td>• threat of degradation of ground waters due to intensive agricultural activities in the wider area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• increased need for the usage of renewable energy sources due to the increase of gas, oil and electricity prices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Management and Coordination/Governance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengthes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Long history and cooperation experience between the municipalities</td>
<td>• a lack of professionalized organizational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experienced staff of the municipalities</td>
<td>• a lack of jointly developed development documents for the cross-border area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Institutionalized cooperation</td>
<td>• Weak joint activities in the post-project period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stable political situation in the municipalities that ensures structured cooperation without interruptions often related to the shift of political staff in municipalities</td>
<td>• Lack of municipal funds for conducting cross-border activities due to the economic crisis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Available EU programmes for preparation and implementation of new projects and other activities</td>
<td>• Some of the key figures that were engaged in the project Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje are best introduced to all segments of the cooperation are no longer active within the zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Available best practices of other institutionalized cross-border networks in the field of professionalizing the working organ</td>
<td>• The extended period of financial crisis represents an additional obstacle to the establishment a professional working organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New technologies and tools that can be used for a better management and coordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

During the interviews with the representatives of the municipalities, a topic was also the question of future cooperation and goals of development of the Haloze-Zagorje cross-border area. The answers show a wide spectrum of developmental priorities for the region. The following tables are structured in order to show those priorities and plans regarding specific developmental fields, and they follow the fields of the SWOT analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Plans and priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>• to improve promotional efforts for the cross-border region as an entrepreneur-friendly zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to stimulate and provide help to local entrepreneurs for applying for projects from EU programmes, especially in the field of CBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to enhance foreign direct investments, especially in the context of the Entrepreneur zone Haloze-Zagorje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>• to improve the promotion of Haloze-Zagorje as a tourist zone, with special emphasis on its cultural assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to stimulate and help tourism actors (small producers, accommodation providers, small farmers) regarding the opportunities of existing EU programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to further diversify touristic offers in the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and cultural resources and heritage</td>
<td>• to enhance the promotion of the cultural and natural heritage of the cross-border area as a unique place with many advantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to enhance resource efficiency and the usage of renewable energy sources in the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• to promote organic farming in order to minimalize the negative impacts of agriculture on the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 The table was compiled by the authors.
8. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation area

One of the main competitive features of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje is related to the rich cultural, historical and architectural assets of both Haloze and Zagorje regions. A vast number of monuments, castles, other historical sites, and well-preserved ethnological collections endow this area with unique potentials that can be utilized in tourism, especially in cultural tourism. Furthermore, local traditions, architectural and ethnographic heritage significantly contribute to the attractiveness and tourism potential of the region. What is more, a diverse landscape specific for this part of Europe can be considered as a further specific advantage of the area.

It is estimated that the area contains approximately 220 touristic sites of various types, while there are around 30 tourism providers that offer their services to the visitors of the region. All this makes the entire Haloze-Zagorje area very suitable for developing various tourism offers, like cultural tourism, rural tourism, sport, and recreational tourism.

![Figure 13: Paragliding in Haloze-Zagorje](http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu/)

26 Source: [http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu/](http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu/)
In addition to the aforementioned, the area is rich in valuable natural assets. Also, within TZH there are several valuable ethnographical collections, where visitors can learn about the traditional life and the history of the local communities. The main assets with major potential for developing tourism in the cross-border are as follows.

8.1 Old traditional houses

- Vukova household: traditional wooden house with fireplace, room with old oven, balcony and roof made out of straw, built in the 19th century;
- Dominkova household: a traditional house typical for Pannonia, built around 300 years ago with traditional carpentry and roof making;
- Other old traditional houses throughout Zagorje. Many of them are still under restoration and renewal.

Figure 14: A typical traditional house

---

27 Source: http://prozorudom.com
8.2 Numerous churches and chapels

- Church of St. Miklavž, first mentioned in 1430;
- Church of Virgin Mary, built in 1538;
- Church of St. Mohor from the 17th century;
- Church of St. Janez from the 17th century;
- Church of St. Marjeta in Gorišnica, first mentioned in 1391;
- Church of St. Barbara in Cirkulane, built in the 13th century. This church is one of the most renowned of its type in Lower Styria (Slovenian part of Styria);
- Church of St. Andrej in Leskovac, built in 16th century;
- Churches of St. Augustin and St. Magdalena in Velika Varnica;
- Church of St. Vid in Videm;
- Churches of Mary the Virgin and Grieving Mary in Podlehnik;
- Churches of St. Mihael (15th century), Mary of Tolažnica (18th century), St. Boštjan (15th century) and St. Mohor (15th century) in Žetale;
- Church of St Anton Puščavnik from the 15th century, in Stoperce;
- Churches of Mary and St. Janez, and the tombstone from the 15th century in Ptujska Gora;
- Churches of St. Miklavž and St. Bolfenk in Majšperk;
- Church of St. Mary alongside numerous other ancient churches and chapels in Lepoglava;
- Churches of St. Marko and St. Jurij and the tomb-chapel of earl Erdödy in Vinica;
- Church of St. Martin and chapel of St. Tomaž and Izidor in Donja Voća;
- Church of St. Trojstvo and chapel of St. Vuk of Vukovje, in Klenovnik;
- Numerous churches and chapels in Bednja (St. Ivan, St. Tri Kralja, St. Josip, Madona, St. Mary, St. Pavel);
- Church of St. Jurij in Đurmanec;
- Church of St Ivan Krstnik in Jesenje.
8.3 Ethnographic collections

- Ethnographic museum in Velika Varnica: collection of typical tools used by former residents in daily life. The collection was put together by the local Ethnographic society.
- Folk costumes in Pobrežje from the 19th century: collection of photography material that depicts traditional clothing. The photography collection was made by the members of the local Folklore association.
- From a seed to bread: ethnological collection stationed on the premises of a local family farm “Korpičeva kmetija”. The collection includes traditional tools used for preparing bread.
- Carnival masks: specific kind of masks used in local carnivals.
- House of wine and bread in Pristava: traditional house specific for the Haloze area, where visitors are able to see various tools used to process wine and bread by the local population.
- Trakošćan castle: a protected cultural and historic entity, it includes various exhibitions and collections.
- Lepoglava lace: the area of Lepoglava is known for its traditional way of producing lace, which is being made out of local material and by using specific methods.
- Collection of photographs and murals made by Ivan Ranger, stationed in Lepoglava.
- Ethnographic museum in Gornja Voća: collection of sculptures. Sculptures are put on display in the museum but can also be seen throughout the Gornja Voća.

![Ethnographic museum in Velika Varnica](http://www.panoramio.com)

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28 Source: [http://www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com)
8.4 Castle and town complexes

- Trakošćan: the castle in Trakošćan is considered to be the most beautiful castle in entire Croatia. The castle is surrounded by a lake and rich flora. The castle is renowned on international level, too.

- Paulite monastery complex in Lepoglava. The complex was founded by Paulites around 1400. In 1503, the first Croatian secondary school was organised there, which then became a faculty and later the first Croatian university.

- The City of Borl is located approximately 60 meters above and near the Drava river, representing the biggest feudal building in Haloze. There are many legends connected to this castle.

- Castle from the 17th century in Zavrč.

- Medieval fortified town in Klenovnik. It serves as a treatment centre/spa for lung diseases nowadays.

*Figure 16: The Trakošćan castle (Zagorje, Croatia)*

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29 Source: [http://www.info.bednja.hr](http://www.info.bednja.hr)
8.5 Bicycle routes in the area

There are eight bicycle and hiking routes established in the Haloze-Zagorje cross-border area. These cycling and hiking routes provide an exceptional opportunity for adventure, sport and recreation for the tourists since they pass through different specific/rich landscapes. In addition to this, the bicycle routes are not far away from other tourism facilities of the area (accommodation, restaurants, etc.).

Figure 17: Map of the bicycle and hiking route in the Municipality of Jesenje\(^{30}\):

\(^{30}\)Source: [http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu/](http://www.haloze-zagorje.eu/)
8.6 Natural landscape and other geographical features

Beyond the architectural and ethnological assets of the region, there are other significant features providing further incentives to visit the region. For example, the preserved nature of the area, its rich natural landscape and other geographical features provide further opportunities and possibilities for the region to offer additional tourism offers. Some of the most important natural assets that are being used as part of integrated touristic offers in TZHZ are the following.

- **Ravna Gora (mountain):** 660 meters high. There are two mountaineering refuge facilities at the visitors’ disposal, where they can eat, rest, visit a nearby old church, and enjoy an exceptional panoramic view.
- **Donačka Gora (mountain):** 883 meters high, it includes a valuable protected forest area on the top of the mountain.
- **Aboretum Opeka in Marčan:** park with more than 14,000 trees as well as 200 species, and a castle.
- **Vindija cave in Donja Voća:** it offers a beautiful cave with artefacts that date back to the Neolithic era.

![Figure 18: Donačka Gora (Slovenia)](http://www.skyscrapercity.com)
8.7 Local food

Beyond the historical and natural assets of the cross-border region, the uniqueness of the area is profoundly supported by additional cultural assets. These include local food made by traditional methods of the old Slavs and they are made from traditional receipt; specific climate and soil is favourable for unique grapes, hence wine and local strong liquors are key products of the region.

Local food in Haloze and Zagorje regions have been historically prepared by using the natural resources of the area and local agricultural products. True, some aspects of the food preparation in Haloze and Zagorje regions share some similarities with the culinary traditions of Central Europe.

Typical “green” foods of the Haloze-Zagorje region are the products made out of cow milk, fatty foods, pastas, soups, and various types of vegetables made out of beans, cabbage, beet, gourd, etc. Pigs and turkey represent the main sources of meat in the region. Nevertheless, visitors can find many other specific food products characteristic for the region, e.g. blood pudding, various types of sausages, stuffed stomachs, ham, bacon, cracklings, etc. Fishing in the Drava and Mura, especially recreational fishing, should be mentioned too. What is more, snails represent an appreciated meat source in the region, baked on fat and onions and mixed with chicken eggs. Furthermore, the production of local bread should also be mentioned, baked in traditional ovens that can still be found in preserved traditional houses in the region. What is more, both Haloze and Zagorje regions are well known for their specific traditional confectionery food. The most important cake of this area is “gibanica”. It is prepared out of sweetened flour and stuffed with nuts, cheese or poppy and baked in ceramic pots. In the Zagorje region,

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32 Source: [http://oblizeki.com](http://oblizeki.com)
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for example, the most popular type of “gibanica” is stiffed with pumpkin noodles and mixed with cow milk and poppy seeds. In addition to “gibanica”, “štrudli” (strudels) are also a popular traditional cake of the area and can be prepared using various vegetables and cheese, just as “gibanica”.

Dairy products, specific for the Haloze-Zagorje cross-border space, also need to be underlined within the context of the specific features of the region. Cow milk in the region is used for preparing specific cheeses dried in special baskets or nets, often enriched with selected vegetables. Sour cream is also an important dairy product of the region, often used for preparing other foods. Moreover, Haloze-Zagorje region is rich in fruits such as apples, plums and pears, which are eaten fresh or dried. Fruits are also used in the preparation of marmalades and/or jams. That means all the features of the regions, like local food, local wines, landscapes, architectural assets, ethnologic collections and/or preserved nature generate attractive elements that can be utilized in tourism.
9. Summary

The Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje represents an example for a successful formalized cross-border cooperation between local municipalities from Croatia and Slovenia. The project is an example of the early development of the LEADER approach in this part of Europe. There are 15 municipalities included in the cooperation; seven from Slovenia and eight from Croatia. All of the municipalities share many cultural, historical and natural influences, and they have established the cross-border tourism zone in order to take advantage of these shared assets and to improve their competitiveness. Subsequently, tourism and especially cultural/recreational tourism and sport are at the centre of the cooperation.

The cross-border region was considered as an underdeveloped area prior to the establishment of the zone. Nevertheless, it has achieved certain results in terms of regional development since its establishment. It has intensified joint cross-border actions, it has enhanced overall tourism appearance of the area in EU context, and it has acted as a catalyst for overall economic development of the cross-border space. Moreover, the tourism zone acted as a framework for additional projects conducted by the municipalities in the zone.

On the other hand, TZH has not surpassed certain obstacles in its development. First of all, the tourism zone has not overcome the shortcomings within its formalized structure; namely it has not achieved financial sustainability and is still being financed by the municipalities. The zone has neither got a separate budget, nor formal employees. All work related to the zone is being conducted by staff members of the municipalities, who have their primary functions/tasks within the municipal institutions and they have neither time, nor the necessary specialization needed for a successful management of the tourism zone. The main consequence of this is that the zone lacks continuous activities regarding its operations, management, planning, and promotion on open market, which undermines its chances for better positioning and attracting more visitors.

Hence, the Tourism zone has its strong sides as well as specific flaws. Both can serve as examples and provide lessons for other EU cross-border cooperation efforts. Others can learn from the experience, identify advantages/disadvantages and see the challenges related to the development of cross-border cooperation.

The Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje represents a long-lasting cross-border initiative in the region with a long history of development and activities. It is one of a few institutionalized cross-border initiatives in the region that has been existing long enough to achieve developmental results but also to show certain weaknesses that cross-border cooperation networks face. These are the primary facts why the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje was chosen as an example of best practices in cross-border cooperation. As new cross-border initiatives will arrive in the future and, hopefully, they will achieve better developmental impact and will overcome challenges, we hope that one of the reasons for their success will be based on the knowledge provided by this case study.
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0CDcQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fhrcak.srce.hr%2Ffile%2F67221&ei=yDZSVPSbJsyBaZnQqegM&usg=AFQjCNNG33yDx7HmWE_Zxy8QKu6VfQ6Otpw&sig2=eQWIQTKAJ2ssYVdQDK1MAQ&bvm=bv.78597519,d.bGQ
11. Annexes

Annex 1: Map of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje

The red line shows the geographical outline of the Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje. The yellow line represents the state border between Croatia in the South and Slovenia in the North. (Source: authors' work.)
Annex 2: Location of the Tourism zone Haloze Zagorje

The red square marks the location of the cross-border Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje. (Source: authors' work.)
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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River

Written by
Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy (Romania)
Bianca Mitriță, Monica Dumitrașcu, Gheorghe Kucsicsa, Diana Dogaru
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1. The Euroregions from Romania’s Eastern border. The socio-economic potential of the cross-border cooperation

1.1 The homogeneity of the ethnic element – key-factor of the cross-border cooperation

For more than seven decades, the Prut River has been acting as a discontinuity axis due to arbitrary political decisions, by attributing a border function to it. A border was relatively hard to be permeated, especially in the ’50s - ’60s of the last century, and it caused a breakup of the natural relations existing between the human settlements’ system in Bessarabia and that of the rest of Moldavia which remained within the boundaries of Romania.

The political openness at the beginning of the 1990s was immediately followed by an opening of inter-human relations. Actions of “restitutio in integrum”, the „Flower bridges” (“podurile de flori”) reunited families and destinies on both side of the Prut River, which had been broken in June 1940. New custom points were opened, generated by the favorability potential of the coupled settlements, periodical local road connections as well as exchanges of wares and people were intensified, thus setting up the bases for the first actions of establishing Euroregions. The economic difficulties, the War in Transnistria, the secessional tendencies of the Gagauz people, as well as the fear of part of the Russian-speaking population about a possible union with Romania gradually hindered this momentary impetus.

The Prut is a border river; it originates in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains and enters Romania downstream of Noua Sulită, approximately in the locality of Oroftiana. It forms the border between Romania and Ukraine on a length of about 36 km, passing through an area with a high homogeneity of the Romanian ethnic element, present both on its right handside and on its left handside.

This fact is sustained by historical antecedents as well as by the 2001 Ukrainian census data, or by the evidence of geographic names which were preserved up to present. The Herţa Region, an old Romanian ground which entered the USSR on June 29th 1940 as a consequence of the second Soviet ultimatum-note sent during the night of June 27th/28th 1940 was mentioned neither in the Ribbentrop-Molotov treaty nor in the Soviet ultimatum of 1940 (Lupan, cited in Stamate, 1997, p. 88).

Herţa became a seat of an administrative division in Moldavia since the second half of the XVIIIth century, while the Herţa Region, with an area of 304 km² was united in 1834 to the Dorohoi Region. At present, the Herţa district, re-established as such in the administrative structure of the Cernăuți/Chernivtsi region in 1992, represents a compact Romanian ethnical area, having in its constitution only one Ukrainian village: Mamorniţa ucraineană (Popescu, 2004).
At the 1989 Soviet census, the Herța district had a total population of 29,611 inhabitants; the Romanian population constituted 27,517 persons, i.e. 92.93% of the total. Of these, 23,539 declared themselves Romanians and 3,978 Moldavians, the latter ones coming from the Ostrița, Țureni and Marmonița românească villages of the former Cernăuți rural district formed immediately after the war, where Romanians were arbitrarily recorded in their passports as “Moldavians” (“moldoveni”). 12 years later, the compactness of the ethnic element preserved itself unaltered, since the 2001 census recorded a total population of 32,316 inhabitants, of which 29,554 were Romanians (91.5%) and 756 Moldavians (2.34%), a large number of Moldavians declaring themselves as Romanians (Şageată, 2014b).

Table 1: Transition points along the Prut sector of the border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Connected localities</th>
<th>Administrative units [NUTS III]</th>
<th>Transition regime</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stâncă – Costești</td>
<td>Botoșani - Bălți</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Small traffic (passengers, wares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sânculeni – Sânculeni</td>
<td>Iași - Ungheni</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>road (passengers, wares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cristești – Jijia – Ungheni</td>
<td>Iași - Ungheni</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>railway (passengers, goods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Iași</td>
<td>Iași</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>airports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Albița – Leușeni</td>
<td>Vaslui - Lăpușna</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>road (passengers, wares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fălciu – Cantemir</td>
<td>Vaslui - Cahul</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>railway (wares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oancea – Cahul</td>
<td>Galați - Cahul</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>road (passengers, wares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Galați</td>
<td>Galați</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Internal fluvial harbour free zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Galați – Giurgiulești – Reni, Galați port</td>
<td>Galați - Cahul</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>road (passengers, wares) fluvial harbours railway (wares)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Human settlements like Mogoșești, Godinești or Molnița from the Herța district, or Mămăliga from the Noua Suliță district have names certifying the continuity of the Romanian ethnic element. In the Romanian sector, the Romanian-Ukrainian cross-border zone belonging to the Prut valley is composed of three communes and one town: Suhrău, Hudești, Concești, and the Darabani town respectively. The cross-border zone, comprised between the two “Moldavias”, characterizes itself through the same continuity of the Romanian ethnic element, which varies between 90% and 100% of the total population. Its northern extremity is given by the villages Cuzlău (Romania) and Criva (the Republic of Moldova), while the southern one by Galați and Giurgiulești, the only Danubian harbour of the Republic of Moldova. Administratively, it brings together 11 districts from the left side of the Prut River (Briceni, Edineț, Râșcani, Glodeni, Fâlești, Ungheni, Nisporeni, Hâncești, Leova, Cantemir and Cahul) and 4 counties from its right
side (Botoșani, Iași, Vaslui and Galați) (Săgeată, 2014b, p. 58). The cross-border connections are accomplished at present through 9 border transition points, placed according to the system of coupled settlements (Table 1).

The role of the system of coupled settlements and the cross-border co-operation Euroregions. The separation through the hydrographical axis, associated with high human pressure and with the existence of some passage fords on both sides of the Prut River, favoured the appearance of a well-defined system of coupled settlements, but which was annihilated by the closed character of the border during the communist period. This fact was emphasized also by the villages that form toponymic couples on both sides of the Prut River: Sculeni-Sculeni, Medeleni-Medeleni, Grozești-Grozești, Rădcani-Tochil Răducan, Pogonești-Pogonești, etc. (Fig. 1) (Săgeată, 2014b).

**Figure 1:** The coupled settlements and the cross-border development axes along the border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova
(Source: Săgeată, 2014c, p. 60)
1.2 The Euroregions on Romania’s Eastern border

The study area of the Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River Project - Prut River basin, is located in all three Euroregions from Romania’s Eastern border: Lower Danube Euroregion, Upper Prut Euroregion and Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion. These Euroregions are characterized in this case study and their cross-border cooperation potential is analysed (e.g. in demographic, social, economic, environmental, management terms) (Figure 2).

![Euroregions at the Eastern Romania’s border](image)

The activity of Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion is focused on different fields of interest, ranging from economy, infrastructure, environment, tourism, agriculture and rural development, human resource development and social services, to education, informational society and culture. The mission of this Euroregion is to extend and improve relations between local communities and authorities in the economic, cultural, scientific and civic fields with the aim of ensuring sustainable and a territorially-balanced development of the Euroregion.

Some of the objectives of the Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River Project are developed according to the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion objectives.

Among the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion projects we could list (www.euroregiune.org):

- Foundation and development of relations between local government and institutions in Romania, Moldova and Ukraine (2013).
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- International Scientific Conference with topics dedicated to Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion (2013). Some of the objectives were the following: identifying areas of research and new opportunities of collaboration and cooperation in the most important areas of life and work in the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion; setting up new projects of collaboration between researchers and teachers on both sides of the Prut River, between administrative and territorial units of the Euroregion and between businessmen; encouraging academics, researchers, postgraduate and doctoral students to contribute in finding solutions for short, medium and long term questions.

- Joint work meeting between District Presidents of the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion, belonging to the Republic of Moldova and the national Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR) (2014). The objective was to harmonize and strengthen collaboration between the County Councils of Romania and District Councils of the Republic of Moldova in the context of European integration and to establish new bilateral agreements between districts of the Republic of Moldova and counties of Romania.

That means these projects directly strengthen the cross-border cooperation between the administrative institutions, academies and research institutions, the same way that the project Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River has done through its activities.

Based on the system of coupled settlements along the Prut River, starting with the year 1997 at the Eastern border of Romania, three Euroregions: Lower Danube, Upper Prut and Siret-Prut-Nistru have been institutionalized. The following table gives synoptic information about the established Euroregions.

These Euroregions are formed on the outer border of the European Union, including the Romanian space as an EU member state and involving the former Soviet space, represented by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In this context, it can be stated that the Prut border sector benefits from a high security degree, functioning like a “filter” for human and material fluxes directed towards the European Union. Cohesion structure of the Euroregions is primarily based on the ethnic element, more precisely the territories are covered by a compact Romanian population. In addition to this, one can mention the intense habitation on both sides of the Prut River, the coupled settlements functioning as communication devices for the two settlements’ systems having a common historical ground. However, if the ethnic unity and the density of the habitation represent the main linking elements of the territories form the left- and right handside of the Prut River composing the three Euroregions, Romania’s integration into European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation structures imposed the need of securing its Eastern border and controlling the migration fluxes. The Prut River, therefore, defines itself, on the one hand, as an integration axis thanks to the continuity of ethnic and linguistic element to which the density and the continuity of habitation on both riversides could be added. Nevertheless, it also embodies a fragmentation axis, induced by its character as a relatively
stable border of NATO and the European Union, which imposes a specific framework to the cross-border co-operation. In addition to this comes the hard political line, an anti-Romanian one, promoted by some political formations from Chişinău, which stresses the segregation on both sides of the Prut River (Săgeată, 2014c).

Table 2: The system of Euroregions at the Eastern Romanian border

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Euroregion / Year of its establishment / Area</th>
<th>Co-participating countries</th>
<th>Territorial-administrative units included [RO – counties, MD – districts, UK - regions]</th>
<th>Urban centers exerting an attractive function [towns]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Danube 1997 - 1998 53.496 km²</td>
<td>Romania, Rep. of Moldova, Ukraine</td>
<td>Galaţi, Brăila, Tulcea, Cantemir, Cahul, Odessa</td>
<td>Galaţi, Brăila, Tulcea, Camtemir, Cahul, Odessa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Săgeată, 2014c, p. 61)

178 settlements can be recorded on the Prut riversides on the entire cross-border sector between Romania and the Republic of Moldova: 99 of which on the right side and 79 on the left side. Urbanization is more pronounced on the left riverside of the River (6 towns, two with a city statute), as opposed to only 2 on the right riverside. A detailed description of administrative units can be found in the next table.
### Table 3: Human settlements on the Prut riversides in the cross-border zone between Romania and the Republic of Moldova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statute</th>
<th>Adm. unit RO – counties MD - districts</th>
<th>Administrative units [villages/villages – seat of communes/towns/towns with a city statute]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gloădi</strong></td>
<td>Cobani*, Balatina*, Tomeştii Noi, Tomeştii Vechi, Cuhneşti*, Cot, Bisericanii, Serghienii, Movileni, Moara Domnească, Vişoara*.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ungheni</strong></td>
<td>Gherman, Floreni, Sculenii*, Blăndeşti, Medeleni, Petreşti*, Semeni, Zagrancea*, Ungheni***, Buzdugani de Sus, Buzdugani de Jos, Valea Mare*, Moldovenii Vechi, Costuleni*, Măcăreşti*, Frăsineşti.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nisporeni</strong></td>
<td>Bărboieni*, Grozeşti*, Zboraia*, Bălăureşti*.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statute</th>
<th>Adm. unit RO – counties MD - districts</th>
<th>Administrative units [villages/villages – seat of communes/towns/towns with a city statute]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Villages – seat of communes. ** Towns. *** Towns with a city statute.
(Source: Săgeata, 2014c, p. 63)

This way, some large urban centers are clearly distinguishable, which have developed as spatial structuring centers with a cross-border impact: Iaşi, Huşi and Galaţi on the right riverside, and Ungheni, Leova and Cahul on the left riverside respectively. Among these, through their demographic and socio-economic potential, Iaşi and Galaţi, together with Ungheni, Cahul, Giurgiuleşti and Reni tend to take over cross-border functions at a macro-territorial level, leading to a spatial unitary structuring on both sides of the frontier. These are also the only first rank cities in the Romanian Prut border zone, which can develop, on grounds of Law 351/2001, metropolitan areas.

The traditional relations preserved among these countries enable a series of cross-border co-operation opportunities, increasing the economic and social potential of the Euroregions. Therefore, the problems which they face are mostly homogeneous, consequently, solutions cannot be achieved on the territory of the national states exclusively, but in a wider perspective. Therefore, in 1997 at the Ismail Summit, the Presidents of the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine signed the “Declaration regarding the cross-border co-operation”.

Evaluation of the economic and social potential of the Euroregions identifies numerous cross-border co-operation opportunities in various fields. Such co-operation should give an impulse to the economic development of the three countries. Several opportunities could be mentioned: correlation of the regional development programs for road and fluvial communication infrastructures; creation of common structures regarding wares’ certification, development of sale markets for products, employment of the labour force, development of the existing economical potential; coordination of efforts for ensuring drinking water and natural gas supply; development of an infrastructure to facilitate the frontiers’ transition, establishing new frontier transition points and modernization of the existing ones; common development and promotion of touristic offers and touristic traffic; organization of festivals, exhibitions, cultural fairs and regional sport competitions; co-ordination of environmental protection programs; and/or common monitoring of the pollution factors (Roşcovan et al., 2010).
1.2.1 The Lower Danube Euroregion

On August 14, 1998, within the framework of the reunion of the border regions in Galați, the leaders of the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine signed the Agreement regarding the creation of the “Lower Danube” Euroregion. On grounds of the constitution Agreement, the Euroregion has the following members (www.actedj.ro): the counties Tulcea, Brăila and Galați (Ro), the districts Cahul and Cantemir (MD) and the Odessa region (UA). The co-operation priorities are the following: founding of mixed enterprises and the intensification of commercial exchanges in the area; development of transport facilities; establishing common centers for emergency situations; joint organization of economic forums, seminars and exhibitions.

In the frame of the Euroregion cross-border co-operation, projects have been implemented with focus on biodiversity of protected areas, management of natural resources and tourism development: Management plan for biodiversity protection and sustainable development in the Nature Protected Areas within the Euroregion Lower Danube; Danube Delta Eco-Touristic Centre; Integrated System for Monitoring the Environment Factors, Biodiversity and Natural resources in the cross-border Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Romania/Ukraine; Cross-border Information Center for environment protection; Health without border; Danube Delta in Europe; Inventory, assessment and remediation of the anthropogenic sources of pollution in the “Lower Danube” Region of Romania, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova; Regional Business Incubators’ Network “Black Sea BI-Net”; Innovative instruments for environmental analysis in North Western Black Sea Basin; Sustainable Tourism Development in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Moldova and Romania, etc.

1.2.2 The Upper Prut Euroregion

The concrete activities concerning the creation of the “Upper Prut” Euroregion started in August 1997. The Ukrainian part proposed that collaboration within the Euroregion to be exclusively concentrated on ecological issues. In September 2000, the Agreement regarding the founding of the “Upper Prut” Euroregion was signed.

On the grounds of the Agreement, the members of the Euroregion are (http://www.cjbotosani.ro/portal/portal.html?pid=173): the counties Botoșani and Suceava (Ro), the city of Bălți and the districts Edinet, Briceni, Fălești, Glodeni, Râșcani and Ocnița (MD) and the Cernăuți/Chernivtsi region (UA). The Euroregion co-operates in the fields of (Roșcovan et al., 2010): economic relations; cross-border infrastructure development; ecological security and environmental protection, science and education, culture and sports, relations among non-governmental organizations, protection of human health, tourism development.

The projects which were finalized or are currently under implementation are: Cross-border cooperation for the management of the Prut River Middle Course; Bucovina Regional Economic Forum, Development of an alternative transport network between Romania and Ukraine;
Discover Bucovina; Bucovina Traditional Folklore Festival; Cultural cooperation between Botoșani and Glodeni; Cross-border Exchanges in Professional Education; Rehabilitation, modernisation and improvement of the cross-border cultural centre; Common traditional patrimony – European promotion element; Quality infrastructure for Botosani County (Ro) - Herta District (Ua) border area; Valorisation of the touristic potential of Siret – Hliboca area; Development of border infrastructure between Ukraine and Romania, etc.

1.2.3 The Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion

The Euroregion involves three administrative units (counties) from Romania (EU) and 26 administrative units (districts) from the Republic of Moldavia (i.e from outside of the EU).

According to the development strategy of the local administrations, activities and projects of this association cover various fields of interest from economy, infrastructure, environment, tourism, agriculture and rural development, human resource development and social services, to education, informational society and culture.

The goal is to extend and improve relations between local communities and authorities in economic, cultural, scientific and civic fields with the aim of ensuring sustainable and territorial balanced development of the Euroregion and to respect, protect and guarantee the rights and interests of the administrative-territorial units, members of the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion.

One of the Euroregion activities is represented by the Economic Cross-Border Forum. This is a concrete manifestation of the mission assumed by the Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru to support the development of economic cross-border relationships at the eastern border of the European Union. The first meeting took place in Iași-Romania, and it counted more than 400 participants from political, administrative and economic environment. The forum facilitates the relationship of several target audiences who have or want to have a key role in the domain of cross-border cooperation (www.euroregiune.org).

The working format wants to be balanced between the two components: business and inter-institutionalism. Therefore, the program included presentations of the economic projects of the central administration, regional and local authorities of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Romania where the business representatives can find opportunities for adjustment and connections.

The component “business to business” will be ensured by the following elements: company presentations of strategic partners; brochure with milestones of all participants on hard-copy and soft-copy; stand provided by the organizers, dedicated to each county, district and region. The stand is the gathering point and the physical support for presentation materials of the participating companies. The Forum aims to mark in the first place the relational component (networking), equipping stand involves elements such as leaflets, brochures, business cards and other related items. Exhibiting products are not discouraged, but it is a subject of sponsorship
agreement. Opened spaces equipped with mobile seats, where participants can withdraw for discussion, are also provided (www.euroregiune.org).

1.2.3.1 General characteristics

The Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion (Fig. 3) situated in the central part of the Eastern cross-border zone is the only one of the three euroregions formed solely between the two states, Romania and the Republic of Moldova. It is therefore characterized by a strong ethnic and linguistic homogeneity and elements which assure its cohesion. Of the 681.3 km length of the border between the two states, approximately 70% is included in the area of the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion. The Euroregion is composed of 22 administrative structures, three are in Romania (Iași, Neamț and Vaslui) and 18 districts and the Chișinău city are in the Republic of Moldova (Tab. 2). The major part of the cross-border connections are occurring on the Iași-Ungheni connection.

The main Euroregion convergence centers are given by the cities of Chișinău in the Republic of Moldova, Iași in Romania, moreover, Tiraspol, Piatra Neamț, Vaslui and Bârlad are added and other urban centers act as local attraction centers.

Chișinău (671.800 inhab., 2013), the capital of the Republic of Moldova, is located in a tableland area, on the Bâc riverside. It represents the main economic, financial, cultural-scientific center and the most important transport network knot in the Republic of Moldova. Situated at the crossing of important commercial routes which connected Iași to Kiev and Odessa, the city knew an early development through its commercial function (market), being certified since 1436. Between 1918 and 1940, Chișinău belonged to Romania, being the largest city of historical Bessarabia. The period, under Soviet administration, marked a turning point in the city’s development: parallel to the industrialization and urbanisation, a strong immigration of population coming from the Russian federation and other union republics of the USSR took place, thus the population reached a number of 700 000 inhabitants in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the ethnic structure is still dominated by Romanians (declared as Moldavians) with 67.6% of the total population, followed by Russians (13.9%), Ukrainians (8.3%) and Romanians (4.5%). The investment with the function of a capital, as a consequence of the independence of the Republic of Moldova in 1991, maintained the rising trend of the urban development of the city, thus partially compensating the industrial decline. Within the environment of re-structuralization, only the food industry (Bucuria – sugar-based products, units of the wine industry) and mining industries (exploitations of mica and building materials) remained viable. The inner of the city is organized in five administrative sectors: Botanica, Buiucani, Centru, Ciocana and Râșcani (Sâgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 77).
Tiraspol (135.700 inhabitants in 2011) represents a secondary attraction center, due to its peripheral position within the Moldavian sector of the Euroregion and its status as capital of the separatist region of Nistrene (Transnistria), although, demographically it is the third town of the Republic of Moldova. Situated on the left handside of the Nistru river, the town forms a common urban agglomeration with approximately 250,000–300,000 inhabitants together with city of Bender (Tighina), which is situated on the opposite side of the river, still under the jurisdiction of the separatist authorities. These two cities are connected by common transport lines (Săgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 78-79).

There are other important cities, like Ungheni (38.200 inhabitants, 2013) which represents an attraction center of prime importance at the level of the Euroregion space; Soroca (37.700 inhabitants, 2013); Orhei (33.500 inhabitants, 2013), etc.

The Romanian sector of the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion is dominated by Iaşi, Piatra Neamţ, and within the Vaslui county, by the urban couple Vaslui-Bârlad. Iaşi (290.422 inhabitants, 2011) represents the main attraction center of the Romanian Euroregional sector. It is a town rich of cultural tradition, it was the capital of Moldavia until 1859. Having a favourable geographic position, the town developed firstly as a market and princely court (certified in 1437), later as a cultural and industrial centre. The wide scale industrialization after 1950, attracted important demographic fluxes from the rural environment, and consequently the city registered an important growth (94 075 inhabitants in 1948, 342 994 inhabitants in 1992). Later a decline followed, due to the industrial restructuring and the mass loss of employments which generated return fluxes towards the rural space or definite departures. Other important cities are: Piatra Neamţ (85.055 inhab., 2011), seat and main attraction center of the Neamţ county,
situated in the Moldavian Subcarpathians (Crăciun-Bistriţa Depression); **Vaslui** (55,407 inhabitants, 2011) at the confluence of the rivers Bârlad, Vaslueţ and Racova; **Bârlad** (55,837 inhabitants, 2011) one of the main attraction centers within the Vaslui county. In addition to these, in the Romanian Euroregional sector there are some other towns, local attraction centres, of which worth mentioning are: **Roman** (50,713 inhabitants), **Huşi** (26,266 inhab.) - Vaslui county and **Târgu Neamţ** (18,695 inhab.) - Neamţ county, the other urban centres (**Hârlău**, **Târgu Frumos** and **Podu Iloieii** – Iaşi county, **Roznov** and **Bicaz** – Neamţ county, **Negreşti** and **Murgeni** - Vaslui county respectively) having below 10,000 inhab.

### 1.2.3.2 The demographic potential in the Romanian sector

The cross-border cooperation represents one of the important polyvalent instruments which involve mobilization of financial resources in the framework of common projects. The long-term objectives of this type of projects consist in creating several bilateral advantages, improving the physical and economic infrastructures, developing the region’s human resources, deepening the cultural and educational links, preparing for the EU adhesion, protecting the environment, etc. (Roşcovan, 2003).

Immediately after the proclamation of the independence and recognition by the international community, the Republic of Moldova made considerable efforts to establish international relationships, join to the most important international political and economic bodies and organizations, as well as to sign bilateral agreements with different countries. Being a small country with limited natural resources, the Republic of Moldova cannot develop its economy unless integrated into European and international economic structures. In this respect, integration efforts were promoted both at central level, and at regional level by intensifying the cooperation of regional communities with similar structures of the neighbouring countries, like Romania and Ukraine (Roşcovan, 2003).

The complex political and socio-economic conditions of South-East Europe gave an impulse to this cooperation due to certain factors, like (Guţuţui, Miron, 2006):

- The Euroregions are formed between states which are situated at the intersection of transnational corridors linking states of Central Europe to those of the Caucasian region and Middle East, facilitating the transit of merchandise and people;
- Population and communities from the border regions are homogeneous in terms of language, mentality, culture, tradition;
- Reorientation of the foreign policy of the Republic of Moldova towards the European Union through the adoption of the Action Plan Republic of Moldova – European Union, furthermore, the organization of a series of meetings with the EU partners both in the Republic of Moldova and in countries of the European Union.
• The extension of the European Union to the east and the possibility to access EU funds by elaborating and implementing cross-border projects in various fields (social, economic, environmental, public administration).

The Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion, established in 2002, is the “youngest” Euroregion and it gathers the largest number of territorial-administrative units of the three Euroregions existing at the Eastern border of Romania.

The communes within the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion belong to those with a population below 5 000 inhabitants. The smallest communes from a demographical point of view are the following ones: Cucuteni, Mădârjac, Bălteni, Bogdăniţa, Alexandru Vlahuţă and Blăgeşti with a population comprised between 1 300 and 1 700 inhabitants. At the opposite pole are the communes of the Iaşi county - Holboca, Tomești, Belcești, Ciurea, Deleni and Neamţ county - Săbăoani, having between 10 000 and 12 000 inhabitants.

Regarding the urban centers, the largest city is Iaşi with 290 422 inhabitants and it is the only one which belongs to the category of large cities. In the category of medium towns are Piatra Neamţ, Vaslui, Bărlad, Roman with a population comprised between 50 000 and 100 000 inhabitants; on the next level are situated Paşcani and Huşi, with a population between 20 000 and 50 000 inhab, while to the category of small towns belong Târgu Neamţ, Târgu Frumos, Hârlău, Podu Iloaiei, Bicaz, Roznov, Negrești and Murgeni. These hold a special place in the urban hierarchy, forming the base of the urban pyramid and satisfy territorial-organisational functions within the national economy, functioning the same way in this Euroregion.

The concentration element which defines the urban habitat and definitely separates it from the rural one, results from the specificity of urban activities. Population density is determined by the different intensity of the socio-economic development in time, as well as by the Euroregion’s landforms. High density areas are registered in the case of Bărlad (5 463.5 inhab./km²), Iaşi (3 048.4 inhab./km²), Roman (1 685.9 inhab./km²), Piatra Neamţ (1 098.4 inhab./km²) and/or in Vaslui (814 inhab./km²) cities. High densities, comprised between 200 and 400 inhab./km², can be encountered in the case of communes like Târgu Neamţ, Târgu Frumos, Hârlău, Podu Iloaiei, Bicaz, Roznov, Negrești and Murgeni. These hold a special place in the urban hierarchy, forming the base of the urban pyramid and satisfy territorial-organisational functions within the national economy, functioning the same way in this Euroregion.

The minimum density (8.8 inhab./km²) is registered in the Târgu Neamţ county, due to the mountain relief with a large fragmentation degree (Fig. 4) (Sâgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 82-83).
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Figure 4: Demography and population density (2011)
Source: Săgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 83

The birth rate registers oscillations in time which depend on several factors. The politics of the communist party was oriented towards ensuring a normal demographic balance of the population, and hence the values were high until 1990. After the political changes and fall of communism, the birth rate suddenly started to drop but the eastern region of Romania is however recognised as having the highest values of the birth rate in the country. The 2011 census registered a variation between 2.8‰ in the Moldoveni commune (Neamţ county) and 27.5‰ in the Băceşti commune (Vaslui county). The lowest values (below 10‰) were registered in 57 administrative units, most of them situated in the Neamţ and Vaslui counties. High values, above 20‰, were characteristic to 16 administrative units, situated in the north-western and western parts of the Central Moldavian Plateau (Săgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 83).

The death rate varied, according to the 2011 census, on a range between 5.2‰ in the Tomeşti commune (Iaşi county) and 29.6‰ in the Alexandru Vlahuţă commune (Vaslui county). The smallest rates (below 10‰) were registered in 55 administrative units, representing 23.2% of the total number within the Euroregion. Values above 20‰ were registered in 11 administrative units, 5 of which in the Vaslui county. The majority of the administrative units have values of the death rate between 10 and 20‰ (Săgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 83).

Similarly to the birth and death rates, the dynamics of the population’s natural balance varied in function of the demographic, economic and social politics which succeeded under the different political regimes, especially after the Second World War. Until the beginning of the XXIth century, the natural balance followed a descending curve, in such a way that in 2006, 127 administrative units (53.6% of their total within the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion) registered
negative values. The annual variation of the natural balance, may substantially differ among counties and localities in Romania. In other words, while the localities from the west and center of the country registered a massive population decline, the eastern and southern counties of the country registered a slower change. In the Romanian sector of the Euroregion, the natural balance varied between -17.9‰, e.g. in the Moldoveni commune (Neamț county), and 16.4‰, e.g. in the Todirești commune (Vaslui county) (Sâgeată, Mitrică, 2014, p. 84) (Figure 5).

![Figure 5: Population’s Natural Balance (2011)](image)

The population’s migrations have a series of effects on the demography, economy and society both for the departure regions and for the arrival ones. These effects include the question of territorial redistribution of the population, changes in the gender and age structure of the society. The phenomenon of migration is usually driven by an uneven geographic development which predetermines the existence of dichotomy between developed and underdeveloped regions. Subsequently, the formers tend to have a deficit in terms of labour force, thus they attempt to attract it from the surrounding areas, while the latters are characterized by an excess in labour force which will be attracted by the regions with an accelerated dynamics. The highest arrival values are in the communes surrounding the large and medium-sized towns – Iași, Piatra Neamț, Vaslui, Bârlad and Roman. In the year 2011, distribution of the migration balance shows changes compared to the last decade of the previous century, as a consequence of the decline in the population’s movements (Fig. 6). Maximum values are in Miroslava (43.0‰), Dumbrava, Bărnova, Muntenii de Jos (between 19.6 and 18.5‰) while minimum ones in the Focuri, Vișoara, Brusturi, Laza, Coarnele communes (between -20.9 and -17.0‰) (Sâgeată, Mitrică 2014, p. 85).
The total demographic balance, established as a difference of the natural balance and migration, varied between -23.9‰ in the Tansa commune and 47.6‰ in the Miroslava commune, both situated in the Iași county (Fig. 7). Negative values were in 157 localities (66.2%
of their total number in the Euroregion), the rest of the 80 localities (33.8%) registered positive or zero values. Moreover, 22 administrative units are emphasised with values between -1.0 and 1.0‰, which means approximately equal values for the natural and migration balances. The highest values (between 20.9 and 25.2‰) were in the Rediu, Bârnova, Aroneanu, Popricani communes of the Iași county, while minimum values (between -20.8 and 22.4‰) in the Alexandru Vlahuță commune (Vaslui county), Focuri și Cucuteni (Iași county) (Săgeată, Mitrică 2014, p. 85).

1.2.3.3 The demographic potential of Republic of Moldova

The highest values of population density are registered in the districts situated in the central part of the Republic of Moldova and along the Nistru River (150 inhab./km²) (Fig. 8). These departments, which are densely populated, occupy the largest area of the country’s territory. High density is due to several factors, either to the concentration of the population in industrial areas (including in the periurban spaces where an intensive agriculture is being performed), or to the high natural balance of the population.

Figure 8: Demography and population density
In the districts which are part of the Euroregion, the population is composed of Romanians (around 70-90%), but in the greatest part of the large and middle-sized towns their share decreases below 50%. In the districts of Orhei și Soroca, the share of Romanians exceeds 90%. Only in districts like Ungheni, Soroca and Orhei, the Romanian population exceeds 50% of the total. Russians and Ukrainians, who migrated into the territory during the post-war period, mainly live in the urban environment.

Regarding the natural balance of the population, this shows a negative tendency comprised between 0.1 and -0.5‰ in the Ungheni district (raion), between -2.0 and -3.0 in the Orhei district (Fig. 9).

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 9: Natural balance of the population**
*(Source: Atlasul Republicii Moldova. Geografia fizică și socio-economică, 2003)*
2. Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River

The project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River is financed by The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, Priority 2 - Environmental challenges and emergency preparedness, Measure 2.1 - Addressing strategic cross-border environmental challenges including emergency preparedness.\textsuperscript{1,2}

Within the context of global environmental change, the aquatic environment represents one of the most sensitive ecosystems, due both to its intrinsic ecological characteristics and external factors. Therefore, implementing a biodiversity and water resources project regarding one of the main rivers in the Danube Basin is a highly topical problem of integrated research of the environment.

The case study of the project is the Prut River which is investigated across and alongside from its entry into the Romanian territory to the confluence with the Danube River.

The project is implemented in a densely populated area of cross-border cooperation Euroregions. The actions undertaken within this project make a significant contribution to improve cultural, economic and an environment-related closer collaboration between the partners on both sides of the Prut River. Other actions take into consideration a sustainable management of cross-border protected areas, a better institutional capacity of local decision-makers to improve accessibility to funding and the implementation of future cross-border joint actions. The project is a means of interdisciplinary approach that brings together specialists in zoology, ecology, climate, water resources management, etc.

At the end of the project, the following will be available: biodiversity database, consultancy services, facilities and training programmes for developing business in the field of aquaculture in the advent of funding through the Operational Programme for Fishery.

The project aims to jointly develop the scientific, human and logistic resources, monitor, restore and improve the Prut River aquatic resources during difficult climatic conditions and threatening anthropogenic actions.

The project’s main objectives are:

- Management of biodiversity in the border area;
- Monitoring of fish-aqua cultural resources;

\textsuperscript{1} The project, under implementation between May 2012 and May 2015, was evaluated in the following pages during the period September - December 2014, while it was still ongoing.

\textsuperscript{2} Further information about the CBC is available: http://prutriver.uaic.ro/
• Management of aquatic resources during difficult climatic situations;
• Preparation of joint action plans for the sustainable management of the cross border protected areas, including actions for increasing the institutional capacity of the local key decision factors in order to improve the access to funding and implementation of joint cross border actions;
• Better collaboration between professionals from both sides of the border with a view to elaborate and implement joint action plans in various emergency situations, e.g. floods, drought, severe pollution, etc.;
• Assessing current environmental conditions which call for improvements in order to remake the Prut River’s ecological state and to introduce collective measures for sustainable use of its water resources;
• Improving public and stakeholders awareness on the necessity for joint action to maintain the Prut River’s biodiversity and natural resources;
• Developing an on-line network for emergency situations.

Under this Project, the health state of the Prut River water species will continue to be tested, a risk analysis report will be completed and a joint action plan for emergency situations (caused by floods, drought, or massive pollution with impact on biodiversity) will be issued. At the same time, the infrastructure of the Ezareni Station for Research in Aquaculture and Aquatic Ecology will be restored to become a source of reproduction, and a pilot centre for resources and research education will be set up for the academic and business milieu.

The Project aims to contribute to a more efficient collaboration between managers and final users of the Prut River biodiversity on both sides of the border and to strengthen the capacity of the two partner institutions to collaborate in field of education and research under some future European Union related actions.

The coordinator of the project is the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University (RO), and the partner of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Institute of Zoology (MD). Associate institutions are National Administration “Romanian Waters” Prut Directorate (associate no.1), Environmental Protection Agency Iaşi County (associate no.2), and The Inspectorate for Ecology of the Republic of Moldova (associate no.3). The target regions are Iaşi (Iaşi County, RO) and Chişinău (Chişinău District, MD).

The budget of the project is split into partners contribution (10%: 325,430.24 EUR) and CE contribution (90%: 2,928,872.17 EUR). The implementation period is for 36 months from May 7, 2012 to May 7, 2015.
3. The development of the cross-border cooperation

3.1 Development of cross-border cooperation: a general overview

The border region between Romania and the Republic of Moldova is characterized by a rich biodiversity, specific for the main types of habitats encountered in the region. The need to adopt the principles of sustainable development and biodiversity conservation imposed changes at the level of governments and the development of strategies and policies in the field of environmental protection as well as instruments destined to the implementation of these – legislative, technical, economic-financial, social and/or communicative ones. A harmonized management is needed and a unitary approach of the aspects regarding the management of biodiversity.

Cooperation between the border regions of Romania and the Republic of Moldova have been established since the mid-1980s, but they had a formal character. After 1989, these relations intensified, but they were made difficult due to the lack of clear external relations between the states, having a more cultural character (fraternities, book exchanges). Strengthening cross-border cooperation has become an important realm of action of bi- and trilateral documents with neighbouring countries, especially signing the Protocol for trilateral collaboration between the governments of Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in Ismail, on 4th of July 1997, (Dandis, 2008). At the same time, the constitution of Euroregions represented an important moment in the intensification of cross-border co-operation, inclusively in the field of environmental protection, between border administrative units of Romania and similar structures of the Republic of Moldova.

The bilateral cooperation Romania - Republic of Moldova is founded on some conventions and agreements:

- Convention regarding the Environmental Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest 1992);
- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention, Helsinki, 1992)
- Convention on Co-operation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube (Sofia, 1994);
- The Tripartite Agreement Romania – Republic of Moldova - Ukraine regarding the Cross-Border Cooperation in the Region formed by the Natural Protected Areas of the Danube Delta and the Lower Prut River (Bucureşti 2000);

3 Ghid de acţiuni comune pentru conservarea biodiversităţii în zona de graniţă România – Republica Moldova, 2008
Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Moldova with regard to the cooperation in the area of protection of fish resources and the regulating of fishing in the Prut River and Stâncan-Costesti Artificial Lake (Stâncan-Costesti, 2003);

In 2010, the Memorandum of Understanding between The Ministry of Environment and Forests of Romania and the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Moldova was signed in Bucharest, which referred to the cooperation in the field of environmental protection, a document which offers new cooperation perspectives between the two countries. The main cooperation fields are (Temneanu, 2010):

- elaboration and implementation of environmental legislation and policies, inclusively the implementation of international and regional conventions in the field of environmental protection;
- environmental impact assessment;
- sustainable development;
- protection and conservation of biological diversity and the management of natural protected areas;
- waste and hazardous waste management;
- the elaboration of policies and measures regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the identification of measures for climate change adaptation;
- the integrated control of industrial pollution;
- the development of an integrated environmental monitoring system in the cross-border context;
- exchange of information in the field of environmental protection and rationale use of natural resources;
- promotion of environmentally-friendly technologies;
- atmosphere protection;
- mitigation of desertification and soil degradation;
- soil and sub-soil protection.

After 2000, cooperation, with the aim to implement common projects, is increasing with the launching of cross-border cooperation programmes of the European Union:

- Phare Programme CBC (Cross Border Co-operation), which had a main goal: strengthening of public administrations and institutions for an efficient functioning at the interior of the European Union and promoting economic and social cohesion;
- Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013. It aims to contribute to a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin. The programme’s three specific objectives (http://www.blacksea-cbc.net),
are promoting economic and social development in the border areas, working together to address common challenges, promoting local, people-to-people cooperation;

- **South Eastern Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme.** Overall objective of the program: creating partnerships in areas of strategic importance aiming to improve territorial, economic and social integration and contribute to cohesion, stability and competitiveness.

- **The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013.** The program aims to create a bridge between the three partner states, by supporting communities in border areas in order to find common solutions to similar problems that they face. Programme’s objectives: stimulating the development potential of the border area; improving socio-economic situation and the environment.

The projects have been focused on cross-border problems, having different approaches in their implementation. This was due to the specific application guidelines, program funding and initiatives, partnerships between applicant and project partners. The implemented projects are focused especially on life quality and economic development: social inclusion, institutional cooperation, safety, health and social services, small and medium-sized enterprises, economic cooperation, agricultural development, cultural heritage, tourism activity encouragement. An important category is represented by the actions of conserving and protecting the environment and of managing the threatened areas. In this sense, the following projects were undertaken:

- Developing the capacities to use methods of ecological agriculture with the aim of reducing pollution with nutrients in the Danube River basin (2003-2004), financed by the Regional Environmental Center of the Republic of Moldova with the financial support of PNUD and GEF;
- Cross-border cooperation project for the management of the mid-course of the Prut River (2004);
- Cross-border cooperation for the protection of surface water quality in the Prut River basin (2005), supported by the Phare Programme 2003, Trans-border cooperation Romania-Republic of Moldova;
- Mutual management Romania - Republic of Moldova for biodiversity conservation on the border between the two countries (2006-2008), supported by PHARE Programme 2006. The project permitted to evaluate biodiversity in the border region, to identify the problems and to prioritise and to develop a guide of common measures and activities (**Gache, 2008**);
- Cross-border cooperation for reducing the waste impact on the environment (2006-2007), supported by Phare Programme 2004, Trans-border cooperation Romania-Republic of Moldova;
- Cross-border cooperation for biodiversity conservation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova (2006-2008). The project has several goals: strengthening of
biodiversity conservation structures in the cross-border area between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, increase of the information level of population regarding biodiversity and its problems, as well as the development of the institutional capacity of the structures involved in the biodiversity conservation;

- Environmental management - instrument for socio-economic sustainable development in the cross-border context (2007-2008), supported by Phare Programme 2006;
- Demonstrative use of alternative energy resources in the Republic of Moldova through the experimental cultivation of crops – ALTER ENERGY (2006-2007);
- Cross-border Resource Center for Sustainable Development (2007-2008), supported by Vicinity programme Romania – Republic of Moldova (Phare CBC 2004). The goal of the project was to establish a permanent regional cross-border structure to contribute to the strengthening of relations between non-governmental organizations and local public institutions interested in the sustainable development of the border region Romania - Republic of Moldova.

- Environmental management – instrument for socio-economic sustainable development in the cross-border context (2008), supported by Phare Programme 2004, Trans-border cooperation Romania-Republic of Moldova;
- Common management Romania - Republic of Moldova for the protection of air quality (2008-2009), financed by Phare Programme 2004, Trans-border cooperation Romania-Republic of Moldova;
- Cross-Border Cooperation for common needs: health, environment, sports (2011-2012), financed by The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013. The project will develop an efficient cross-border partnership for sports activities in a healthy environment;
- Joining nature and culture through outdoor activities in the border area (2011-2012), financed by The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013. The objective of the project is the promotion of a greater and more effective educational, social and cultural interaction between two groups of children from Romania and the Republic of Moldova in order to protect natural and cultural heritage through outdoor activities;
- Educational park - model of cross-border ecological education (2011-2012), financed by The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013. The project aims to contribute to the development of an educational program which has in view the personal and professional development of the pupils from Romania and the Republic of Moldova and a long lasting development of the communities in the project;
- Resources pilot for cross border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River (2012-2015), financed by The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013. The project’s objective is to jointly develop the scientific, human
and logistic resources, aiming to monitor, restore and improve the Prut River aquatic resources during difficult climatic conditions and threatening anthropogenic actions.

The important progresses registered in the development of economic, cultural, social projects, which reunite Romania and the Republic of Moldova in the frame of cross-border cooperation, create perspectives for a tight collaboration in the future with beneficial effects for both parties involved.

### 3.2 Cooperation and the Prut River basin

The concept of cross border cooperation, as already implemented in other regions in the Danube River Basin (e.g. Sava, Tisza), offers a much wider scope for the exchange of data and information, methodologies and best practices, especially with regard to the integrated development of shared basin and nutrient reduction (Islam et al., 2006).

The Prut River, a tributary river of the Danube, is 953 km in length (the first 211 km are in Ukraine 31 km represent the border between Romania and Ukraine, and the remaining 711 km represent a natural border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Of the total basin area, 39% lies in the territory of Romania, 28% is in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and 33% in the territory of Ukraine. (Figure 10)

The Prut basin, through the variety of geomorphic elements, of flora and fauna, is permanently subjected to the researches of various experts from Romania, the Republic of Moldova or other countries (Vartolomei, 2012). Water quality of the Prut River is subject to numerous trans-boundary impacts. Therefore, international cooperation and the implementation of international and regional projects play a special role in the evaluation of hydrological and environmental risks in the basin, and in the protection and rational use of water resources as a whole (River Basin Management Plan for Prut Pilot Basin, 2013). Most significant among these are:

- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention, Helsinki, 1992);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971);
- Procedure for Monitoring of the Prut River Water Quality within Bilateral Cooperation between Romania and Republic of Moldova (1992);
- Convention on the Protection of Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest 1992);
- Convention on Co-operation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube (Sofia, 1994);
- Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Moldova with Regard to the Cooperation in the Area of Protection of Fish Resources...
and the Regulating of Fishing in the Prut River and Stânca-Costești Artificial Lake (Stânca-Costești, 2003);

- Agreement for the Establishment and Management of a Cross-Border Protected Area between the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine in the Danube Delta and the Lower Prut Nature Protected Areas (Bucharest, 2000);
- Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on Cooperation for Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources of the Danube and the Prut (Chisinau, 2010);
- Regulation of water quality monitoring of the Prut River within the framework of bilateral cooperation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova (1992).

Figure 10: Position of the Prut River Basin within Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
(Source: http://www.icpdr.org/main/publications/focusing-prut-river-basin)

The main anthropogenic pressures in the Prut River basin are the following: water abstraction and point sources of pollution, related to insufficient processing of urban wastewater, discharge of industrial wastewater, and inadequate management of municipal/livestock and industrial waste. The most significant and urging water issue is the pollution with organic substances, nutrients and hazardous materials caused by emissions from agglomerations and
industrial activities. Agriculture, especially through drainage works, is an important issue in the Prut River corridor area. At the same time, a special importance and attention is given to flood defence and nature protection. Activities related to the management of the Prut River constitute actions for the implementation of the Water Frame Directive and have as objective the balanced management of water resources. They also aim to implement protection of aquatic ecosystems and to achieve a good quality of surface/ground-waters. The management and protection is directly correlated to the socio-economic development and represents the starting point for the management measures in all economic branches, water management measures and emphasizes on the major factors which influence water and basin.

The main objectives of the management activities are (Cserwid, 2013):

- Permanent knowledge of water resources, conservation and protection of water resources;
- Assurance, allocation and optimal use of water resources;
- Protection and improvement of water quality;
- Water management infrastructure operation;
- Prevention and defence against the destructive action of water and accidental pollution;
- Developing and updating River Basin Management Plans and River Basin Developments Plans;
- Completing and adopting the institutional and legislative frame at European Union requirements;
- Strengthening collaboration with neighbouring countries regarding the trans-boundary rivers and international cooperation;
- Public awareness and participation.

Bilateral cooperation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, regarding the management of the Prut River basin, has in view the following: hydrometeorological data exchange; water quality monitoring; common hydrometrics; exchange data in case of droughts; procedures in case of floods; experience exchange in the field of risk management associated to the hydrotechnical works; experience exchange in the field of groundwater exploitation; cooperation regarding the improvement and developing of the groundwater monitoring systems for answering to the Water Framework Directive requests.

The partnership of the project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River has been established on a common and solid ground during the elaboration of the application form, based on common needs, values and scientific objectives. The partners met on various occasions, kept a close and regular contact via email and phone

4 http://www.see-river.net/pilot-sites.7.html
calls. Any difficulty was subject to negotiations and mutual help. No risks were identified in this collaboration.

The two organizations have a long co-operation history dating back to the period immediately after 1990. This start was marked by individual collaborations on common themes, i.e. among the employees from the two institutions, while the working language has always been Romanian.

The relationship with other organisations is the following:

- The associate institutions (ROMFISH National Association of Fish Producers, National Waters Administration - Prut Bârlad-Branch and Iaşi Agency for Environment) quickly responded to their requests and gave their support during the elaboration of Support Documents.
- Sub-contractor(s) - average well.
- Other third parties involved (including other donors, other government agencies or local government units, NGOs, etc.): quick and favourable response of the institutions involved with the custody, security and exploitation of protected areas alongside the natural border of the Prut River.

The partnership of this project did not change over time. The very beginning of the organizational partnership can be traced back to 2009, when the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University from Iaşi sent an official address to the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. Moreover, a general template of the project’s proposal was sent to all institutes pertaining to this important research body of the Republic of Moldova, with the aim of receiving collaboration offers. The Romanian organization also directly contacted the Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and a renewal of the partnership was embraced. Under the restrictions imposed by the need for a visa to visit the other county, the two institutions decided to meet on the Stânca-Costeşti bridge over the Prut River, in the “Friendship’s House” (“Casa prieteniei”), an administrative space commonly managed by Romanians and Moldavians, symbolically sealing the future partnership. Hosted by this environment, they held meetings in two stages, each having a one-day-duration. The final project proposal was conceived and written by experienced scientists from both partners together.
4. **Determination of geographical confines**

4.1 **Geographical context**

Considering the region of the Danube basin, the Prut River is the second longest (950 km) and the last major tributary of the Danube, with its confluence located just upstream of the Danube Delta. Its source is in the forests of the Ukrainian Carpathians and later the Prut forms the border between Romania and Moldova. Of its total length, 695 km (72%) represent a natural border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

The Prut hydrographical basin is situated at the contact between the Carpathian Mountains, the Moldavian Plateau and the Podolic Plateau, covering an area of 27,447 km². Three main sectors of the Prut River: superior, middle and inferior can be clearly delineated, flowing through the mountain, plateau and plain regions. Within this environmental settings, the urban and rural localities are developing in the riverine lowlands along the Prut River, while the catchment area is mainly used in agriculture. The floodplain of the river is used mainly for grazing, while some areas are afforested (Geografia Romaniei, vol. IV, 1992).

4.2 **Social and territorial characteristics**

The Prut River flows through the area of three countries: Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Romania. All localities are situated in contiguous districts of the three countries (i.e. belonging to 2 regions in Ukraine, 12 territorial administrative districts in the Republic of Moldova and 6 counties in Romania). Several reports were elaborated in order to evaluate the current state of the Prut River basin and to find proper sustainable development and management solutions at the basin level (Environmental Protection of International River Basins, 2013a, 2013b). Similarly, The Prut River Basin Management Plan for 2016-2021, 2015, elaborated by the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova (Institute of Ecology and Geography) and coordinated by the Ministry of Environment in Chisinau, represents a synthesis of the current state of the environment and of the settlements in the basin, including the EU Water Directive targets and objectives that need to be complied with (http://www.dbga.md/V1%20Moldova_Plan_Prut_ro.pdf).

**Ukraine**

In Ukraine, the Prut River basin is situated in two administrative regions – Ivano-Frankivsk (two thirds of the water catchment area) and Cernăuți/Chernivtsi

Given current industrial production structure, the Prut River basin in Ukraine is an industrial-agrarian area. Industrial machinery construction, is involved in the manufacture of oil and gas processing equipment; industrial wood processing is involved in the production of shaped
timber, veneer and furniture; the industry for construction materials produces bricks, roofing paper, ceramics, reinforced concrete structures; the light industry manufactures apparel, knitwear and denim; the food industry produces sugar, baked goods, alcohol, sunflower oil, meat, milk, and canned vegetables and fruits. Industry in Cernăuți/Chernivtsi Region includes over 200 enterprises with combined production of 0.4% of the country’s economic output. Important to note is that the region is energy-deficient, subsequently, it necessitates the development of industries, which consume little energy and materials (Environmental Protection of International River Basins, 2013a, 2013b).

The Republic of Moldova

The landscape of the Prut River basin on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is typically agrarian, with over 74% rural population. Over the last 20 years, the total population number has declined by approximately 50 000 people. The basin area in Moldova includes 253 communities grouped in 12 territorial-administrative districts. The number of settlements totals 447 – villages, urban-type localities, and 15 towns. The total share of urban population in the basin is 24.8%. Most towns (except Lipcani, Cupcini, Costesti, Cornesti and Iargara) are district centres. In the last 20 years urban population in the basin has remained stable. A decline of about 22 500 people (2.7%) is part of an overall reduction in demographic parameters related to economic crisis (Prut River Basin Management Plan for 2016-2021, 2015).

The primary demographic indicators suggest that the overall number of population in the basin will tend to decrease in the coming years. The low level of economic development leads to outflow of working-age population. Thus, anthropogenic pressure on natural resources in the basin will likely decrease slightly, leading to certain environmental improvements.

Industrial enterprises in the basin are primarily concentrated in towns. A few small enterprises exist and they process agricultural products (e.g. mills and dairies) and they operate in villages. Moreover, a food canning factory operates, which utilizes the resources of the Făleşti sugar refinery (part of Sudzucker Moldova). In Ocniţa and Lipcani, small canning factories operate, as part of the local consumer cooperatives. The Ungheni Business Free Economic Zone was established in 2003 and it helps to ensure foreign trade of goods. 38 companies were registered in the zone in 2012, and Austrian, Italian, Russian and Belgian capital can be also found amongst them. In 2011, sales of industrial products in the Zone reached 927 million lei (over 57 million Euros).

Romania

The largest part of the Prut basin, almost 60%, is situated in Romania, extending over the Botoşani, Vaslui and Galaţi counties and most part of the Iaşi county, as well as over small areas in the eastern part of the Neamţ and Bacău counties (Geografia Romaniei, vol. IV, 1992).
Iași and Galați act as main polarizing centers, especially for the surrounding localities whose socioeconomic profile is shaped by the market forces of the two cities in their response to the demands of the respective markets as well as of the cities’ dwellers. Nevertheless, the influence of the two poles is to a certain extent present at national level as well, as an effect of major economic traits (e.g. the steel industry in Galați represented by ArcelorMittal Company, a long standing shipyard industry in Galați – Damen Shipyard Company, traditional and prominent higher education in Iași, etc.). Worth mentioning that the economy of the two cities is growing, with increased focus on new economic branches such as IT, R&D sector, education and services (Popescu, 2011; www.sdtr.ro). These sectors become more diverse and they are capable of coping with various external impacting factors. As such, this aspect comes in favour of supporting the polycentric structure of the respective areas, with potential to intensify at regional level, expanding across the border in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

To reduce the territorial disparities and to increase the resilience of, as well as the social cohesion in the entire area, key driving forces should be identified to act in this direction. The Prut River itself, through its ecosystem functions (i.e. aquatic biodiversity, water delivering resources, floodplain provisioning functions, etc.) plays an integral role in the region by multiplying the feedbacks at the level of the human and natural systems interactions, and thus increasing the diversity and, subsequently, the resilience of the region. Moreover, the cross-border particularity of the region enhances the capacity of the whole area to increase its dynamic relations across borders, thus enabling the socio-economic development and rising local peoples’ living standards.

4.3 Prut River’s ecological services

Considering the quality of water and biodiversity, Stânca – Costești reservoir makes a good case-study for investigation (as it is the case of the present project, among other sampling sites), based on its importance of providing services to a large share of local communities. This reservoir is the largest accumulation of water in the Prut basin and the second in the country, built jointly by the two riparian states Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

The role of the reservoir is manifold: to protect against the effects high flood, to prevent from damage caused by floods, to provide water supply for the population, industry, irrigation, fishery as well as for hydropower energy production and fish production (Rădoane et al., 2006; Briciu et al., 2011).

At the level of the entire Prut River basin, there are 307 reservoirs in operation with a gross volume of 1.657 million m$^3$, a net volume of 681 million m$^3$. Out of them, 18 are complex lakes with total gross volume of 1 451 million m$^3$ and a net volume of 510 million m$^3$. The most important is the accumulation of the Stanca-Costesti on the Prut River with a gross volume of
1 285 million m³ and 450 million m³ net volume, of which 225 million m³ for the Romanian side (Vartolomei, 2009).

Stanca-Costesti reservoir provides water for Iasi and Vaslui towns, all settlements in the bordering area of the lake and downstream, and also the irrigation of 70 000 ha of agricultural land (Vartolomei, 2013). It should be pointed out that the reservoir had a particular effect on the upstream and downstream runoff, being observed, over the last 30 years (i.e. since the Stânca-Costești dam was built), a steady increase in the downstream discharge, with a decrease in the sector next to Oancea station, until the flowing of the Prut into the Danube (Briciu et al., 2011). This situation is quite complex having in view the lower amounts of precipitation and the higher levels of evapotranspiration downstream, and could be proved by climate variability and human intervention in the original flow of the ecosystem services generated by the Prut River, particularly through the construction of the Stânca-Costești dam upstream (Rădoane et al., 2006; Briciu et al., 2011; Vartolomei, et al., 2011).

To assess the water quality and the biodiversity level of the Prut River, sampling campaigns were performed over the working phases of the current project, in many sites as: Stânca-Costești reservoir (lower sector, straight next to the dam), and the Prut River (Brașniste, Ungheni, Prisecani-Valea Mare, Scoleni, Leușeni, Bumbata-Leova, Oancea-Cahul, Cislita-Prut, Sivita-Giurgiulești). Investigations were directed both to the assessment of diversity, quantitative structure and production peculiarities of bacterio-, phyto- and zooplankton, zoobenthos, ichthyofauna and hydrochemical state of the Prut River.

4.4 Protected areas

The Prut River basin preserves high level of biodiversity, recognised at the national and international level. This could be turned into a big opportunity for the local communities in order to improve their life’s quality and to take benefit from the biodiversity of the territory, and to bring strong financial support for the sustainable development into one of the last green oasis of the European Union (Gache, 2008). Along the Prut River and its vicinity area, both parts of the Romania and the Republic of Moldova, were declared as important protected areas for conservation and protection of the natural resources, including scientific reserve, monuments of nature, natural reserve, natural parks, SCI-Sites of Community Importance and SPA-Special Protection Areas. On the Romanian side, the following natural areas were designed “Lower Prut Floodplain Natural Park” (V IUCN category), Stânca Costești Lake and meadow forest (SPA), Belcești Lakes (SPA), Ibăneasa-Bășeșu-Podriga lakes (SPA), Cârja-Mata-Rădeanu Lakes and Roșcani Forest (SPA), Jijia and Miletin Ponds (SPA), Vlădești-Frumușița Prut Floodplain (SPA), Brateș Lake (SPA) (the last two are belonging to the natural park), Medeleni Forest (SCI), Prut River (SCI), Lower Prut Floodplain (SCI), part of them being included in the Romanian Natura 2000 Network (Government Decision, no. 1284/24.10.2007) (Fig. 11). On the Moldavian side, there exist three small scientific reserves: Prutul de Jos/Lower Prut, Plaiul Fagului/Beech’
Forest, Pădurea Domnească/Royal Forest (I IUCN category), covering a total surface about 13,365 hectares. Other protected areas are monuments of nature and natural reserves: Meandrul Pererita/Pereriţa Meander, Caracuşeni, Călineştii Mici (III IUCN category), Rosoşeni, Dancu, Pogăneşti, Lucăceni, Vadu lui Isac (IV IUCN category), etc. We must notice here that the last protected area and its territory represent a larger wetland – the surface is about 19,000 ha- with Ramsar situ status, under the name “Lakes of the Low Prut River”, with the wetland flora and fauna’s protection like first priority.

**Figure 11:** Protected areas along the Prut River within Romanian side (left) (processed after data from Government of the Romania, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change) and Moldovan side
(Source: Government of the Republic of Moldova, State of the environment in the Republic of Moldova)
5. Organisational and institutional structure, operation (level of institutionalisation)

5.1 Partners of the project

The research within the project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River was, but it still continues to be performed on a solid basis of research, education and local authorities. The project was initiated by the education-oriented organization “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University from Iaşi (Romania), as the Lead-Partner, together with the research organization Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, as its partner. The partnership includes three other associates, namely the National Administration “Romanian Waters” – Prut Directorate (Associate No. 1), The Environmental Protection Agency of the Iaşi County (Associate No. 2) and the Inspectorate for Ecology of the Republic of Moldavia (Associate No. 3).

The project coordinator is Professor Mircea-Nicuşor Nicoară from the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, while the Project Head is Mrs. Maria Sava. The seat of the Lead-Partner is located in Iaşi, Romania. The coordinator representing the main Partner is Professor Ion Toderaş, member of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, while the project Head of the same partner is Dr. Laurenţia Ungureanu. In the following part, the case study gives a brief information about the involved actors.

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi (UAIC) is not only the oldest Higher Education Institution (HEI) but also the first modern Romanian university. The university, opened in 1860, currently has more than 38,000 students, 24 research centres, 15 faculties and almost 200 study programmes at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral level. The university has been carrying on a tradition of excellence and innovation in research due to its academics’ expertise, its modern infrastructure and its numerous research projects. In 2008, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University was placed first in the national research ranking compiled on the basis of Shanghai criteria. Striving for excellence, the university takes unique initiatives to stimulate research quality, to encourage dynamic and creative education and to involve its best students in academic life (www.uaic.ro).

The Faculty of Biology is the institution involved in the organisation and the development of the Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River Project. Students and teachers have at their disposal an important material basis for research and practice: Faculty’s research centres of Agigea (Black Sea) and Potoci (Bicaz); Botanical Garden; Museum of Natural History (Romania’s oldest); Herbarium. Faculty’s
fundamental and applicable research concerns: biodiversity, modern biotechnologies, ecology, integrated and biological obliteration of harmful agents, genetics, biochemistry, biophysics, cellular biology, anatomy, cytology, vegetal physiology, histology, etc.

**The Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Institute of Zoology – Partner**

The Institute of Zoology is one of the 25 research institutions which belong to the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASM). The Institute of Zoology has its origin in 1947. It is a prestigious scientific and methodical center, coordinating and conducting fundamental and applied research, as well as training high qualified research staff in zoology, entomology, parasitology, helminthology, hydrobiology, ichthyology, and ecology. The institute is one of the leading research bodies of the country in the field of conservation of wildlife biodiversity, working out the scientific basis for the development of aquaculture and fish culture in Moldova. The originality and competitiveness of the institute researches are confirmed by successful participations in numerous international projects, by many obtained invention patents, and awarded gold, silver and bronze medals, national and international diplomas (www.prutriver.uaic.ro).

**National Administration “Romanian Waters” Prut Directorate – Associate no. 1**

National Administration “Romanian Waters” representing the unique administrator and manager of water resources in Romania has the following objectives: the use, processing and sustainable development of water resources as well as the progressive improvement of the relations with the beneficiaries and users of water resources and of their potentials.

The National Administration “Romanian Waters” has the following main attributions which cover the project objectives: unitary and long lasting water resources management both for the surface and for the underground waters, their protection against exhaustion and degradation through a rational and balanced sharing of these resources; administration, operation and maintenance of minor water river beds, lakes and ponds, in their natural or fitted condition, of the sea wall and beach, wetlands and other protected heritage areas; administration, operation and maintenance of the National System of Water Resources Quality Supervision; allocating the right to use the resources of the surface waters and groundwater in all forms; implementation of the EU directives in the field of water.

**Environmental Protection Agency Iaşi County – Associate no. 2**

Environmental Protection Agency Iaşi County is a public institution with legal personality, subordinated to the National Environmental Protection Agency, with the status of a decentralized public service, funded from the state budget.
Environmental Protection Agency Iași County fulfils, at the county level, the attributions of the National Environmental Protection Agency, including: the implementation of policies, strategies and legislation on environmental protection.

**The Inspectorate for Ecology of the Republic of Moldova – Associate no. 3**

The Inspectorate for Ecology of the Republic of Moldova works under the umbrella of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova. Some of the Inspectorate responsibilities which cover the project objectives are the following (http://inseco.gov.md/): participation in the development and promotion of programs and national action plans on environmental protection and natural resources; monitoring of environmental factors and organization of state ecological control; supervising the use of water resources, special consumption compliance, management of the special protection zones and areas of sanitary protection of water resources; controlling the performance of recreational-sports and industrial fishing; establishing the necessary measures to increase the biological potential of fisheries resources.

### 5.2 Roles of the institutions in the project

The roles of the institutions are presented in this section as they could be identified based on the partial project narrative reports available (Annex VI, Interim Narrative Reports, no.1 and no. 2, internal documents, 2014a,b), covering the period May 2012 – July 2014 out of the total implementation period of the project. These reports were kindly provided by the UAIC project manager.

The roles of the Lead Partner (LP) and Partner 1 (P1) in the project were distributed according to the main groups of activities present in the project’s structure: GA1: Project management, coordination and communication; GA2: Public procurement; GA3: Cross-border institutional capacity; GA4: Prut River investigation; GA5: Information, awareness and dissemination. Therefore, within GA1: Project management, coordination and communication activities, both the Lead Partner and Partner 1 ensured the coordination of the project, including the management of financial aspects and of human resources, according to the established procedures into force in both institutions. They both organized kick-off meetings in the headquarters of their institutions. On regular meetings throughout the project, the LP of the project had the role of evaluating the documents (labour contracts, job descriptions, monthly time-sheets, monthly attendance sheets and financial documents) delivered by Partner 1, in terms of correctness and completeness and with the aim of ensuring that these are in agreement with the Programme’s requirements.

In the framework of the same group of activities, P1 had the mission of carrying out the Audit report (intermediary and final). In this respect, the organization prepared the necessary documents to be assessed and approved by the auditor in order to receive the Report for an
Expenditure Verification of a Grant Contract - External Actions of the European Union. By bringing together the results provided within the two Reports for Expenditure Verification approved by the Audit Company (for P1) and the 1st level National Control (for LP) respectively, the LP was responsible with the elaboration of consolidated reports (intermediary and final) to be approved by the Management Authority of the Programme Ro-Ua-Md.

With regard to the public procurement activities comprised in the GA2, LP ensured that public procurement procedures for the different needs (i.e. various support documents – e.g. FS5, ED6, SEIA7 -, equipment and supplies, subcontracting construction works to rehabilitate the existing Ezăreni infrastructure, communication and visibility services) were respected as stipulated in the Romanian Law concerning the public procurement (OUG 34/2006) and in the Practical Guide to Contract procedures for EU external actions, by pursuing the sequence: 1. Elaboration of tender dossier; 2. Submission of tender; 3. Receipt and registration of offers; 4. Evaluation of offers; 5. Award and signature of contracts; 6. Delivery and quality appraisal of the products/services; 7. Reception of the products/services. The tender dossiers were uploaded on the SEAP (Electronic System for Public Procurement) platform, in order to comply with the requirements of transparency, fair treatment of competitors and free market. On his side, the Moldavian partner was engaged in assuring that public procurement procedures for equipment and supplies developed according to the Practical Guide to Contract procedures for EU external actions. In addition, P1 was also responsible that the Public procurement procedures for Audit subscribed to the Moldavian Law and to the Practical Guide to Contract procedures for EU external actions. The same sequence consisting of several steps was respected: 1. Elaboration of tender dossier; 2. Submission of tender; 3. Receipt and registration of offers; 4. Evaluation of offers; 5. Award and signature of contracts; 6. Delivery and quality appraisal of the products/services; 7. Reception of the products/services.

In the frame of the GA3: Cross-border institutional capacity, regarding the activity devoted to the rehabilitation of the Ezăreni infrastructure (fish reproduction tanks, laboratories and other facilities), the LP specialists regularly reviewed the papers submitted by the company which won the elaboration of the Feasibility Study and Technical documentation, with the aim of ensuring a better adaptation of the proposed solutions described in the Pre-Feasibility Study to the functional characteristics of the hall breeding. The technical solutions were discussed and decided during several meetings organized with the design company, the constructors and the supervisor. After the finalisation of the rehabilitation works, the infrastructure, as well as other facilities, now still in the process of being procured, will be set-up.

5 Feasibility Study
6 Execution Details
7 Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment
As part of the activity of developing joint action plans for sustainable valorisation of fish resources alongside and across the Prut River, both partner institutions elaborated the Methodology for monitoring fish population structure. More precisely, the LP responsible for organizing the scientific fishing (Grigore Davideanu) in collaboration with the P1 investigation responsible (Elena Zubcov) prepared a Methodological guide for monitoring the structure of ichthyocenoses.

Both partners were also involved in elaborating of an Action Plan for developing joint research and education projects in the field of self-sustained aquaculture.

The Group of activity 4 concentrated on the actual Prut River investigation. The hydro-biological study (including fish sampling) was performed across and alongside the Prut River from its entry into the Romanian territory to the confluence with the Danube. It comprised several activity phases, of which the following are in an advanced stage of development: monitoring of the structural and functional characteristics of the main aquatic organisms communities inhabiting the River Prut; investigation of the hydro-chemical characteristics of the Prut River; identification of the influences of abiotic factors upon aquatic organisms’ communities; evaluation of the natural and human-induced threats upon the fish reproduction capability; assessing the role of aquatic organisms in the chemical migration process, in view of evaluating water quality.

The LP was in charge with ensuring good conditions for the scientific fishing. As such, in order to acquire the right to perform scientific fishing in the Prut River, the LP team was involved in obtaining the necessary annual agreements, permits and approvals from the central administrative bodies and all institutions dealing with the custody, management and border security of the Prut River basin. P1, as well, obtained new permits for carrying out scientific works in the border area.

Before the expeditions could start, a Health and work security plan for scientific fishing was drafted. The training based on such a plan was compulsory in order to ensure the compliance with the legal conditions concerning safety standards and equipment handling protocols.

The LP team performed seven scientific fishing expeditions for collecting data and samples of Prut’s ichthyofauna. On the other hand, the staff of Partner 1 performed twenty expeditions, collecting water and biological samples. The sampling was performed, most of the times, in the Costești-Stânca reservoir (lower sector, straight next to the dam), and the Prut River (Braniste, Sculeni, Leuseni, Leova, Cahul, Cislita-Prut, Giurgiulesti). Investigations were focused on assessing the diversity, quantitative structure and production characteristics of the bacteria-, phyto- and zooplankton, zoobenthos, ichthyofauna and the hydro-chemical state of the Prut River and the Costești-Stânca reservoir. Experiments were performed in laboratory conditions. Additionally, several field experiments were carried out to determine the influence of heavy metals (Cd, Pb, Ni, Cu, Zn) on production processes. The obtained results, especially on the structural and functional characteristics of the main aquatic organisms communities (including
fish population), the hydro-chemical characteristics, the human impact on the water quality, the state of hydro-biont populations and the role of aquatic organisms in the migration of chemical elements, being processed and presented in Investigation Reports, are meant to be included in the Risk assessment report. The laboratory researchers of the partner institutions agreed upon the framework of the Risk Assessment Report (RAR). Furthermore, information gathered in the written Investigation Reports, related to laboratory results and main trends of biodiversity changes, were further synthesised in the Risk Assessment Report.

One important activity, concerning the elaboration of an Emergency Plan for restoring the natural ecosystems of the Prut River, is currently taking place.

During the implementation period, the visibility and advertising of the project and of the Programme was ensured by the involvement of both partner organizations within GAS5: Information, awareness and dissemination. To this purpose, LP utilized one press release, several advertising insertions in print media, more precisely in editions of the “Evenimentul” newspaper, and several audio spots on Radio Iaşi. The two media institutions have regional coverage.

In the Republic of Moldova, the project benefitted of a good coverage in visual media. TV Publika, in one edition of its broadcast news “Săptămâna devreme”, invited the Moldavian head of the project, namely, Elena Zubcov, to present the project and its major benefits for cross-border collaboration (this was done in Russian language). Since the Chişinău print media is weak and did not accept advertising insertions, the staff of Partner 1 decided to generate media topics by inviting press people at each major event of the project: launching, investigations, conference. Hence, P1 succeeded in contributing to a good visibility of the RO-UA-MD Programme and to a popular awareness of the aim of the project. The advertising of the project was also made during working meetings at ministries and on the occasions of different scientific events organized by the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

As well, the staff of both institutions elaborated several promotional materials by selecting all relevant pictures and texts to be printed on posters, banners and folders, according to the rules specified in the Programme’s Visibility Handbook and in the project.

All information and communication materials were released after first being approved by an Information and publicity officer from the JTS8 of the Regional Office for Cross-border Cooperation Iaşi.

With regard to public events, the Lead Partner (“Al.I.Cuza” University) organized a scientific symposium. A special focus was attributed to this project, as well as to the opportunity and stimulation provided by EC funding for cross-border collaborative research in the field of biodiversity. The researchers from two partner institutions participated in 11 articles, out of
which two valorised the results of the Prut River project. Besides, LP organized an exhibition with the aim of raising the awareness on the potential of the Prut River to provide services in terms of biodiversity, food and leisure. Also, LP organized the 1st roundtable, gathering all relevant stakeholders involved in the management, monitoring and use of the waters of the Prut River and of its tributaries. The event was advertised in print and audio media, and further through banners, posters and leaflets. The roundtable was destined to create good visibility of the results achieved at that stage (the hydrological, chemical and biological characteristics of the Prut River, the methodology for monitoring the ichthyocenoses’ structure), and moreover, to present the main risks generated by human and natural incidents, that are threatening the aquatic biodiversity.

P1 organized the Zoologists conference. The event was advertised 6 times on TV Moldova 1, which is a public company. The researchers from the two partner institutions participated in 14 articles, 11 of which valorised the results of this project. In April 2014, Partner 1 presented the project’s results at the 5th Danube Academies Conference, held in Chişinău.

Regarding the project’s website, LP was responsible with subcontracting the design of the website to a company with relevant experience in the field.

The good co-operation with the associate institutions (ROMFISH National Association of Fish Producers, National Waters Administration – Prut-Bârlad Water Branch and the Environmental Protection Agency, Iaşi) was based on their constant prompt reactions to the requests of the project’s partner-organizations, as well as on their availability and support during the elaboration of the Support Documents.

The National Administration “Romanian Waters“ - Prut-Bârlad Water Branch, the Environmental Protection Agency, Iaşi, the Ecology Inspectorate of the Republic of Moldova are some of the local authorities benefitting from this project. They will be provided, following the research results of this project, with a clear view about the risks that threaten the biodiversity of the Prut River, an Emergency plan and a methodology for mitigating the effects of threatening actions.
6. Composition of the working group

The Project was organized in five activity groups (Fig. 12).

**GA1: Project management, coordination and communication activities**

- A1  Coordination and management activities
- A2  Financial management
- A3  Project’s progress monitoring
- A4  Audit
- A5  Implementation reports (technical and financial)

![Diagram](http://prutriver.uaic.ro/)

**Figure 12: Main goals of the project**
(Source: http://prutriver.uaic.ro/)

**Activity Outputs:**

Decision making structure for project’s implementation; Staff’s assignment Decision; Decision for establishing salaries, workload and labour contracts duration; Description of job and task for every member involved in project; Labour contracts for every member involved in project’s implementation; The minute of the kick off meeting; The minute of the half year meeting; Internal evaluation report and corrective measures (intermediary); 8 Progress reports – at every four months (narrative report, procurement report, communication and visibility report,

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9 http://prutriver.uaic.ro/
financial report); Final report; National controllers’ report (intermediary and final) - LP; Audit report (intermediary and final) – P1

**GA2: Public procurement**

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<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Public procurement procedures for Support Documents (FS, ThP+ED, SEIA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Public procurement procedures for equipment and supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Public procurement procedures for construction works to rehabilitate the existing Ezareni infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Public procurement procedures for communication and visibility services</td>
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<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Public procurement procedures for Audit</td>
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**Activity Outputs:**

Procurement contracts, invoices, etc. for: Feasibility Study, Technical Documentation, Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment; Equipment and supplies; Construction works; Communication and visibility actions; Audit.

**GA3: Cross-border institutional capacity**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Elaboration of the Support documents (Feasibility study, Technical documentation, Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment) for rehabilitating the Ezareni infrastructure: fish reproduction tanks, laboratories and other facilities;</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Development of the rehabilitation works for the infrastructure necessary for the management of the aquatic resources and for restoring the biodiversity related to Prut River</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Reception and setting-up of the equipment and facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Continuing monitoring the degree of compliance of executed works with the quality/price requirements and with the schedule’s terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Setting-up the infrastructure dedicated to the sustainable management of the aquatic resources and for restoring the biodiversity related to Prut River</td>
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C6. Development of joint action plans for sustainable valorisation of fish resources alongside and across river

C.6.1. Elaboration of the Methodology for monitoring fish population structure

C.6.2. Elaboration of the Action Plan for developing joint research and education projects (within national and/or EU programs) related to self-sustained aquaculture

C7. Subscription for specialized journals, books and database/software

Activity Outputs

- List of subscription for journals, books and database/software (contracts): at least 3 scientific journals related to biodiversity and limnology (fresh waters) and 8 scientific books focused on environment, aquaculture, fresh waters and marine ecosystems etc.
- Support documents
- Feasibility Study
- Technical documentation
- Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment
- Written monitoring report concerning the status of the construction works – in narrative report
- Methodology for monitoring fish population structure
- Action Plan for developing joint research and education projects (within national and/or EU programs) related to self-sustained aquaculture
- Written record of equipment and facilities setting up
- Written report of Ezareni overall infrastructure reception

GA4 Prut River investigation

D1. Site hydro-biological study (including fish sampling) performed across and alongside from the entry into the Romanian territory to the confluence with river

D1.1. The monitoring of the structural and functional characteristics of the main aquatic organisms communities inhabiting the River Prut.

D.1.2. Qualitative and quantitative investigation of fish populations, aiming at preserving their biodiversity.

D.1.3. River Prut hydrochemical characteristics investigation.

D.1.5. Assessment of the aquatic organisms’ role in the chemical migration process, aiming at the evaluation of river’s aquatic resources quality.


D2. Elaboration of the Risk assessment report for the integrity of the ecosystem

D3. Elaboration of the Emergency plan for restoring the natural ecosystem of the river

**Activity Outputs**

- Methodology for monitoring fish population and its structure: Written Prut investigation report on: 1. structural and functional characteristics of phyto- and zooplankton, zoobenthos and ichthyofauna 2. hydrochemical characteristics 3. relationship between biotic and abiotic factors 4. water quality 5. evaluation of fish reproduction capability 6. ecological indices of fish population
- Risk assessment report for the integrity of the ecosystem
- Action plan for developing joint research and education projects within European programmes
- Emergency plan for restoring the natural ecosystem of Prut river

**GA5: Information, awareness and dissemination**

E1. Communication and visibility activities
   - E.1.1. Official launching of the project (press release)
   - E.1.2. Official closure of the project (press release)
   - E.1.3. Advertising insertions in print media
   - E.1.4. Advertising announcement in broadcasting media

E2. Elaboration of promotional materials
E3. Public events:
   E.3.1. Scientific symposium (“Al.I. Cuza” University)
   E.3.2. The Zoologists conference (Zoology Institute)
   E.3.3. Exhibition
   E.3.4. Round table addressed to the main stakeholders and users of river aquatic resources

E4. Project website

Activity Outputs:

40 press releases; 48 advertising insertions at every 4 months in the print media; 48 announcements in audio media at every 4 months; Advertising and promotional materials (Leaflets; Banners; Posters; Folders; Canvas bags; Ball pens; Badges; CDs); 2 scientific symposia organized by “Al. I. Cuza” University; The Zoologists Conference organized by Chisinau Institute of Zoology; The conference volume; 2 exhibitions organized by “Al. I. Cuza” University regarding the species living in Prut River; 2 round tables; Project website

Within the project: Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River (No. MIS ETC 1150), 45 people were engaged in the planned activities. The expertise of the project’s working groups was in the fields of: biologists specialized in vertebrate and invertebrate organisms, ichthyofauna, hydrobiology, hydrochemistry, ecotoxicology as academic and teaching professionals including MSc and PhD students. Likewise the successful completion of the project was facilitated by the work of the administrative and technical group including economists, engineers, accountants, secretaries and translators.
7. Main activity areas/profile\(^{10}\)

The cooperation is involved in scientific publication, scientific events and promoting activities using promotional materials, press releases, advertising, and information output through the project website [www.uaic.pрутriver.ro](http://www.uaic.pрутriver.ro).

During the implementation period, the visibility of the project and of the Programme was ensured using a press release, 10 insertions in print media and 10 audio spots (on September 2012 and March 2013 and October 2013) in “Evenimentul” newspaper, respectively on Radio Iaşi, two media institutions with regional coverage. The press release appeared in electronic media, with a larger impact especially on the young public:

- [http://portal.radiolaşi.ro/proiect-de-protectie-a-biodiversitatii-prutului-de-3-000-000-de-euro-a64286.html](http://portal.radiolaşi.ro/proiect-de-protectie-a-biodiversitatii-prutului-de-3-000-000-de-euro-a64286.html);
- [http://curieruldeIaşi.ro/2012/05/31/centru-pilot-pentru-conservarea-biodiversitatii/](http://curieruldeIaşi.ro/2012/05/31/centru-pilot-pentru-conservarea-biodiversitatii/);
- [http://www.bzi.ro/cercetatorii-de-la-cuza-au-intocmit-un-plan-de-urgenta-pentru-raul-prut-291865](http://www.bzi.ro/cercetatorii-de-la-cuza-au-intocmit-un-plan-de-urgenta-pentru-raul-prut-291865);
- [http://www.topIaşi.ro/homepage/eveniment/1264-proiect-de-este-3-milioane-de-euro-la-cuza.html](http://www.topIaşi.ro/homepage/eveniment/1264-proiect-de-este-3-milioane-de-euro-la-cuza.html)

In the Republic of Moldova, the project’s launching benefitted from a good coverage.

During the reporting period, the project received the diploma for “the largest number of media actions to promote the project” awarded within the Annual Conference of the programme organised in Odessa, Ukraine, on September 20th 2012. The project’s website contains available information related to the funding programme, the project and the partner institutions.

Furthermore, three scientific events were organised: the Zoologists Conference “Actual problems of protection and sustainable use of animal world diversity” (10th of October-12th of October 2013), an exhibition (24th of October 2013) and the symposium “Biodiversity without borders” (25th of October 2013). The events benefitted from a large spectrum of visibility tools: TV interviews, banners, posters and leaflets. The events were advertised in regional print and audio media.

\(^{10}\) [http://prutriver.uaic.ro/](http://prutriver.uaic.ro/)
The scientific Symposium “Biodiversity without borders” was organized by the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Faculty of Biology in collaboration with Institute of Zoology, Academy of Sciences of Moldova and structured in three sections according to main biology research: animal biology, vegetal biology and molecular interactions within the living world. The event was attended by 100 participants at national and international level from universities, research centers and botanical gardens. A special focus was attributed to Prut River project, emphasising the role of EC funding in boosting the collaborative research with neighbouring countries in the field of biodiversity. The researchers from the two partner institutions participated with 11 articles from which 2 valorised the results of Prut investigation.

Moreover, the 8th Zoologists Conference “Actual Problems of Protection and Sustainable Use of the Animal World Diversity” organized by the Institute of Zoology, Academy of Sciences of Moldova in collaboration with the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University was structured in eight distinct thematic areas: Terrestrial vertebrates, Invertebrates, Water ecosystems (methodology of investigation, monitoring, evaluation of threats and assessment of risks), Palaeontology. The researchers from the two partner institutions participated with 14 articles from which 11 valorised the results of Prut investigation.

The project is involved in several scientific publication activities (Figure 13):

1. Methodological guide for monitoring the ichtyocenoses structure, a book which presents a set of documented procedures, a list of steps to follow. Mr Grigore Davideanu launched the “Methodological guide for monitoring the ichtyocenoses structure” within the project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River MIS ETC 1150. The methodology includes:
   a. activities and materials,
   b. instructions for using tools and materials,
   c. forms.

2. Using a unified methodology for monitoring ongoing ichthio-fauna reduces activity time, effort required, and the results are reproducible and comparable with other teams.

3. The conference volume of the Scientific Symposium “Biodiversity without borders”;

The conference volume of the Zoologists Conference “Actual Problems of Protection and Sustainable Use of the Animal World Diversity”.
At the same time, the following programs and events were organized (www.prutriver.uaic.ro):

a. Master programme in aquaculture;

b. Access to Ezareni infrastructure for researchers and students;

c. Exhibition, organized by “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University. The exhibition’s main goal was to create a public awareness about the rich potential of the Prut River as source of biodiversity, food and leisure. The posters, in Romanian and English language, were displayed on the halls and amphitheatres of the Faculty of Biology.

d. Round tables addressed to the main stakeholders and users of the Prut River’s aquatic resources;

e. Kick-off and Regular meetings of the Project (the details of which are listed below).

**Kick-off Meeting Romania, May 11th, 2012, Iaşi, Romania**

**Agenda:**

Presentation using Power-Point slides of the Programme and of the project: general objective, specific objectives, activities, terms, results, indicators; Presentation and consensus obtained for necessary modifications of the annexes to grant contract; Establishing the teams for launching the procurement procedures for equipment and supplies, pre-feasibility study, visibility services and other necessary services; Assignment of the main responsibilities in order to elaborate the job descriptions.

**Decisions, resolutions and terms:**

- The participants appreciated the opportunity to develop research and investigation of the Prut River in order to have up-to-date information about the bio-diversity of this natural border with major impact on the communities living around.
- The idea of developing a resources centre in Ezareni, urged the participants to declare their commitment for obtaining best results, educational and training products, etc. The implementation team approved the necessity to modify Annex 1 and Annex 2 to...
Partnership agreement in order to use the warmth weather for the investigation of the Prut River.

- The persons involved in the procurement process (GA2) agreed to extend the period for the procurement of equipment and supplies because of the longer terms to comply with the exigencies of the ANRMAP (Autoritatea Nationala pentru Reglementarea si Monitorizarea Achizitiilor Publice – National Authority for Regulation and Monitoring the Public Procurement). The team decided to have ad-hoc meetings with all personnel of the Public Procurement Department of the “Al.I.Cuza” University, for establishing the final form of the RNOs (Necessity and Opportunity Reports).

**Regular Meeting no. 1, 13-14 September, 2012, Headquarters of the Institute of Zoology, Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova**

**Agenda:**

Brief presentation of the procedures and tools to be used for the elaboration of Progress Reports; Verification of technical documents elaborated by Partner 1: management decisions related to the assigned staff for the project, labour contracts, job descriptions, monthly time sheets; public procurement contracts; Verification of the financial documents elaborated by Partner 1; Elaboration of common sections of the Annex VI- Narrative report no. 1.

**Decisions, resolutions and terms:**

The representative of the Lead Partner verified the correctness of labour contract and of other documents related to human resources and indicated some modifications to be made to attendance sheets and monthly time sheets in order to have a good correlation between these papers and the provision of Annex 3 and job description. It also verified the procurement documents for audit services and the financial documents. The Lead Partner encouraged the Partner team to apply the European Procurement Guide for the procurement of services and products provided in Annex 3 – Partner Budget in order to respect the right procedures.

**Regular Meeting no. 2, February 13th 2013, The “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Department for Project management and Structural Funds.**

On February 13th 2013, the Department for Project management and Structural Funds of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Romania, hosted the second regular meeting of the Project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River, Code MIS ETC 1150. During this meeting, the participants focused their attention on checking and evaluation of technical and financial papers, to be joint to the 2nd Progress Report as justificatory documents, identification of research themes and topics to be included in Action Plan.
Agenda:
Checking and evaluation of technical and financial papers to be joint to the 2nd Progress Reports as justificatory documents; Discussing of the Prut River Investigation Reports; Identification of research themes and topics to be included in Action Plan; Elaboration of common sections of the Annex VI- Narrative report no. 2

Decisions, resolutions and terms:
- The Lead Partner asked the Partner to modify the attendance sheets and to provide information about the workload of each member team according the assigned position instead of cumulated positions; term for execution 28 February 2013.
- It was also asked to respect the order of the staff’s positions as described in Annex 3 Partner’s Budget instead of hierarchical display of them.
- The Partner’ staff presented the 2nd Investigation Report and agreed with Lead Partner which of data and information could be used within scientific papers.
- The investigation team agreed with the research themes proposed to be included in the Action Plan for being developed in the future collaboration within European Programmes.

Regular Meeting no. 3, August 16th 2013, The “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iaşi
Department for Project management and Structural Funds

Agenda:
to discuss, amend and approve the content of the Methodology for monitoring the fish population structure; to improve the framework of Risk Assessment Report established in the application form; to establish the information and data to be processed for the elaboration of the Risk Assessment Report and the criteria to be taken into consideration; to establish the content and form of the promotion materials to be used during the events; to establish the first steps for the Action Plan for developing common research within European Programmes; to underline the necessary actions for speeding the procurement process; to elaborate the common sections/documents for Progress Report no. 4.

Decisions, resolutions and terms:
- The representatives of P1 agreed on the content of the Methodology for monitoring the fish population structure and recommended an English translation; The participants established the main lines/chapters to be developed within the RAR and also the criteria for evaluation: pollution, flood, drought;
- The participants agreed to send the digital format of the posters to be used during the fair organised in Chişinau on 20th of September 2013, in order to obtain the approval of Iaşi CBC Office for visual identity conformity;
- The members of the research team from two institutions agreed to extend the list of the research themes and to fill the electronic application with information and data
related to each institution. The presentation will improve the chances of the two institutions to be asked for participation within collaborative projects in the framework of the EC Research and Innovation Programme HORIZON 2020.

- The staff discussed the main difficulties encountered during the equipment procurement; it was emphasised the necessity to procure only the equipment originated in EU and the difficulty (even impossibility) to obtain a derogation from the Commission in the case of non EU provider.
- The Partner 1 provided the necessary information for an up-date of the procurement progress plan and for written investigation report no.4

**Regular Meeting no. 4 and European Cooperation Day, September 20th 2013, Institute of Zoology, Academy of Sciences, the Republic of Moldova.**

The representatives of the project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River participated at the European Cooperation Day, organized by the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013 and hosted by Chişinău, the capital of the Republic of Moldova.

During two days, 20-21 September 2013, they participated and attended several important events. The Prut River representatives presented the results of the implemented project. And they attended the press conference where representatives of the Programme’s managing structures, as well as the EU Ambassador in the Republic of Moldova, and Romanian Ambassador, presented the main directions of cooperation between the Romania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

**Agenda:**

to elaborate the amendments requested by JMA to Notification no. 5; to organise and take the justificatory documents related to Progress Report no. 4; to establish the conditions for participation on two scientific events organised in October 2013; to instruct about organising the justificatory documents in view of audit report

**Decisions, resolutions and terms:**

The partners commonly agreed to allow free participation on two scientific events for the members of project’s implementation team; The partner organisation agreed to organise the financial justificatory documents according to the rules imposed by the programme even if the national procedures are slightly different; The scientific members of Partner organisation understood to register on https://cordis.europa.eu/partners/web/guest/home as private persons emphasising their own scientific expertise.
Regular Meeting no. 5, November 13th 2013, the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Department for Project Management and Structural Funds.

Agenda:
To provide data and information to Mr Mattias Lindstrom, the representative of European Commission’s Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) to the ENPI CBC JOP Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013 regarding: project’s relevance & Quality of Design, efficiency and effectiveness, impact and sustainability, horizontal and cross-cutting issues; To elaborate the Notification no. 7

Undertaken decisions, resolutions and terms:
All personnel involved in this meeting provided the ROM expert with full, coherent and specialised information in order to have a clear image of the project: aims, actions, results, sustainability; The partners agreed on the budget changes necessary to be made in order to adjust the foreseen prices of the equipment to those into force on the market.

Roundtable, April 7th 2014, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași (Figure 14)
The “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași organised the 1st Roundtable within the project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River MIS ETC 1150 on April 7th 2014. The event took place in the “King Ferdinand” Conference Hall of the University.

This 1st meeting brought together all parties involved in the management, exploitation and valorisation of the Prut River, in order to acknowledge the project results attained at this stage:

- Purchased research infrastructure;
- Health and work security plan for scientific fishing;
- Methodological guide for monitoring the structure of ichthyocoenoses;
- Results related to Prut River investigation;
- Identified risks due to anthropogenic actions or to natural hazards.

Figure 14: Roundtable, April 7th 2014 (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Romania) (Source: http://prutriver.uaic.ro/)
8. Management (incomes/expenses)

The budget was split, to be specific,, 70% was granted to the lead partner, the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași (Faculty of Biology) and 30% was given to the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (Institute of Zoology).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTNERS CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>Value (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LP financial contribution (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University)</td>
<td>250,826,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1' st Partner's financial contribution (Institute of Zoology)</td>
<td>74,603,69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE contribution</td>
<td>2,928,872,17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP’s share of grant (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University)</td>
<td>2,257,438,99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1' st Partner's share of grant (Institute of Zoology)</td>
<td>671,433,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,254,302,42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://prutriver.uaic.ro/

The LP’s public procurement activity was the most challenging because of some rejections of procedures by the ANRMAP (The National Authority for Regulating and Monitoring of Public Procurement) under suspicion of infringement of free concurrence. As a consequence, the procedures have been resumed, a time-consuming and labour intensive activity. On another hand, the competitors contested the conditions imposed by the Annex IV (rules of origin for products and services) under accusation of putting barriers to free competition. The procurement of services, related to technical documents (feasibility study, technical documents, and execution details), were finalised following a close consultation between the final users (the staff of Ezareni Research Station for Aquaculture and Aquatic Ecology) in order to ensure the optimal technical solutions for fish breeding.
9. **SWOT-analysis (specifically with a cooperation base, instead of a territorial base)**

The main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are relevant to the design and implementation of the Project are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (S)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (W)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT</strong></td>
<td><strong>GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The main organizational partnership of the project composed of two major education and/or research institutions representing the two countries situated on both sides of the Prut river border;</td>
<td>▪ The border areas of both countries are among the poorest; this poverty is visible in the weakness of the industrial apparatus, in the high unemployment rate and in the lack of investments. These weaknesses are accentuated by the lack of funds, specialists and support from central authorities. The creation of co-ordination agencies and the development of infrastructures and marketing policies would favour investments in the area;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Cultural co-operation is especially strong because of the common ethnic background. Numerous agreements were signed and their repercussions were felt also in the border area. In this phase, outside intervention (the EU, foreign investors, etc.) but also NGO intervention can only foster these positive elements and favour effective cross-border co-operation;</td>
<td>▪ Increased need for scientific knowledge on the hydrological impacts of climate variability coupled with human interventions in the flow of ecological services of the Prut River, with particular emphasis between upstream and downstream connection links;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ High levels of biodiversity and landscape, preserved in protected areas as the Prut River SCI ROSCI 0213, Lower Prut Floodplain Natural Park;</td>
<td>▪ Need for information materials and tools in order to increase local people awareness on the current state of the environment and water resources and future challenges of climate change;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Resourceful region given by the existence of important natural resources such as forests and water;</td>
<td>▪ Low public participation in the action plans for the development of the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Preserved cultural assets, properly managed, could serve as a development driving force at local as well as at regional level.</td>
<td><strong>MONITORING AND QUALITY OF WATER RESOURCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Important higher education centers in the region, i.e. Iaşi and Galaţi.</td>
<td>▪ Lack of the emergency integrated monitoring system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ EU external border creates new opportunities for cross-border cooperation among the three countries;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Implementing the project in a cross-border cooperation Euroregion;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (S)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (W)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• the same language (Romanian) used by the Project partners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARTNERSHIP CONTEXT**

• Implementation of the project under the coordination of a university in Romania together with a research institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova;

• Joint elaboration of the initial research proposal by the two national partners of the current project

• Design of the project’s structure with the involvement of stakeholder-institutions highly relevant in the management, monitoring and use of Prut aquatic resources.

**RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT**

• The Project contains the topical problematic of integrated environmental research;

• Intensifying research on the Prut River biodiversity and natural resources;

• Interaction among researchers from several fields of activity;

• Disseminating of the project’s results at national and international symposia, in volumes of proceedings, and books;

• Involvement of volunteers represented by Master and PhD students, hence contribution to their experience-building.

**MONITORING AND QUALITY OF WATER RESOURCES**

• Assessing the ecological state of the Costești-Stânca reservoir.

**BIODIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE**

• Developing an on-line platform for information.

**BUDGET CONTEXT**

• High value of the project
### Opportunities

**GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT**
- The landscape and cultural treasures of the area should be exploited for the development of tourism;
- The Prut River as an ecosystem with multiple services useful for the local communities and as a corridor of territorial and social coherence in the region;
- The transboundary region has the potential to increase its relations across borders, thus creating new dynamic relations and fostering the development of the local communities;
- Increased potential to develop polycentric structures in the entire region through sustainable territorial planning;
- Potential to preserve traditional land use and other traditional activities of the local people;
- Potential restoration of some wetlands sites in the Lower sector of the Prut River basin (Vartolomei et al., 2011; Vartolomei, 2013).

**INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION**
- Improving cultural, economic and environmental conditions between partners from Romania and the Republic of Moldova;
- Promoting inter-regional cooperation.

**VISIBILITY OF RESULTS**
- Project results more visible through dissemination in national and international scientific journals;
- Increasing awareness on the importance of biodiversity.

### Threats

**GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT**
- Environmental threats: floods occurrence during heavy rains, particularly downstream of the Prut River, where the variability of the runoff/discharges is higher (Radoane et al., 2006). Nevertheless, at a regional level, this aspect should be well controlled to some extent, since in the upstream part of the region the runoff is relatively well managed (the Stanca-Costesti dam has a protection role by retaining large quantities of water during heavy rain events);
- High water abstraction levels, stationary point and diffuse pollution sources are main pressures with significant impact on the water bodies (Environmental Protection of International River Basins, 2013b);
- Loss of aquatic biodiversity due to strong human impacts;
- The stereotypes due to the fear in the Republic of Moldova of being annexed to Romania and the high unemployment and poverty in the area undermine the trust of the institutional and local economic actors;
- Significant differences among the involved countries, in terms of their relationship to the EU, could lead to greater differences in the border region.
### Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Access to Ezareni infrastructure for researchers and students;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The project will provide facilities for education and research purposes: laboratories, fish production hall, action plan for developing research and education projects through European programmes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The following information and experience will be available at the end of the project: biodiversity database, consultancy services, facilities and training programmes for developing business in the field of aquaculture in the advent of funding Operational Programme for Fishery;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIODIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing public and stakeholders awareness of the Prut River biodiversity and natural resources.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOINT ACTION PLANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing the access capacity and the implementation of future cross-border joint funding;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elaborating some joint action plans for emergency situations in case of extreme events impacting water resources: floods, drought, severe pollution, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-border cooperation of the partners contributes to the improvement of the current situation. Moreover, it has increased the awareness of local people about the current state of the environment and water resource of the Prut River. This will be implemented through the project activities of information, awareness and dissemination: project website, Methodological guide for monitoring the ichtyocenoses structure, the conference volume of Zoologists Conference “Actual Problems of Protection and Sustainable Use of the Animal World Diversity”, the conference volume of Scientific Symposium “Biodiversity without borders”, the Master programme in aquaculture, round tables addressed to the main stakeholders and users of the Prut River aquatic resources. Elaboration of the Action Plan for developing joint research and education projects (within national and/or EU programs) will play an important role in the future cross-border cooperation.

As a conclusion, the Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River was an example of CBC best practice along the Romanian-Moldavian border, hence the cooperation will be n good example for other cross-border interaction.
10. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

It is important to underline that the Resources Pilot Center for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River is a very successful cross-border interaction between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The long-term goals of the current collaboration become obvious from a simple look on the project’s title and objectives. These announce a joint development of human and logistic resources with the aim to monitor, restore and improve the Prut River aquatic resources under difficult climatic conditions and/or threatening anthropogenic actions.

There are some important activities included in the project which reveal that this one strongly contributes to building a solid and promising ground for future collaboration of the two partners. One type of such activities, also announced by the project title, refers to the rehabilitation works which are being brought to the infrastructure (e.g. laboratories, fish production hall) of the Ezăreni Station for Research in Aquaculture and Aquatic Ecology. As shown, the station is dedicated to the sustainable management of the aquatic resources and the restoration of biodiversity associated to the Prut River. The works will be followed by the final set-up of the infrastructure in the following period. The Ezăreni Station is intended to be transformed into a pilot center for resources and research education destined for both academic and business purposes. The desired future access of researchers and students to such a modern infrastructure demonstrates the long-term impact of one of the core results of this project for further scientific cross-border collaborations in the field (Annex VI, Interim Narrative Reports, no.1 and no. 2, internal documents, 2014b).

Other equipments and facilities will be set up in the final year of the project; among these, a „high-performance computing” (HPC) cluster, which was acquired by the „Al. I. Cuza” University for ecological research and modelling. Once put into function, such facilities will serve to several purposes: obtaining new data on the structure of matter and universal laws; detailed study of proceses and phenomena; experimental results; statistical simulations in short time allowing a reduction of the study areas and of the investigation time; scientific modelling; model calibrations; etc. (Stoicescu, 2014). For the „Al. I. Cuza” University, these equipments constitute important assets for the research in the frame of the Cross-border Prut River Pilot Center, which will continue after the ending of the project. The use of the acquired equipments will allow: risk analyses, biological and ecological simulations, analyses of the interaction between chemical compounds (e.g. heavy metals) and the organic matter, modelling the evolution of populations, etc. (Stoicescu, 2014).
The Action Plan, elaborated in the framework of this project, for developing joint research and education projects (within national and/or EU programs) in the field of self-sustained aquaculture, gathers a series of relevant information, e.g. on the partnership scientific expertise, laboratories, interesting open calls on EC Programmes. This document represents an important pre-requisite for future access to funding opportunities and implementation of cross-border joint actions (Annex VI, Interim Narrative Reports, no.1 and no. 2, internal documents, 2014b).

All the above announce the innate need for further successful cross-border cooperation in several other scientific studies in the field of aquatic environment and life, with the associated opportunity to publish the obtained results.
11. Summary

Within the context of global environmental change, the aquatic environment represents one of the most sensitive ecosystems, due both to its intrinsic ecological characteristics and external factors. Therefore, implementing a biodiversity and water resources project regarding one of the main Danube Basin rivers is a highly topical problem of environment integrated research.

The project Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River was financed by The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, Priority 2 - Environmental challenges and emergency preparedness, Measure 2.1 - Addressing strategic cross-border environmental challenges including emergency preparedness. The project was aimed to jointly develop scientific, human and logistic resources, in order to monitor, restore and improve the Prut River aquatic resources during difficult climatic conditions and threatening anthropogenic actions. It was initiated by education-oriented organization “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University from Iași (Romania), as the Lead-Partner, together with the research organization Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, as its Partner. The partnership included three associates, namely the National Administration “Romanian Waters” – Prut Directorate (Associate No. 1), The Environmental Protection Agency of the Iași County (Associate No. 2) and the Inspectorate for Ecology of the Republic of Moldavia (Associate No. 3).

The Project aims at contributing to a more efficient collaboration between managers and final users of the Prut River biodiversity on both sides of the border and to strengthen the capacity of the two partner institutions to collaborate in field of education and research under some future European Union-related actions.

This Project made a significant contribution and it improved tight cultural, economic, and environment-related collaboration between the partners on both sides of the Prut River. Furthermore, the project involved actions which concentrated on sustainable management of cross-border protected areas, better institutional capacity of local decision-makers in order to improve accessibility to funding and implementation of future cross-border joint actions. The project was an interdisciplinary approach that brought together specialists in zoology, ecology, climate, water resources management, etc. 45 people, academic and teaching professionals including MSc and PhD students, were engaged in the planned activities. The expertise of the project’s working groups was in the fields of: biology of vertebrate and invertebrate organisms, ichthyofauna, hydrobiology, hydrochemistry, ecotoxicology.

Under this Project, the health state of the Prut River and the species in the River will continue to be tested, a risk analysis report will be completed and a joint action plan for emergency situations issued.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Resources Pilot Centre for Cross-Border Preservation of the Aquatic Biodiversity of Prut River

The Project was organized in five activity groups:

- GA1: Project management, coordination and communication activities
- GA2: Public procurement
- GA3: Cross-border institutional capacity
- GA4: Prut River investigation
- GA5: Information, awareness and dissemination

At the end of the project, the following items will be available: biodiversity database, consultancy services, facilities and training programmes for developing business in the field of aquaculture in the advent of funding Operational Programme for Fishery.

A list of some main tools guaranteeing the project’s long-term sustainability, ensuring a continuous relevance of its results, could consist of the following products/services which will be available at the end of the project: biodiversity database, consultancy services, facilities and training programmes for developing business in the field of aquaculture in the event of funding through the Operational Programme for Fishery; access to the Ezăreni infrastructure for researchers and students, facilities for education and research purposes (laboratories, fish production hall, an action plan for developing future joint cross-border research and education projects through European programmes), the launching of an education programme in aquaculture (starting with the fall of 2014), plans for emergency situations in case of extreme events impacting water resources: floods, drought, severe pollution, etc.

Acknowledgements:

The authors are most grateful to dr. Marta Jurchescu for the contributions, useful advise and suggestions which were helpful in improving the manuscript. Herewith, special recognition is credited to the management team of the project entitled "Resources pilot centre for cross-border preservation of the aquatic biodiversity of Prut River", namely prof. Nicoară Mircea Nicușor - project coordinator and Mrs. Sava Maria - head project, from "Al. I. Cuza" University, Iași, for their kind support throughout the progress of our study, providing valuable information and data.


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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
of the Őrség-Goričko cooperation

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1. Introduction

We are living in a time of co-operation and co-dependence. Thus it is worth discussing the significance of the co-operation between Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Park. The Central-European small and medium-sized countries are essentially transit countries with a linking role, as well as borderline countries, thus borders have a huge impact on the majority of their area, so on Hungary and Slovenia as well (Hajdú Z. 2000, Bufon, M. 1996, 2004). Both the Slovenian and Hungarian geography emphasise that the region lies in the junction of cultural regions, macro regions and biogeographic units, and its border feature is highly important (Orožen Adamič, M. 2004, Perko, D. 2004). One pivotal statement of the Hungarian geography is that in the respect of ethnics, society, economy and traffic, borders break spatial continuity, hinder smooth relationships and flows. (Nárai–Rechnitzer 1999). Milan Bufon (2004), Slovenian geographer concludes that the Slovenian borderline regions are like a "European integration laboratory". Regarding the co-operation, at a macro regional level, it must be emphasised that in general, among the ever-narrowing border lines ranging from North - North-West to South - South-West, the borderline of the studied region represents one of the peripheral open types of the Danube River Basin.

From a historical aspect in the two decades following the demolition of the Iron Curtain, a basically landscape-based integration took place in the border region, which deserves a case study to be presented. Moreover, the developments in regional cohesion, aiming at nature and environmental protection of the National Park and the Landscape Park as outstanding actors, are in harmony with the guidelines due to the cohesion policy of the EU, which referred to the spatial perspective exceeding the administrative borders (i.e. European Spatial Development Perspective, Territorial Agenda). The significance of the co-operation lies in that it gives an example to the cohesion-based mutual co-ordination and management initiatives.

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that the success of the borderline co-operation between Őrség National Park and Goričko not only has a great influence on the common future of the Slovenian-Hungarian borderline areas and population, but also on that of the whole macro-region and of the European ecological networks. Beside the mutual care for cross-border landscape, this co-operation also bears great significance. Due to the small area of the countries and the dense network of borders (many times breaking the landscape) it is hardly possible to launch large-scale programmes within one country without having cross-border impacts on the neighbouring countries (Illés I. 2002).

It is not possible to examine the development of the Danube-region areas including only the local framework (social, economic, planning etc.). The function of the borders of Central-Europe, including that of Hungary and Slovenia, is in perpetual change, as well as the border regions themselves. The dissolution of borders offers many a great opportunity, meanwhile creating new problematic areas. The need to treat these with a combined, integrated strategic
approach, enhances the territorial development role of cross-border co-operations, meaning the best practice, of Goričko and Őrség.

The interoperability and openness of the common border region of Hungary and Slovenia were influenced, on one hand, by the system changes in the region and by the European integration, on the other. The enmity and distrust following World War I, were not in favour of cross-border co-operations and relationships (Tóth J. – Golobics P. 1996, Golobics P. – Tóth J. 1999, Rechnitzer J. 1999). After World War II, both countries became part of the Soviet alliance of interests, however, the Cominform 1 condemned Yugoslavia in 1948 (due to its independent geopolitical endeavours), which was an indisputable step to a break-up, and with this step the building of the Iron Curtain begun. The present Slovenian-Hungarian borderline became even more closed than in the interwar period, mainly in the first half of the socialist regime.2 The Slovenian border was closed with barbed wire fences and special missile attack warning system. The Iron Curtain initially consisted of wire obstacles, mine fields, roadways and checkpoints inside the countries. The roadway followed the mine field, which was installed in the wire obstacles, that is, barbed wires braced to 150 cm tall dual-lined wood poles. From the borderline the 50-500 m wide lane was the border lane and the 15 km area was the "borderzone". In one of these only with a certain permit was it possible to reside and build. Only in harmony with the 1955 Soviet-Yugoslavian reconciliation, in 1956 mines and wire obstacles were removed. From the beginning of the 70s did the border's hermetically sealed character mitigate; this was the period of "gentle Iron Curtain", during which a low-voltage wire fence substituted the existing complex technical blockade. At the system change on 1 August 1989, this method of border control finally ceased to exist on the examined border section.

In the period of the closed, strongly restrictive Iron Curtain, the border was perceivable through its peripheral process enhancing impact. Due to this, the borderline area drifted to a peripheral situation in a social, economic and political way. The defensive political will prevented and slowed the development of border regions. It was excluded from the preferences of the national regional policy, it did not appear as beneficiary area. The lack of investments started an autocatalytic process: with the borders getting more closed the attraction zones became more truncated, the border control limited the free movement of the population and goods, thus the general development and standards of living declined. Consequently, the border region making up the geographical periphery is more and more becoming a peripheral region in the economic sense and in the sense of power. The deficiency in funds and the low purchasing power increased the isolation of the border because local actors did not have

1 Communist Information Bureau

2 On the 621 km long border section between 1920 and 1941, between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Hungary there were 26 border stations out of which only 6-7 remained until the beginning of the socialist period. Their traffic was minimal. In 1961 on the Hungarian side all in all 5350 border crossings were registered: the gap compared even to Austria was obtrusive. (Bottini, S. 2010)
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resources efficient enough to cross the border. The control of the power centre hindered the autonomy of local actors, the development of sub-centres and regional centres, that is, the opportunity of cross-border co-operations.

The change in geopolitical constellation created new opportunities, and still does so for cross-border co-operation (Szűcs R. G. 2009). Nowadays there is a chance for co-operations to be developed that serve the enhancement of the cohesion overcoming the artificial disruption caused by the Iron Curtain. With the borders becoming more open the territorial capital of the borderline regions' landscape specialities may serve as a foundation, since the values of natural and built heritages rarely coincide with the political borders. The spatial-structure modifying influence of the borders' changing roles can be unequivocally recognisable in environmental protection, rural development and tourism. The obstacles before all forms of tourism (i.e. ecotourism, water tourism) have started to cease, cross-border structures are forming. In the past period certain states and their authorities and actors strived to harmonize the preservation and presentation of the aforementioned values, as well as the regional development based on this. Networks, such as NATURA 2000 areas, under cross-border and intact environmental protection, have been established and the increasing tourist traffic is one of their characteristics. The co-operations may bring together tourist destinations with the help of cross-border thematic routes and educational trails. The significance of the co-operation of the two conservation areas, among others, lies in the mutual exploitation of the region's touristic potential.

The increasing state of openness of the borders in the past two and a half decades, especially compared to the atmosphere of the Cold war after World War II, means an enormous change. After 1945, the Iron Curtain that separated the world systems, also hermetically sealed off the western borders of Hungary (Sallai J. 1996). The strong, barrier- or filter-like borders often times served as a real wall, even regarding the Eastern socialist countries, up until the system changing processes in Eastern-Central Europe. Although, certain positive tendencies have appeared since the 70s and 80s on (Sallai J. 1996, Locsmándi Sz. 2004, Fülöp M. – Vincze G. 2007, Bottini, S. 2010).

In the recent history of the borderline areas of Central Europe, beside the system changing processes, the European integration was the other major milestone. For the Central-European border regions, the Eastern expansion of the EU brought forth the so called four fundamental liberties: free flow of capital, goods, services, and labour. Due to the Eastern expansion, from 1 May 2004 on, Hungary and Slovenia are full members of the European Union. Beside the removal of customs borders, the cross-border co-operations were greatly facilitated: by having joined the Community, passports were substituted by ID cards, and after joining the Schengen area (21 December 2007) the permanent internal border control ceased on the Slovenian-Hungarian line. On the 102 km long border in 1988 only 2 border crossing points were
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operational, whose number has risen to 9 by 2015 resulting that the interoperability of the Slovenian-Hungarian border has become outstanding in the region.3

Finally, in the aspect of the border studies, it is worth examining the change in the role, expansion and function of the border section, since they deeply affect the opportunities for cross-border co-operation.

Considering the spatial expansion of the border, today's tendency shows a shift of the administrative borders towards the emergence of blurred borders. Instead of sharp boundaries, temporary zones emerge (Fleischer T. 2001, Novotny G. 2007). Due to the opening up of borders - or as David Newman (2011) describes the borders' flowing character: process of opening - it is rather about that the spatial specialities of the border change and instead of a well discernible line, we can talk about a border lane, a border zone as a consequence of the blur. The need for the common operation of the borderline areas on the two or more sides of the border, replaces the necessity of the exact drawing of the border. Thus - after Tamás Hardi - frontier type is gradually replaced by the 'boundary' type border. On the basis of the nomenclature drawn up by van Houtum, the open border starts to prevail instead of the former closed one (van Houtum, H. 1998), furthermore, the 'bridge' role of the border grows, as well. This kind of change in border characteristics entails the transformation of border functions: on the basis of Guichonnet and Raffestin's border function typology (1974), the borders' significant legal, fiscal, control, military and ideological functions are much less dominating than a few years ago. In correlation with this, borders do not (only) separate, moreover, the 'linking function' starts to dominate according to Strassoldo (1989). This also means to the examined border region that borders do not primarily serve as defensive walls, but as scenes of peaceful co-operation, enhancing the borders' linking role. The barrier-, filter-like border is replaced by the open border. The borderline co-operation belongs to the 'open border' effects as an evolution of the integration process. The linking function and the openness of the borders reveal that where the given territory of the State is located currently on the way to integration (Ratti, R. 1993). Due to the change in the spatial characteristics and prevalence of the linking function of the border, it becomes a contact zone, does not remain an obstacle or buffer zone. Consequently, border regions, among others with the effective contribution of Őrség and Goričko, form integrated border areas and cohesive border regions, from single-attribute they become multi-attribute border regions (co-operative in more fields (see Haggett, P. 2006). The Danube-basin and Slovenia within, along with the alienated border regions of Hungary, shift towards the Martínez-type mutually collaborating, then integrated border regions in consequence of the transformational process.

3 Regarding the density of the border crossing points, behind the Austrian ones, the Hungarian border section of the Slovenian-Hungarian border is the most interoperable.
Due to the opened borders, there is an opportunity for the formerly separated peripheral areas to join together. The opening-opened borders can exploit the territorial potential that originates from disparate characteristics (comparative advantages) of certain border regions. Thus there is an opportunity to mutually exploit the territorial capital, to link and complete the so far internal common and complementary advantages. In this aspect, the economic growth of the border regions is no longer influenced by the differences between political-institutional systems (that is, the separating component of the border definition), but the combinations of comparative advantages of neighbouring areas (Courlet, C. 1988). Henceforth, we can talk about transborder regions instead of border regions. The co-operation of the examined partners, because of these all, is of special significance concerning the Hungarian-Slovenian border region.

Before the study would go on to the development of the cross-border co-operation and the discussion of its geographical environment, it is important to clarify why the co-operation of Őrség and Goričko is a best practice.

The cooperation has been selected as a best practice model mainly because of the initiatives launched in the frame of sustainable development activities that were consistent with the natural capacity of the cross-border landscape. In their cooperation, the partners have been trying to harmonize their activities in relation to a sustainable landscape management system that includes interconnecting fields of action of habitat restoration, environmental protection, production and processing of local products, ecotourism, heritage conservation and dissolution of mental borders.
2. Methodology

At the beginning of the methodology part, it is worth talking about the content and logical structure of the study. The aim of the study is to introduce the cross-border co-operation of Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Park. To accomplish this, the cross-border cohesion strengthening/weakening geographical, structural, organisational advantages and processes are to be revealed, with special regard to determining why the co-operation is a best practice model. Therefore, it is also important to clarify the advantages of the region, the development activities to build on them, hampering factors, as well as further possible co-operation in the future.

This introduction is to show why the co-operation of the two nature conservation areas is significant for the given border region. The processes mostly influencing the co-operative opportunities of the border region will be elaborated on, such as the demolition of the Iron Curtain and the European integration process, which tendencies result in more open borders and bestow a special significance upon the exploitation of the mutual territorial potential of Őrség and Goričko.

Primarily, this methodology part briefly introduces with which means and sources we processed the geographical and structural characteristics of the co-operation.

The second long chapter addressing the general analysis, firstly outlines the history of the cross-border co-operation and the change in perspective, which led towards the cohesion-based planning. The main periods will be separated, the significant milestones defined, by introducing them the development of the co-operation will be perceivable, the process during which the parks have become more and more leading stakeholders concerning the CBC activities in harmony with regional advantages.

After this, the presentation of the geographical environment of the co-operation comes, to see that what the geographical scope of the co-operation is, whether the completeness of the area coverage is realised, and how big border region can be organised by the co-operation.

The fourth big structural unit is for the detailed analysis, where firstly, the case study deals with the questions of structure institute and management. As it will be studied later, the rather different organisational structures are those, contrary to the geographical-regional advantages, that hinder the efforts to strengthen cohesion of cross-border co-operation. Thus, the competences of the partners, their obligatory and voluntary tasks, as well as their staff and budget etc. will be compared. Since no own work organisation was created, the individual structures of the actors, the system of workshops and meetings can be presented.

The aim of the sixth subchapter is to present the particular activities of the co-operation. To accomplish this, at first, the different well-established non-project based activities (events, etc.) will be presented, then the detailed presentation of the project comes. The study presents the
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projects in groups, broken down to mutual and non-mutual, bilateral and trans-European groups. Finally, there will be a comparison, due to which we will get a picture about which sectors and thematic areas the two parks have similar interests in, and which areas represent differences. It is necessary in order to establish that in the future useful results as good practices could be achieved built on common or complementary advantages, potentials or challenges.

The eight chapter gives a short summary of the information from the interviews using the method of SWOT analysis. It separates macro-level specialities, determined by the explicitly structural 'external' environment, relating also to the whole border region, as well as it separates the information related to the particular processes and common activities of the co-operation. The ninth subchapter is about the future plans and aims of the co-operation. Since they do not have a common plan document, a comprehensive table will be presented, which juxtaposes the two parks' own and common ideas about the co-operation, therefore, they become comparable and coordinated and allow the possibility to even designate the elements of a common strategy.

The tenth subchapter presents those unique resources originated from geographical and border regional attributes, by which the co-operation may be supported in bilateral and trans-European cross-border programmes and projects. Primarily, the chapter focuses on those mutual or complementary advantages, which can be jointly developed according to the cross-border strategic spatial perspective, and harmonised regarding the area.

Finally, there will be a synthesis as closure for the content part of the study that concludes the most important attributes and morals concerning the co-operation. The conclusion afterwards goes beyond the simple situation report and in the light of the aforementioned information, specifies useful recommendations for the actors in regional development policy.

Proceeding to the pure methodology and the utilised sources: this case study could build on the results of previously published independent or periods of studies (i.e. Hardi T. 2002)\(^4\), especially on the short case study „Governance of natural areas in the transnational context: Trilateral Nature Park Goričko-Raab-Őrség” within the project of ESPON TANGO (Territorial Approaches for New Governance) in the framework of ESPON 2013 Programme, which dealt particularly with the question of Slovenian-Hungarian co-operations in the border region.\(^5\) This study thus strives to synthesize the results, as well as present the new ones.

In each and every work that touches upon border study questions, it is expedient to be aware of the frequently used and current terms at the field of border functions and border region

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typology. Thus, there will be references to authors known in border studies (i.e. Ratti, R. 1993; Martínez, O. J. 1994; van Houtum, H. 1998; Haggett, P. 2006; Newman, D. 2011). Beside the studies and volumes particularly about border studies, the literature dealing with the opportunities of the two countries’ cross-border co-operation and their geographical background (i.e. Hajdú Z. 2000; Bufon, M. 1996, 2004) was also included in the literature perusal methodology.

The legal rules related to two (or three, considering the Austrian party) partners, and documents of the cooperation agreements between them constitute a separate group. All these were necessary in order to see in what kind of regulatory environment the parks work, how this affects their co-operation and for the sake of integration of the border region what written frameworks (aims, institutional structures, etc.) were created.

The study examined that which sources the co-operative partners could exploit and what particular projects they could elaborate on and realise. For the sake of this, primarily the publications of actors, partners, and homepages of projects, conclusive studies about the utilization of CBC resources\(^6\), the related cross-border trilateral and transnational co-operation programmes and projects (i.e. TransEcoNet, Landscape in Harmony) were overviewed, including those realised in the framework of Phare the INTERREG and the European Territorial Cooperation. In connection with the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, as well as the Slovenia–Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013 the lists of approved operations have been checked thoroughly. During the analysis and presentation of the realised projects we were aware of the numerous attributes of the project, such as, leading and project partners; budget; the period and duration of the realisation; the content, thematic area, aims of the project; completed activities; results related to cohesion strengthening.

Whether the objectives of the co-operation are suitable in respect to the border region’s social-economic situation, primarily the chapter about resources will reveal. For this purpose, the cohesion-based methodology worked out by the CESCI was realised, above all, in this chapter. Its essence is that instead of the sector-focused, simply descriptive analysis, it is rather worth revealing the potential of mutual and complementary advantages that strengthen (or weaken) the cohesion of the border region. From the relevant literature László Gyuricza’s scientific article\(^7\) was outstanding: “Mura-vidék – Kerka-vidék – Hetés: Problémák és pontatlanságok a tájak nevezéktanában és térképi ábrázolásában” (2012).

Among the empirical research methods the interviews must be mentioned, which took place at the work organisation or the headquarters of the interviewees. In the field, not only did we talk personally, but also we did fieldwork. In one part of the border region in question,


especially around Őriszentpéter and Grad a local walking, taking photos and observation of the landscape structure took place. 

Before the interviews themselves were made, we found the suitable stakeholders (stakeholder analysis). Finally, personal interviews were made with three local actors - each was an hour long. By asking similar questions adapted not only to the content structure of the study, but also to the peculiarities of the organisations, we received at the same time 'soft' and 'hard' (statistical, factual) data, as well as objective and subjective information from the following interviewees:

- Dr. István Szentirmai (Őrség National Park, Department of Nature Conservation, head of department)
- Stanislava Dešnik (Goričko Landscape Park, Acting Director)
- Sándor Bauer (Natúrpark Térségfejlesztési Közhasznú Nonprofit Ltd., Managing director)

Via telephone we reached the Naturpark Raab in Austria, which is deemed important due to its close relation to the direct co-operation. Finally, they answered our questions in e-mail, namely Karl Kahr, who is responsible for organization and management. The interviews facilitated the answering to that whether the co-operation contributed to the intensification of cross-border relations, whether some kind of local identity emerged in the region influenced by cross-border co-operations and whether the cross-border co-operation had an impact on the development of the region. The integration of personal experience and practices regarded good into the study was a separate aspect in order for the really efficient development activities to be able to serve as an example and to build on them in the development policy of the future.
3. The development of cross-border co-operation

Henceforth, the study deals with the impacts of cross-border co-operations’ framework conditions (i.e. demolition of the Iron Curtain, accession into the European Union and Schengen Area) on the actors of the co-operation and on the intensity.

In general it can be said that the effect of the demolition of the Iron Curtain and the European integration process have made cross-border co-operation easier and more direct. The newly appeared bottom-up initiatives have reinterpreted the former, almost state privilege CBC co-operations. The obstacles in the way of local initiatives continuously disappeared. For instance, years ago organizing a cross-border trip or event influencing the consciousness of belonging together in the border region was subject to authorisation (obligation to register them at least at two authorities, as well as a certain amount of money to be paid etc.). Contrary to this, in the past years it has been free to organise such events and the removal of existing obstacles unequivocally appears in the intensity of the co-operation.

Essentially, after the demolition of the Iron Curtain and the accession to the EU, the real co-operations started to take place between the protected areas. Contributing to this, both Őrség National Park and Goričko are young organisations, the former was established in 2002, the latter in 2003. Before 2000, nature protection was not significant on either sides. The Hungarian side was merely a landscape protection area with one or two rangers, whereas on the Slovenian side there was no protection whatsoever. Consequently, there were neither capacity, nor resources to give room for mutual projects or activities.

The two countries show greatly similar pace approaching the EU. After the establishment of the INTERREG initiative in 1995, financial and strategic supporting means started to appear to stimulate cross-border co-operations. The cross-border co-operation between Hungary and Slovenia started prior to the accession; in relation to the pre-accession funds (Phare CBC) between 1995 and 1996 the trilateral programme between Slovenia, Hungary and Austria. Afterwards, the first bilateral co-operation operated between 2000 and 2003 in the framework of Slovenia-Hungary Phare cross-border co-operation programmes. Within this framework a large project with large significance was carried out each year, and then in 2003 a grant scheme aiming at the development of human resources was launched. The mutual interest in the co-operation manifests in nature protection (2000: Mutual national park development; 2002: waste water management in the valley of river Kerka), in economic co-operation (2001: Common Economic Area Support Plan) and in human resources development (2003: the maximization of opportunities of human resources in border line regions). So called people-to-people co-operations were outlined as further important co-operation areas, which were realised through small project funds (2000-2003), which do not exist anymore.

Therefore, already at the time of the establishment of Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Area, those thematic areas were outlined where real CBC projects with regional development influence could be developed. These sectors, in addition, mostly coincide with
the parks' own and common (which will be elaborated on later) and voluntary aims and tasks determined at State level.

Hungary and Slovenia simultaneously, due to the so called Fifth Enlargement, have become full members of the European Union together with 8 other states, thus further opportunities opened for common activities serving to consolidate the co-operation, for a harmonised regional planning, and to create the co-operation's organisational and financial background. During the truncated planning cycle between 2004 and 2006 the trilateral INTERREG IIIA Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia was available. At EU level there have been changes in perspective: with the European Territorial Cooperation becoming an independent objective of the European Cohesion Policy, there has been an unprecedented support for European transnational, interregional and cross-border co-operations. The Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Programme was born as the development plan of the now complete 2007–2013 budgetary period.

This detour had to be taken in order to see that due to scarce state and local resources, with the start of the cross-border programme an opportunity opened for more significant common activities. This construed integration process has immensely stimulated the alliance of the three borderline conservation areas, namely the Slovenian Naturpark Goričko, the Hungarian Őrség National Park and the Austrian NaturPark Raab. With the birth and the growth of the funds allocated to them, the co-operation in today's sense started to unfold at that very time.

The appearance of actors meant the 'zero' step of the cross-border co-operation. The major parts of today's Őrség National Park (Őrség, Vendvidék, Rába Valley and the neighbourhood of Szentgyörgyvölgy) were given protection in the second half of the 1970s; the Szentgyörgyvölgy landscape protection area was appointed in 1976, the Őrség landscape protection area in 1978. The Őrség–Vendvidék Naturpark was established in 1998, the Kerkamente Naturpark in 1996. The Őrség National Park as one of the main actors of the co-operation was born from the fusion of Szentgyörgyvölgy landscape protection area and Őrség landscape protection area in 2002.

In the south the establishment of the Slovenian Naturpark Goričko was realised approximately at the same time in 2003. The area, similarly to the Hungarian and Austrian partners, was built on the diversity of the cultivated landscape, it offered valuable, but strongly fragmented natural habitats, flora and fauna, to which, as Natura 2000 area, area-based protection had to be provided according to the EU guidelines.

From the parks of Hármashatár (Tripoint), Naturpark Raab on the Austrian side has been appointed as diverse cultivated landscape. This area is bordered by the Neuhauser hills, through the Doiber- and Rába-valley until the Henndorf Mountains and it ends in Mogersdorf at the historical Schlößl Mountain. The Association for Naturpark Raab committed itself to the diversity and uniqueness of farming and the conservation of the mosaic agriculture, as well as to encourage soft tourism. The richness of nature and cultural heritage has to get closer to both the local population and guests - they described their aims.
The two most important documents of the history of cross-border co-operation and the way leading there are worth delineating, since they played a decisive role in the deepening of the co-operation and they indicate the historic development process of CBC relations.

As we will see later on, the idea of the border region could be grasped mostly at a threefold border region level. The parties acknowledged that the concerted management and development, in the framework of a strategic partnership, of the three sides of the border may provide suitable solution to exploit the common and complementary advantages. In the spirit of regional perspective, Dr. Wilfried Hicke Principal Adviser, Regional Deputy Registrar, and Péter Csoknyai Principal Adviser head of department put forward proposals to the trilateral protection of the area, which concerns Hungary, Slovenia and Austria, and possesses unique natural and cultural values. The idea of a cross-border nature park was expressed by Hicke and Mr. Csoknyai at the Hungarian-Austrian joint committee that had prepared the establishment of the Fertő-Hanság National Park and the Nationalpark Neusiedler See–Seewinkel as the firstly established, still unique cross-border national park in the former Iron Curtain area.

After the consultations, the document ‘Agreement between Naturpark Raab, Őrség National Park and Krajinski Park Goričko’ was signed by Dr. Tibor Markovics director on behalf of Őrség National Park, on behalf of the Slovenian Goričko by Janko Halb, and on behalf of the Austrian Naturpark Raab Willi Thomas Deputy Director. Following this step we can talk about the Őrség-Raab-Goričko Nature Park, which provides the framework conditions of a loose co-operation. The agreement, adopted in the small town of Windisch-Minihof belonging to Minihof-Liebau in Burgenland on 21 May 2006, was based on the mutual advantage that the common border line area of Hungary and Slovenia is excessively rich in natural and cultural assets. These three parks were established in regard to the different legal rules, and they co-operate in harmony with the agreement still today.

In accordance with IUCN regulations all three parties identified the preservation and presentation of the region’s natural values and cultural heritage as common interest.

The aims of the cross-border co-operation have been determined by the parties in the following (partly setting up a kind of indirect priority order):

- Joint work in order to protect natural and cultural values;
- Organization and realization of joint events;
- Design and creation of joint publications;
- Coordination of tourism activities;
- Elaboration of joint projects;
- Preparation and realization of habitat restorations;
- Operation of environmental education, forest school;
- Involvement in activities initiated by the European Green Belt.
In the agreement there was a perusal of actual activities that were realised within the framework of the co-operation. The following belong to those:

- Representation of agreed goals and government programs, regional and sub-regional level;
- The involvement of public and social organizations in the protection of natural resources, coordination of necessary information works;
- Involvement of the population in tourism development projects and in the operation;
- Mutual awareness raising, together with the population regarding social and folk traditions, traditional farming activities and the preservation of folk crafts;
- Preserving the values of vernacular architecture, finding resources and the developing of necessary support system;
- Promoting effective mutual appearances in the tenders of European Union or the individual states.

As it can be seen, the aims of the cross-border co-operation are primarily nature conservation, environmental protection and cultural heritage protection; the aims group around tourism and strive to harmonise and by surpassing this, mutually plan certain activities. The cross-border, transnational and project-level co-operations were endorsed separately, which go beyond sheer publication editing.

The organisational base of the co-operation was determined in the 2006 text of the agreement (for further explanation check: Chapter 5, The composition of the work organisation).

The second and so far final common document of the co-operation was signed on 25 May 2009, almost exactly three years after the first one, in the headquarters of Őrség National Park, Őriszentpéter. The Co-operation Agreement, which was signed by Ferenc Márkus director on behalf of the Őrség National Park, Janko Halb on behalf of the Krajinski Park Goričko, and Helmut Sampt Chairman of the Association of Naturpark Raab. The agreement slightly consolidated and further developed the cross-border co-operation in certain thematic and strategic target areas. In other questions, however, the previously established practice remained unchanged. The organisational background of the ‘hármashatár’ (tripoint) co-operation remained the same and no mutually sustained institute or organisation have been established, neither are there any mutual employees. All three parties confirmed that the preservation and presentation of the landscape's natural assets and cultural heritage remain their common interest. No activities have been modified that were realised in the framework of the co-operation. Although, there has been a change concerning the aims of the co-

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8 Full description: Co-operation Agreement between Naturpark Raab, Őrség National Park and Krajinski Park Goričko.
operation. The formerly determined aims of the co-operation have been extended with the following four areas (the last one was discarded in 2012):

- Joint research on fish communities of cross-border watercourses;
- Coordinated joint survey and study of otter populations;
- Elaboration and initiation of a protection programme for European roller (Coracias garrulus);
- Joint monitoring of effects in case of realization of an incinerator planned to be built in Szentgotthárd.

In the Hungarian and Slovenian co-operation history that is taking place in the current area of the two parks (and the Hungarian Natúrpark Ltd.), three main milestones can be highlighted. The first steps meant only a few common projects, the beginning of this period, from the appearance and completion of the Phare CBC resources, approximately lasted between 1995 and 2003. The partnerships for the most part lacked deeper efforts to seek out partners, they were rather accidental and based on personal acquaintances.

Afterwards, a kind of institutionalised co-operation was set forth among the protected areas. By 2003 the Őrség National Park and the Goričko Landscape Park had been established, then in 2006 and 2009 agreements were endorsed. Therefore, apart from the former sporadic co-operations a formal, document-supported co-operation has been established. The agreements themselves, contrary to the beginnings, no longer bear particular significance in a practical respect, still it provided a framework for subsequent co-operations. At programme and project level there are and there will be more developments that are basically bilateral, but also refer to a third party, they are imbued with border region attribute.

Simultaneously, along with the more or less official nature park co-operation, came the newer cross-border co-operation programmes; more resources, opportunities and common tenders were outlined. This period lasted between about 2007 and 2009. The next, third milestone is innovative in a way that in the past few years they have been trying to further develop the co-operation that exists at the formal and mostly actual project level. The aim is to have a kind of co-thinking and co-operation between the two protected areas independently from the projects and funds. Regular meetings, common programmes (tourist programmes) have been organised as of today. This whole co-operation generates more tenders and projects.

During the completed projects there have been much communication, co-thinking has appeared. The practice in regard to the whole border region is rather that the long-term strategic and regional cohesion perspective is not dominant, which adapts to needs, but the parks that play a key role in Slovenian-Hungarian cross-border co-operations start to recognise that it is more beneficial to communicate more and realise the cohesion perspectives.

All in all, what has been established in the area, in roughly a decade since the foundation of the parks, is the practice that nature parks - including the Raab Nature Park - have tried to organise
the hármashatár (Tripoint) region themselves ("take it under their wings"). Firstly, to organise events, secondly, to develop products, thirdly, to realise the knowledge transfer. In these three major areas the parties mutually involve each other. The how-to, the project development and the participation in the realisation belong here (apart from the fact that one of the parties does not participate in a certain project).

Finally, it is worth presenting that in the common co-operation area of Őrség National Park and the Goričko what kind of other, relevant, or already participating actors can be highlighted, and which actors the parties strived to primarily integrate.

Firstly, the Őrség Nature Park Association has to be introduced that has been actively participating, amongst others, in the nature park initiative since the very beginning and its work organisation, the Natúrpark Térségegfejlesztési Közhasznú Nonprofit Ltd., whose priority is to help the European integration of the area, and to realise the common development programmes with neighbour countries.

The Municipal Alliance of Vas County Undeveloped Areas, which included 67 municipalities, operated since 1991, following its dissolution in 1995 the Őrség-Vendvidék Natúrpark, as its successor, was established with the participation of regional municipalities, civil organisations, enterprises and private individuals. The park, focusing on sustainable development and supporting developments that harmonise with the ecological advantages of the region, was born in Őriszentpéter as its headquarters, uniting an overall area of 440 km², due to the initiative of 22 Őrség and 6 Vendvidék municipalities. The former Őrség landscape protection area, which constitutes a part of Őrség National Park, takes up to 379,11 km², however, finally, 61 municipalities joined the nature park, whose overall area did not coincide with the landscape protection area. The secretarial tasks of the association have been tended to by Natúrpark Térségegfejlesztési Közhasznú Társaság (Nature Park Regional Development Public Benefit Association) since 3 May 2000. Its founders beside Őrség-Vendvidék Nature Park Association were Regional Development Association of the Municipalities of Őrség, Municipality of Kőrmend City, Municipality of Szentgotthárd City, Szombathely Forestry Corp., as well as the West-Pannon Regional Development Plc. Its area of operation covers the statistical micro-regions of Kőrmend, Őriszentpéter, and Szentgotthárd. Practically the majority of towns in Őrség and the town around Alsószölnök are active in the co-operation within the framework of Nature Park. By time the number of towns has reduced compared to the original. They do not think that the number of members should be increased, rather they see possibilities in co-operating with Zala county-based or other initiatives, which were established with a nature park philosophy in some kind of network form. The fact of a town being a Nature Park member or not, bears no real significance. They co-operate with such towns that are not members, also there are members with whom the co-operation is not particularly active.

http://w3.rkk.hu/nyuti/borderregion/sa/w2_case.pdf
There is a classic co-operation area, which Nature Park has been working on since the beginning. This is primarily targeted towards touristic co-operations. It has to be seen that the establishment and consolidation of the Őrség National Park practically take numerous roles and infrastructural developments naturally to national parks (i.e. educational trails), whose elaboration and visualisation were started by the Nature Park. Thus, it is pointless for the Nature Park to deal with these, since there is a national organisation established and financed for this purpose - said the executive during the interview.

The Nature Park has started to co-operate in two directions with the Slovenian side apart from classic tourism. One is the development of local products, the other is that of human resources. Within the latter, one of its parts means the recognition of good practices and their adaptation, the other one reveals the co-operations of the labour market and the co-operation in harmony with border line economic relations. The explanation to this is that on the Hungarian side a programme has been launched, which has aimed at the establishment of labour market pacts in the micro-region. The Nature Park was the Hungarian-side co-ordinator and initiator of a similar pact. Utilising these systems of relationships, they started to deal with Slovenian partnerships, local development organizations, foundations, labour centres. They have taken a direction to figure out how they could help borderline job placement and movement of labour. In this area an expert network was established last year. In this, Hungarian and Slovenian experts take part who have made proposals as to what actual activities could be initiated. What we have to think over is that which proposals should be formed into an actual project - explained László Bauer, executive of the regional development organisation. Therefore, the development path and the milestones for the Natúrpark Nonprofit Ltd. were the following, with which they are able to appear in the network of border region partnership: 1, tourism policy 2, local product 3, human resources (for more information on the projects, see Chapter 6).

As it has been referred to, following the establishment of the Hungarian national park, the Hungarian nature park initiative gradually lost its leading role in the matters of nature conservation and environmental protection, as well as, in partly, tourism policy matters, and by now the ŐNPI (Őrség National Park Directorate) has become the major Hungarian partner of the nature conservation projects. However, it is more positive that the Nature Park has got a less official, more vivid and people-oriented system of relationships with local actors. Consequently, it can provide different quality in the frame of the co-operation. The initiative of the Nature Park is bottom-up type, thus it can integrate real demands into the system. In their opinion, it cannot be expected in an official structure that the national park and Goričko should tend to the same activities as the Nature Park itself, this is why they remain important stakeholders in the border region.

On the Hungarian side there is the Szlovén Vidék Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft. (Slovenian Region Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd.) with headquarters in Szentgotthárd, which belongs to the active partners that can be involved and do not arrive from nature conservation sector. The aim of
the company established by the Alliance of Hungarian Slovenes in December 2006 is that to contribute, in its frame of public benefit activity, to the cultural, touristic and economic development of Raba Region (in Slovenian: Slovenska krajina)\textsuperscript{10} also inhabited by Slovenian people, to support the establishment of enterprises of the Slovenian population, as well as the investments of the already operational enterprises. All this shall be achieved by seeking out Slovenian, Hungarian and EU tender resources, and by the preparation and implementation of the tenders. The main activities of the organisation that employs six colleagues involve writing tenders, a model farm, common agricultural machineries, the operation of an apple processing facility, as well as the tradition promoting, event organisation and publication editing that all serve the Slovenian ethnic culture. The Szlovén Vidék Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft. receives strong support from the Slovenian state, they develop much along the border area, which has Slovenian population.

On the Slovenian side, regional development agencies established by state co-ordination, play an active and decisive role in tending to regional development tasks and in generating CBC projects, furthermore they have assumed leading roles in the pooling of funds in the past few years. Without the involvement of regional development agencies, successful regional development work cannot be accomplished since the Goričko and the towns on their own do not have suitable capacities to tend to regional development tasks. Therefore, in this respect in Slovenia the situation is slightly different. There are more development agencies, which in general deal with writing of tenders and project management. Őrség National Park has common projects with these organisations, however, since nature conservation is not their primary area of expertise, still they participate in the project management in the Goričko area.

The Mura Development Agency acts as the leading development institution in the Slovenian part of the border region, implementing tasks and projects for regional development. The agency’s activities are directed to constant stimulation of progress and development on the regional level and fostering public-private partnerships. Being an another important platform for cooperation between actors and institutions in the NUTS3 region of Pomurje and for the whole border region, in which the Goričko Nature Park is situated, is the Mura Regional Development Agency. It has been one of the initiators of the trinational nature park in the mid-1990s. The coordination with the 27 municipalities in the region is carried out through 5 sub-regional partnerships, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, directly through annual meetings of the regional board, composed of mayors of all municipalities. Mura RDA often serves also as a lead institution in various EU projects in relation to Goričko Nature Park, having institutional capacity to carry out complex administrative tasks with this regard. One of such projects is project “Upkač”, aiming at preserving the biodiversity of orchards in Goričko Nature

\textsuperscript{10} Towns of Felsőszőlnök, Alsószőlnök, Szakonyfalú, Orfalú, Kétvölgy, Apátistvánfalva.
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Park and Őrség National Park. The park authorities are partners in the project, which is led by the Mura Agency (for more, see Chapter 6). Another development agency on the Slovene side includes the Prlekija Development Agency. The agency has already been operating for more than ten years. It was established in order to promote development of small businesses, tourism and rural areas in the region of Prlekija, a region in north-eastern Slovenia between the Drava and Mura rivers, stretching from the border with Austria to the border with Croatia in the historical region of Lower Styria, forming the Mura Statistical Region together with the traditional province of Prekmurje. The agency has realized several major development projects, with which it made a big impact in the broader Slovenian territory. Its activity covers four basic areas: the development of small businesses and tourism, rural development, environmental protection and cross-border cooperation. Current references are the most extensive in the field of promoting small business development and cross-border cooperation programs. In the present time, it has firmly consolidated international links with Austrian, Hungarian and Croatian partners and has developed into an institution that undertakes bigger and more demanding projects, particularly in the context of EU programmes.

Last but not least, municipalities can be identified as important actors. They take part in cross-border co-operations with different intensity. In general their method of participation is that the national park or a Slovenian development agency bring together partners or involve municipalities. For example, perhaps Őriszentpéter and Szalafó are the two towns where the mayors are the most active and they usually take part in different projects.

History of a tight cooperation had started even before the Pan-European Picnic, an important event that led to the fall of the Iron Curtain, was held. There was a meeting of mayors and local people at the tri-national border on 27th May 1989 when the previously heavily guarded border had been opened to the public.

In essence, the real co-operation between the two protected areas began after the demolition of the Iron Curtain and intensified after the EU accession with the help of growing funds allocated to INTERREG Community Initiative and later to European Territorial Cooperation objective. Another contributing factor was that both Goričko Nature Park and Őrség National Park are young organizations; the former was established in 2002, while the latter was founded in 2003. Before the millennium, neither side of the border assigned an outstanding importance to the goals of nature conservation. Due to the lack of money, the cooperation started to emerge with the appearance of the two parks as important regional stakeholders. The establishment of the two parks was the zero-step in the history of their cooperation.

Three major periods can be defined in their cooperation. The first period lasted from the appearance of Phare programmes until their run-out, approximately between 1995 and 2003. In those times, the co-operations were mainly based on activities with no territorially integrated approach, ad hoc partnerships and personal connections. The second period, lasted approximately between 2004 and 2009 and it is characterized by the beginning of a partly institutionalized cooperation. The previously sporadic exercise changed to a more formal one. The territoriality and strategic thinking gained bigger consideration.

The Parties recognized that a coordinated, strategic partnership in the context of management and development of the two (with Austria three) sides of the border can provide a suitable solution in the joint and complementary assets to exploit. The idea of establishing a trilateral park with the participation of Slovenia, Hungary and Austria emerged in the early 1990s at one of the workshops aimed at developing a vision for the area after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Therefore, since their foundation two important documents have been agreed to by the partners. The first Memorandum, signed on 21st May 2006, meant the formation of a trilateral nature park, and set the main goals and activities, organizational structures regarding the cooperation. The aims of the cooperation are mainly focusing on environmental protection and nature conservation, cultural heritage, tourism and people-to-people actions. The second and yet last agreement on cooperation was accepted on 25th May 2009, nearly three years later, in which four new fields of cooperation have been added to the specified goals set before.

The beginning of the third and last period started around 2009 and it is still ongoing. This milestone brought the idea that besides project-based co-operations, regardless of money, a common thinking and some kind of joint planning are needed between two areas. The partners have been trying to move in the direction of a long-term, demand-driven, territorially integrated and cohesion-based approach.
4. Presentation of the geographical environment of the cooperation

Before we proceed to the narrowly defined area of co-operations, it is worth providing a broader picture of the region, in which the regional scope of the co-operation can be interpreted in order to be able to place the co-operation within a wider environment. In Hungary the co-operation area is bordered by Upper Rába Valley, Vasi-hegyhát (Mountain’s back of Vas), Göcsej and Közép-zalai-dombság (Middle Zala Hills), in Austria the extension of Upper Raba Valley and the Gleichenberg hills, in Slovenia the Slovensko gorice means the border. In the respect of landscape structure, the Hungarian-Slovenian border region belongs to the Western Transdanubia macro region, which is divided between two smaller regions, the Mura–Raba-hills and the Drava–Mura-hills. Within these, five micro-regions can be distinguished, whose borders do not coincide with the political borders, thus, we can talk about cross-border landscapes: on the northern side of the border section the administrative border intersects the low hill reliefs, on the southern side it does so with the intrinsically linked plain reliefs. Mostly on the Hungarian side, the Őrség (Lower Őrség), which gave its name to the national park and Hetés (Kerka region) are located, as well as on the Slovenian side Goričko hills and the lower plain area of Mura, the Ravensko can be found in close proximity of the border. The integral extension of the Upper Őrség–Vasi-hegyhát micro region is the Goričko. The Kerka-vidék (Hetés) and the left hand side plain of the Mura reach over to the Slovenian side, which continues in the low hills of the Slovenian Dolinsko, and to the south of that in the Ravensko.

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12 By regional scope we mean the co-operation participants’ area of operation defined in the statute, furthermore, the related neighbour and intermediate area, which can be organised decisively by the two parks.

13 The following towns constitute the exceptions: Hodoš, Krplivnik, Domanjševci, Središče, Prosenjakovci, Pordašinci, Šikečka vas and Motvarjevci.

The biggest shaping force of the borderline region’s present surface was the Mura and its tributaries, it can be divided into two major phases. Firstly, the accumulation processes were predominantly characteristic. Due to this, in the major part of the area, on the surface a scree bed can be found, which was the result of the accumulated alluvium until the Pleistocene epoch and the building work of the rivers (ancient Raba and ancient Mura). In the second half of the Pleistocene the erosion of alluvium was characteristic in consequence of tectonic movements and the spread of rivers. Alongside the ancient tectonic fault-lines the movements renewed again, which caused tremors in the area, at this time the Lenti-basin and after that the Lendvai-basin sank. This increased the relief energy of the surrounding areas, which sped up valley development and the segmentation of the area. As a result, steep, watercourse-segmented sides and sharp hillside fragments were created, which later supported the establishment and spread of the hillside town form.

The surface of the Hungarian-Slovenian border region is about 150-300 m high in average, it is a dying hill region whose surface is swiftly formed by erosion. Its terrain is tripartite in North-South direction. The Northern part of the region is the Őrség, whose terrain contains flat, plateau-like hills, however, proceeding to the west, the landscape becomes more intensive, hills and stream valleys densely follow one another, a view of a hill is outlined that is strongly fragmented by erosion-derasion valleys. In the north, towards the Raba-valley is characterised
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by steep breakdowns, which make the surface diverse. On this relief traditionally arable farming meadow management and grassland farming are characteristic. The region slopes down from the west to east, its average height is between 250-300 m\(^15\). The relative relief is about 15-45 m/km\(^16\). On the other side of the border in the region of Goričko, Slovenia the alluvium hills become more and more segmented and gradually get higher towards the Alps, reaching its peek near the Austrian border (Sotinski breg – 418 m)\(^17\). The Lenti-basin and the Lendva–Mura-basin constitute the lowest part of the area that have become perfect plains due to tectonic dips and subsidence of rivers. The present level differences are minimal. It is also characterised by simultaneously low relief energy (1-5 m/km\(^2\))\(^18\). The most southern part of the area is the southern part of the Kerka region and the Lendvai hill. It is also the highest part, due to the big differences in level, it is characterised by high relief energy (80-125 m/km\(^2\))\(^19\). The wet climate contributes to this, thus the surface forming here is the fastest and is also the most segmented part of the border region, so it is unsuitable for arable farming. Due to the different slope exposures, distinct farming was created, on the south-south west slopes vines took root, whereas on the northern and eastern slopes forests are situated.

In contrast with the hilly areas located east of the borderline region, there was no loess formation, and due to the wetter, cooler climate loaming took place, where later on mostly woodland soils came into existence. The spread of pottery was based on the process in Őrség and Goričko. The water abundance caused by frequent precipitation is also harmful for the soils and affects the opportunities in agriculture. Since this prevents biological and chemical activities in soils, soil life is minimal. In consequence of the water abundance the soil was washed away, heat-, water balance are insufficient, the majority of soils are without structure. It poses another problem that the topsoil is shallow, poor in nutrients, its humus content is low (1,6-2%), and their pH level is acidic (4,0-5,0 pH)\(^20\). The most common soil types in the area are luvisol and pseudogley brown forest soil. In smaller intact areas we can still find old soils, and

\(^{15}\) László Gyuricza: Opportunities in landscape utilisation alongside the Slovenian border

\(^{16}\) László Gyuricza: Mura-vidék – Kerka-vidék – Hetés: Problems and inaccuracies in the nomenclature and map imagery of the landscapes

\(^{17}\) http://www.park-goricko.org/de/prvastran.asp

\(^{18}\) László Gyuricza: Mura-vidék – Kerka-vidék – Hetés: Problems and inaccuracies in the nomenclature and map imagery of the landscapes

\(^{19}\) László Gyuricza: Mura-vidék – Kerka-vidék – Hetés: Problems and inaccuracies in the nomenclature and map imagery of the landscapes

\(^{20}\) László Gyuricza: Mura-vidék – Kerka-vidék – Hetés: Problems and inaccuracies in the nomenclature and map imagery of the landscapes
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along the streams alluvial soils are characteristic, in a mosaic-like pattern gravel and regosol skeletal soils were formed.

Due to the great amount of precipitation caused by the climate, hydrographic attributes are adverse for arable crop production and for traditional peasant farming, they provide suitable conditions for a low level self-sufficiency only. In the countryside four major rivers, Mura, Raba, Zala, Kerka and their tributaries are dominant, through which the area belongs to three drainage basins. These are the river basins of Mura-Dráva water system, Balaton and Raba. The rivers bear great importance in the uniqueness of the flora and fauna of the region since these create important habitat-oases. Apart from these, the rivers are significant for tourism: there are possibilities for boat trips, and the lower section of Kerka is available for kayak and canoe trips.

Due to the adverse precipitation conditions more, smaller still waters, moors and swamps can be found in the region, which, however, create excellent conditions to establish unique plant communities, and it can be built on in tourism as well. For instance, the sphagnum moss moorland of Szőce, which is specially protected, however, on its educational trail visitors can familiarize themselves with the ecosystem and care of the moorland of the region.

In relation to hydrography we shall speak about subsoil waters, since the high groundwater is characteristic of almost the whole region, especially of eskers and the lower areas of widening valleys. Among others the high groundwater and the watertight soil layer obstruct the infiltration of abundant precipitation into the soil, thus inland inundation is frequent (mainly in spring). The big amount of precipitation, as it has been pointed out at the soil conditions part, has got adverse effects on the crop production in the whole border region. Although, in animal husbandry previously this attribute was used to water the animals using a so called 'tóka' (small hole filled with water).

The climate of the Slovenian-Hungarian border regions is wet subalpine, which is primarily influenced by the distance from the Atlantic Ocean and the proximity of the Alps and Adriatic Sea. Consequently, the pre-alpine, Atlantic, sub-Mediterranean and continental effects apply here. It is characterised by moderate continental temperature, small amount of thermal fluctuation and abundant precipitation.

The climate of the border region is balanced, hot summers are rare (the average temperature of Őrség is only 19°C\textsuperscript{21}, and winters are not so cold either). The area is rich in precipitation (the annual precipitation is higher than 700-750 mm\textsuperscript{22}), in the northern regions higher annual precipitation can be registered, whereas moving further from the Alps it decreases towards the

\textsuperscript{21} László Gyuricza: Mura-vidék – Kerka-vidék – Hetés: Problems and inaccuracies in the nomenclature and map imagery of the landscapes

\textsuperscript{22} http://www.met.hu/eghajlat/magyarorszag_eghajlat/altalanos_eghajlati_jellemzes/csapadek/
middle regions, however, in the southern parts it is higher again in consequence of the Autumn second maximum caused by a Mediterranean effect. The early summer, and summer thunderstorms often entail hailstorms. Due to the relatively cool, but wet climate relative humidity is high. In consequence of all these, precipitation conditions are slightly ideal for arable crop production.

The annual average mean temperature of the border region is around 9-10 °C on the basis of the long-term average. The summer average temperature is lower, in comparison with the country, which is caused by the cloudiness derived from the high precipitation average. The annual average sunshine hours ranges between 1750 and 1850 hours/year. In spite of this, the lack of summer hot weather might be a tourist attraction.

To the associated regional units in Slovenian-Hungarian relations, the full area of operation of the western-Hungarian Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Park in north-east Slovenia belong. The size of the area controlled by the two parties is almost identical; the former is 439.3 km², the latter is 462 km². In case we are aware of the tripoint attribute of the co-operation, the Raab Nature Park of South-eastern Austria comprises the third major associated partner of the co-operation. It is important to emphasise that the area of operation of the Nature Park Directorate, which is responsible for the legal operation of Őrség National Park, extends to the whole of Vas County (3336.2 km²).

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25 Hungarian state organ responsible for the operation of the nationally significant protected area. The single directorates, beside the national park within their area of operation, tend to the nature conservation operation of all landscape protection areas. The ‘Hungarian national park’ and the ‘national park directorate’ do not mean the same area.
The Őrség National Park lies in the NUT2 region called Western Transdanubia, and touches upon 44 settlement borders of four districts of two counties. The settlements are predominantly in Vas county, however, Szentgyörgyvölgy, Magyarföld and Felsőszenterzsébet (with their 46,71 km² they compose the 7,5% of the district) belong to the Lenti-district that stretches along the southern part of the national park. The major proportion of the national park belongs to the district of Körmend, while the minor proportion to the district of
Szentgotthárd; in the former district only two settlements (Nemesmedves és Rönök) are left out of the national park that covers 91.4% of the district, whereas in the latter district 57.2% of the settlement area is covered by the national park. In Zalaegerszeg district, merely the peripheries of two settlements (the plots of Zalalövő és Csöde) are under the surveillance of the national park. The Őrség National Park represents only a small proportion of the area of Hungary, a bit less than half percent (0.47%). However, in case we compare this area to that of Western Transdanubia (3.92%), or rather to the NUTS3 regions comprising Vas (13.17%) or Zala (11.61%) counties, its size is not negligible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seat of the municipality</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Legal status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cankova</td>
<td>Cankova, Domajinci, Gerlinci, Gornji Črnci, Korovci, Krašči</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobrovnik</td>
<td>Dobrovnik, Strehovci, Žitkovci</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gornji Petrovci</td>
<td>Gornji Petrovci, Adrijanci, Boreča, Gornji Petrovci, Košaroviči, Križevci, Kukeč, Martinje, Lucova, Neradnovci, Panovci, Peskovci, Stanjevci, Šulinci, Ženavlje</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad</td>
<td>Grad, Dolnji Slaveči, Kovačevci, Kruplivnik, Motovilci, Radovci, Vidonci</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodoš</td>
<td>Hodoš, Krplivnik</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobilje</td>
<td>Kobilje</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuzma</td>
<td>Kuzma, Dolič, Gornji Slaveči, Matjaševci, Trdkova</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moravske Toplice</td>
<td>Moravske Toplice, Andrejci, Berkovci, Bogojina, Bukovnica, Čikečka vas, Filovci, Fokovci, Ivanjševci, Ivanovci, Kančevci, Krnci, Lončarovič, Motvarjevci, Pordašinci, Prosenjakovci, Ratkovci, Selo, Središče, Suhi Vrh, Tešanovci, Vučja Gomila</td>
<td>144.5</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puconci</td>
<td>Puconci, Bodonci, Bokrači, Dolina, Dankovci, Kuštanovci, Mačkovci, Moščanci, Otovci, Pečarovič, Poznavnici, Prošečka Ves, Šalamenci, Vadarc, Vaneča</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogašovci</td>
<td>Rogašovci, Fikšinci, Kramarovci, Nuskova, Ocine, Pertoča, Ropoča, Serdica, Sotina, Sveti Jurij, Večeslavci</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šalovci</td>
<td>Šalovci, Budinci, Čepinci, Dolenci, Domanjiševci, Markovci</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own editing.
The Goričko Landscape Park lies in the most eastern corner of the NUT2 region called Eastern Slovenia, wholly in the eastern part of the NUTS3 Mura Statistical Region, and in the northern corner of the historical Prekmurje (literally „Transmurania”), which does not constitute as an administrative-statistical region. In the north-central half of Prekmurje, the Goričko Landscape Park covers the borders or the total area of 91 settlements of 11 local governments (municipalities). The most settlements concerned are in the area of the local governments of Gornji Petrovci, Moravske Toplice and Puconci, these localities cover 55,28% of the settlement area of the park. The Slovenian partner of the co-operation, the Goričko Landscape Park covers 2,28% of the area of the Republic of Slovenia, which means five times more share in the state area compared to the Hungarian national park. In case we compare it to the NUTS2 region Eastern Slovenia, this proportion grows to 3,78%. The weight of the Goričko is expressly great in the Mura Statistical Region, where it covers more than one-third (34,55%) of the land area, and also in the historical region of Prekmurje, where the proportion of the protected area exceeds half (50,77%) of the overall area of the region.

The third party that influences the bilateral co-operations is the Naturpark Raab that has the smallest area of the three nature parks. Consequently, the area of the park covers only 0,17% of Austria. Derived from the small area of Burgenland state, it includes the relatively major part (3,6%) of the province. The nature park includes all the Jennersdorf District municipalities that lie south of river Lafnitz. The total of 7 municipalities, the belonging villages and part of settlements extend to the major part of Jennersdorf District (56,1%).

The overall area of the trilateral co-operation is up to 1043,4 km², while the Hungarian-Slovenian co-operation constitutes an almost intact cross-border region of 901,3 km². As a comparison, this size exceeds the combined size (869,6 km²) of LAU1 area level Szentgotthárd- and Kőrmend-districts, which makes up the majority of the protected areas on the Hungarian side, and almost equals to the area of the historical Prekmurje (910 km²), which is in the Mura Statistical Region (Pomurska), and is embraced by the border and the Mura. Therefore, regarding its size, it is a cross-border co-operation sufficient enough for regional development aims.

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26 Compared to Hungary the Slovenian administrative system has only two levels: the national level and the level of municipalities that consists of at least 3-4 other settlements beside the seat of the municipality in general.
Its co-operation area previously has not existed in the form of an independent administrative unit. The border region settlements, including the area of today's South-Burgenland, were last united under common authority in the Kingdom of Hungary before the Treaty of Trianon, followed by WWI, which came into force on 31st July 1921. In spite of this, even during the turn of the twentieth century, the border region was not a unified, independent administrative region even under the Hungarian administration. The bigger northern part of the co-operation area belonged to Szentgotthárd-district of Vas county, while its southern part together with other areas to Lendava district.

Since the beginning of the co-operation the area of the co-operative partners has not changed. We should rather talk about that it has been successful over time that bigger and bigger proportion of the park areas and the actors thereof have been involved into the common CBC activities in connection with projects or other soft elements.

The Slovenian and Austrian nature park fully cover the settlements that belong to them. Contrary to this, on the Hungarian side, excluding Őriszentpéter, Szalafő and Apátistvánfalva, the inner areas do not belong to the national park, thus we can talk about a mosaic-like "hollow" spatial structure, though, it is still regarded as an intact territorial unit. In the aspect of the national park, two bigger zones are distinguished from the "base area": along the northern river bends of the Raba-valley, as well as the area of the Szentgyörgyvölgy landscape protection area.
that has been integrated into the national park in the south-south-west, including those micro regions that belong to the neighbourhood of Kercaszomor and Magyarszombatfa, also to the Slovenian border and Slovenian landscape protection park. Nevertheless, we can say that in the respect of the cross-border co-operation, the compliance with the completeness of the area coverage can be regarded as accomplished, thus, beside the extent of the area, its intactness also positively influences the efficiency of the co-operation.
5. Organisational and institutional structure and operation

The differences and similarities in the organisational structure of the two (three) parties greatly influence their regulatory compliance activities, as well as their own initiatives. Further on, the study will examine that how organisational attributes facilitate or hinder the participation in the cross-border co-operation.

Moreover, it is important to state that this chapter will deal with the matters of organisational and institutional structure together with particular work organisation matters. Since we cannot talk about a common work organisation, henceforward the organisational idiosyncrasies of the parks will be compared to illustrate the differences and similarities.

The Goričko Landscape Park, which is operated from its headquarters in Grad, is given less financial resources to tend to its activities due to its scarcer duties and jurisdictions. In consequence of this, the number of its employees is much fewer than that of its Hungarian partner, only 9-10 employees. Within the Őrség National Park, with its headquarters in Őriszentpéter, the total 40 employees fill in 43 positions and 29 positions with different scope of activities, whereas in Slovenia only 8 different positions exist. The discrepancy in numbers emerges from the highly developed nature conservation ranger service of the Hungarian side, from the significant number of financial and accounting employees, as well as from the considerable weight of nature management coming from the possession of the land area.

Not only in the number of employees, but also in the number and importance of departments and sections that determine the organisational structure, there are shifts between the two sides. In Goričko there are 4 major organisational units operating, whereas under the national park that deals with Őrség and its broader environment there are 9 departments apart from the Directorate. In regard to the single organisational units, on the Slovenian side there is no distinct directorate and the acting Director is Stanislava Dešnik, who alone tends to the tasks connected to the directorate. In contrast with this, on the Hungarian side a directorate of three is in operation with Mr Tibor Markovics. The Őrség National Park has its own independent legal and administrative departments, nature management department and application management department. The Őrség Land Management Department carries out its activities expressly in Őrség.

Henceforward, we will discuss particularly which place the cross-border co-operations take in the work of the organisations, how many people, who, and which organisational units are responsible for the developments.

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27 Moreover, after its establishment it employed only one employee and one Acting Director managed the park.


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Table 1: The organizational structure of Goričko Nature Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting director</td>
<td>Stanislava Dešnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature protection councillor</td>
<td>Janko Halb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature protection councillor</td>
<td>Gregor Domanjko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Accountant</td>
<td>Suzana Huber-Sobočan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business secretary</td>
<td>Nataša Krpič</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group for nature protection and international projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature protection collaborator</td>
<td>Nataša Moršič</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature protection supervisors, nature park ranger</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature protection supervisor</td>
<td>Kristjan Malačič</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor centre</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Park guide leader</td>
<td>Marina Horvat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature park guide</td>
<td>Štefanija Fujs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2: The organizational structure of Őrség National Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directorate</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Tibor Markovics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director, Natural Protection</td>
<td>Jenő Horváth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director of Finance</td>
<td>Éva Pál</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal and Administrative Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial assistant</td>
<td>Judit Varga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal adviser</td>
<td>Vilmos Paukovits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Finance and Accounting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance assistant</td>
<td>Tünde Árva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance assistant</td>
<td>Judit Holdosi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance assistant</td>
<td>Richárd Németh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance assistant</td>
<td>Tiborné Pintér</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance assistant</td>
<td>Mária Véghné Töreki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tender management department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>Csaba Németh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Dániel Kovács</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Miklós Bodonczi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Szilveszter Dénes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Nature Conservation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>István Szentirmai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoological consultant</td>
<td>Ádám Faragó</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Consultant</td>
<td>Márta Havas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botanical consultant</td>
<td>Máté Szépligeti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Information System Consultant</td>
<td>Andrea Tárčzy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Department of Nature Conservation Ranger Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>Tibor Tanner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Natural Landscape Conservation</td>
<td>Mihály Máté</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Natural Landscape Conservation</td>
<td>Blanka Kóródi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Zsófia Szekeres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Dr. László Jandrasits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Rita Márkus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Ágnes Gruber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Imre Szabó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Krisztián Harsányi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Mihály Tóth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Department of Ecotourism and Environmental Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>Albert Kevy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism associate</td>
<td>Szilárd Kovács</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco Tourism Consultant</td>
<td>Ágnes Nagyné Szabó</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land Management Department of Northern Vas County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of Natural Landscape Conservation</td>
<td>Blanka Kóródi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism associate</td>
<td>Boglárka Bali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Area Conservation Supervisor</td>
<td>Krisztián Harsányi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Őrség Land Management Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>Zoltán Kovács-Mesterházy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the Manor</td>
<td>Gábor Szabó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Equipment Operator</td>
<td>Zoltán Pivonka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Maintenance Department

<table>
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<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>Jenő Horváth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td>Gyuláné Mihály</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td>Ferenc Könye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forester</td>
<td>György Németh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Engine Plant</td>
<td>László Póczak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.orseginemzetipark.hu/hu/info/segitunk/elerhetosegek.html

As it can see it in the tables, none of the parks have employees to deal with cross-border co-operation. This cannot be done due to the size of the staff. In the Őrség there is a so called Tender Management Department, whose primary tasks are project writing, project management and the implementation of developments. The department deals with national and other tenders, therefore, it takes part simultaneously in Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Programme projects, international and national projects (predominantly in
sectorial operational programmes), and in projects funded from its own resources.\textsuperscript{28} In the department under the Deputy Director of Finance four Hungarian persons work; one head of department (Csaba Németh), whose work is helped by three project managers (Dániel Kovács, Miklós Bodonzi and Szilveszter Dénes). The organisational unit was established four years ago that also deals with cross-border development matters. At first, the national park tried entrusting external tender writing companies. However, this system in their opinion was malfunctioning, so they chose to have this task done with their own staff.

In the case of Goričko Landscape Park, mostly the Group for nature protection and international projects deals with cross-border co-operation projects, however, there is no separate person in charge of CBC matters. When the park works on a cross-border project, it hires an employee especially for this purpose. In these cases, to ensure the presence of project administration and experts in scientific research and observation, there is a need for extra employees. Thus, those persons with fixed-term employment are in charge of tender administration. In 2014, three persons in project manager position worked at the organisation, however, after the last project had been realised they left the park. Since the tender had been realised they had to be laid off after three years. Although, the administrative works afterwards are still being carried out, thus their absence has an adverse impact on the co-operation with the Hungarian party. The accounting is taking years, consequently, those sums, which were spent a year and a half ago, still have not been transferred to the accounts of the Slovenian and Hungarian parties. Among the employees in the frame of the landscape protection park there are no cross-border residents. Nevertheless, it is favourable for the cross-border co-operation that a Slovenian lady with Hungarian nationality (Marina Horvat) works for the park.

Last but not least, the organisational resources and opportunities of the Hungarian Natúrpark (Nature Park) have to be presented. The Nature Park is more operative than all the other actors and regional development organisations in the region. While due to the statutory obligations from the state, the institutional form of Goričko and Őrség is characterised by bigger decision constraints, the Executive of the Nature Park can make decisions more freely (apart from

\textsuperscript{28} On the basis of the document ‘2013 Report on the activities of Őrség National Park Directorate’ in 2014 the following national tasks were tended to by the department:

- Continuing the forest habitat reconstruction activities
- The construction and handover of the Bird Conservation Showroom buildings.
- Furnishing and handover of Research Centre for Nature Tourism in Szőce.
- Closure of development of touristic supplies and products.
- Closure of well drilling, procurement of tools and machines related to the improvement of pasture management.
- Implementation of a cattle barn and its additional facilities.
- Realisation of organisational development
certain strategy questions). Whether the small size of the Nature Park is an advantage or drawback is a matter of perspective. In case a matter of quick reaction is needed to be executed, the Nature Park is the most operative. It is more time-consuming for bigger actors (Goričko and National Park) to reach consensus with those behind them, they are more dependent on the state-regional actors (i.e. from financial perspective as well). In case it is successful, they have a more secure background. The number of colleagues is 3, in the framework of the Natúrpark Nonprofit Kft. that functions as the work organisation of the Nature Park, out of which two participate actively in the development work that incorporates cross-border co-operation.

All in all, because of the organisation structure of Őrség National Park, it can accomplish its environmental and nature conservation perspectives with more employees and diverse organisational structure, and it can build relatively broad cross-border co-operations.

Regarding cross-border co-operation, the conditions given by the disparate national regulatory environment are very decisive. The co-operational decision-making of the actors is defined by what kind of tasks, jurisdictions and fields of competence the state level assigns to the organisations.

The management of the Hungarian park with its headquarters in Őriszentpéter, is defined in the modified, consolidated version of the deed of foundation of the Őrség National Park Directorate. On the basis of the regulation given by the Minister of Rural Development, who is responsible for, among others, nature conservation and environmental protection, the public tasks of the Directorate are the nature conservation public service and the public-authority activity defined in the statute.

The opportunities of the two parks are largely determined by the size of their own assets, and how they can indirectly or directly serve regional development aims. One of the main differences between the two parks is that the Hungarian national park not only assesses, manages, presents the nature conservation areas that belong to it, but also owns ever-growing asset management areas. 98% of the areas in its own management - in a remarkably high degree among Hungarian national parks - are treated in the organisation's own benefit. Moreover, the national park's aims to extend its own asset management areas coincide with the Hungarian governmental endeavours. Due to the land purchases, the national park has almost doubled the size of the lands in its own possession and management in the past three years. Thus, before the land purchases, the cultivated land of 3000 hectares in Őrség National Park's own management had grown to 6000 hectares. The consequence of this was that in 2012 the Hungarian government relaunched the purchase of agricultural lands under nature conservation. Minister for Agriculture Sándor Fazekas announced in January 2012 in Őriszentpéter, the headquarters of the national park, that 550 million HUF had been

reallocated to accomplish the aim. After the launch of the programme in 2012, 636 hectare land, later another 1064 hectares from 950 million HUF funds, in 2013, 456 hectares from 460 million HUF were purchased. In 2014, 480 million HUF were at hand, from which 600 hectare arable land, meadow and forest were purchased or expropriated until the end of the year.

According to the plans, the Őrség National Park will be continuing the land purchases in 2015. According to the national park, in order to achieve the necessary nature protection goals as well as decrease the conflicts of interest in the protected areas (including regional development and cross-border initiative conflicts), it is still essential to increase the amount of self-owned territories. By concentrating the fragmented land area of the numerous small, frequently external actors, with fewer partners and stakeholders they have to agree, and accomplish projects that incorporate lighter and bigger areas and have real regional development effects. In the region, the proportion of neglected, degrading grasslands, whose restoration probably will not be undertaken by their private owners, is significant, while in the majority of state forests industrial and profit-oriented management is going on. All these will or can be substituted by the Directorate management aiming at nature conservation. Currently the largest proportion of the areas in asset management is forest (in 2013, 1723 ha, 42.2%), smaller proportion is grass (2012 ha, 24.8%). The national park owns arable lands as well (307 ha, 7.5%).

In the majority of the purchased arable lands fodder is produced for the indigenous livestock by the national park, other parts are converted to meadows, pastures, in the forests selective-cutting forest management will be undertaken, furthermore, there will be areas for rental. These management activities all contribute to the improvement of the budgetary situation of the national park.

Regarding the management classification of the Őrség National Park Directorate, it is an independently operating and self-managing budgetary organisational unit. Out of its 10 establishments a total of 7 were built in the area of the Őrségi National Park or in its direct proximity. These seven establishments are the following:

- Keserűszer Guesthouse, Őriszentpéter
- Office building with a -record office, Őriszentpéter

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31 On the basis what Tibor Markovics said, there was a purchased undivided forest, which was listed under the name of 248 owners, consequently, of course, no professional forest management could/ could have been undertaken. The purchased plots predominantly meant such areas, which were in the possession of producers’ cooperatives in the socialist era, then during the privatisation era they were assigned as undivided common possession to their new owners, many of whom were not local actors and no longer lived in the Őrség.

32 The inner areas of some settlements (i.e. Szőce) do not belong to the national park, however, are surrounded by protected national park areas.
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- Livestock farm, Őriszentpéter
- Engine plant, warehouses, Őriszentpéter
- Őrség Folk Monument Group, Szalafő
- Weather Station, Szentgotthárd–Farkasfa
- Moor exhibition site, Szőce

As Stanislava Dešnik, acting Director of Goričko Landscape Park acknowledged, the work of Őrség National Park is not as hard as theirs. While the Slovenians have to prod the land owners to sustain the meadows and hay meadows, Hungarians can use authoritative tools, and on their own lands they can efficiently enforce nature and environmental protection perspectives. However, Goričko cannot use force against private owners. It is a difficult task to make less cultivated and less adaptive farmers understand the principle of sustainability and that ecological farming can serve not only nature conservation, but also economic development. In addition to this, the young do not wish to farm in a hillside landscape that has less favourable producing attributes or farm structure compared to the Mura-basin, and consequently provides lower earnings. Resulting from that, there are many abandoned, unused areas without owners, no matter how much the landscape protection park may maintain and reap them up to its limit.

All in all, while the Hungarian side has land areas with its own asset management and utilisation, as well as establishments, the Slovenian side has no own land area and only the headquarters in the Grad castle, the accommodation and visitor’s centre are in their possession.

Certain national regulatory environments have the biggest influence on the opportunity to have cross-border co-operations. This basically determines the actors’ room for manoeuvre. In the region of the Tripoint the Őrség National Park has got the most extent nature conservation system, there the conservation area regulations are the most restrictive. Contrary to this, the Goričko can only provide lower level security, since it is not a national park, but a landscape park. If we take into consideration the nomenclature classification of International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN in short), the Őrség National Park is classified in category II, that is, an area whose ecological unity is to be preserved for present and future generations; is to be protected against any kind of agricultural and industrial abuse; and where there is every opportunity not only for scientific, but also for educational and leisure activities. However, the Goričko is in IUCN category V and is a so called Protected Landscape/Seascape, that is, such an area whose unity is to be preserved owing to its natural or cultural values. Moreover, the Austrian Naturpark Raab does not belong to any IUCN categories at all.
On the basis of the government regulation 347/2006. (XII. 23.) about the appointments of the organs performing environmental protection, nature conservation, water authority and administrative functions, in Hungary a national park directorate takes care of the following:

a) tends to
   aa) tasks related to the nature conservation management of protected and specially protected natural areas, the Natura 2000 areas, as well as to areas and values in the scope of the international environmental agreement, with the exception of those tasks that must be carried out by other organs or natural persons.
   ab) asset management tasks in respect to the treasury assets under asset management,
   ac) preparatory tasks related to the jurisdiction of the Minister's local forest and wildlife management plans;

b) tends to furthermore
   ba) nature conservation research,
   bb) creating and sustaining habitats, as well as
   bc) restoring and rehabilitating damaged and impaired habitats

c) it keeps records of protected natural areas and natural values on its area of operation, takes care of primary and secondary data collection necessary for keeping records with nature conservation aims, as well as it operates the area monitoring and informational system related to its function, it co-operates with other informational and monitoring systems;

d) it contributes furthermore
   da) to forest resource protection activities,
   db) to the protection of natural flora and fauna (wild and fish species available for hunting, fishing, ancient domestic animal species and types and their gene pools), which are not classified as protected from the nature conservation aspect.

e) it comments on the regional, county and micro-regional development concept and programme related to priority areas; the concept of spatial planning of priority areas and counties; the local building code and also concepts of urban planning.

f) it co-operates with the regional offices of the National Office of Cultural Heritage regarding cultural heritage tasks related to the separately defined statute of the Office;

g) it stays in contact with other organisations that tend to nature conservation management tasks, and natural persons;

h) it provides help for municipalities in nature protection tasks.

The direction of the park is managed by the Goričko Landscape Park as public institute based in Grad, in compliance with the regulation about the Goričko Landscape Park. The director and the leadership of the park as public-sector employees tend to the following activities:

- prepare the directing plan of the park,
- accept the annual work plan of the park based on the management plan and take care of the implementation of the tasks defined therein,
constantly follow closely and analyse the condition of natural values, natural variety and diversity of the landscape, as well as make reports on the condition of the park,

- take care of the implementation of protective provisions, nature protection tasks and development guidelines in harmony with the regulation,

- take care of the maintenance of the natural values, refurbishment and protection of the park,

- conclude contracts in connection with the protection of the park based on the nature conservation law,

- co-operate with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation when drawing up the nature conservation guidelines for the park,

- coordinate and follow closely the research work concerning the park,

- contribute to international projects because of the procurement of the tools necessary for the operation of the park, furthermore, contribute to the introduction and professional research of the park, as well as tend to the implementation of the received projects,

- tend to the introduction of the park, whose aim is to raise awareness of the significance of the park for the public,

- provide access to data about the park and lead the information centre of the park,

- co-operate with the land owners in the park, professionally help them and provide them with advice,

- manage the properties in State possession in the park that are defined in the act of the establishment of the public institute,

- prepare and maintain roads, signs in the park, and the infrastructure necessary upon visiting the park and also assume a leading role in the park,

- take care of natural values or the part of the park open for visitors, in harmony with the management plan of the park,

- tend to other tasks concerning the development and protection of the park.

As it may be concluded from the tasks and jurisdictions mentioned above, the Hungarian side has more complex activities as a result of legal obligations. The Őrség National Park has more and wider jurisdiction regarding the nature conservation ranger service, native Hungarian animal species, quasi competent authority-comment functions, as well as the right of ownership. All these (see appendix) from the regional and rural development perspective, provide more favourable legal background for the operation of the organisation. The theoretical and statute opportunities are there on both sides to participate in international co-operations, project developments, however, the very different legal, work organisation, asset management potentials can be based on two different organisation structures, where there is a need to either eliminate or benefit from the discrepancies in the field of mutual exploitation of the border region's territorial capital.
In connection with the legal environment and the personnel, different opportunities can be recognised: while the two parks are in charge of similar-sized areas,\(^{33}\) and the challenges as well as advantages are very similar, the Őrség National Park has had four times more permanent employees. Contrary to this, the Goričko annually has a budget equal to less than half\(^{34}\) (about 46\%) of the income from the central budget of the Hungarian national park. It must be added that the Hungarian park receives more funds, but also tends to more tasks, therefore in its own area the results can be more significant.

Thus, the Hungarian party has got more room for manoeuvre. A national park directorate counts as a strong organisation in Hungary with big professional cadre, more infrastructure and relatively significant budget. Due to these it can accomplish much. Moreover, the legal environment confers broad powers on the organisation. Especially the personnel of nature conservation ranger service, which operates as an authority, and the Tender management department are outstanding. Although, due to recent changes a national park is no more a nature conservation authority, but actually the park has the last word in numerous matters.\(^{35}\)

The strength of the Hungarian party lies in that it has significantly bigger capacity than the Slovenians, thus they can learn from the Hungarian practice, for example, from the activities of habitat reconstructions and farming on protected areas. In Hungary in recent years billions have been allocated to recover, treat and improve habitats. In contrast, on the Slovenian side slightly none of these exist. They neither have their own area, nor personnel to make these improvements. In this respect, Slovenians are behind Hungarians regarding cross-border cooperation opportunities. The weakness of Goričko is that it has only few legal means compared to a Hungarian national park directorate. Consequently, the Slovenian party can better achieve its goals by communicating with local actors, persuading, encouraging, building a good system of relationships, whereas Hungarians can operate with authority instruments. The communication with local actors can be learnt from the Slovenians, authority instruments and every kind of resources from the Hungarians.

Language matters have great significance in the organisational and institutional structure and operation, as well as which language(s) is/are used as working language by the actors during the communication with Slovenian, Hungarian (and Austrian) partners. Since language challenges greatly determine on what level the Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Programme may be realised as a working relation. The experience shows that there are much

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\(^{33}\) Őrség National Park: 43,927 hectares; Goričko national park: 46,200 hectares.

\(^{34}\) Our calculations of the EUR-HUF exchange rate, were based on 310 HUF/EUR rate.

\(^{35}\) It contributes to the necessary Impact estimation procedure in the Natura 2000 areas; to environmental impact assessment common authorisation procedure of environmental use; planning and realising state researches in nature and landscape protection, as well as to organising non-state researches; as expert - in case of seeking out the competent Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, Natural Protection and Water Management - nature conservancy authority, competent authority landscape protection procedures.
more theoretical programmes and projects, since local actors who are responsible for practical realisations do not or hardly speak foreign languages. This greatly determines the cross-border co-operation's possible project partners, contents and its whole method also in the border region of Őrség National Park and Goričko. It is relatively hard to find a language that suits both sides of the border region co-operation, so none of the parties fall behind. Therefore, the desirable Slovenian-Hungarian-Austrian tripartite co-operations usually do not have the same strength.

One of the main difficulties of the meaningful co-operations are language difficulties: the tripartite border region belongs to two very different language families (Indo-European and Uralic), it is a confront zone of the Slavic Slovenian, the Finno-Ugric Hungarian and the Germanic German languages. In addition to this comes English as world language, which besides German, is the main relay language, and in the already multilingual environment, it appears as the quasi "obligatory" language when it comes to the assembly of projects. Henceforward, we will discuss it.

As it has been mentioned, we encounter dissimilar language competencies on both sides of the border. According to the experience of the Őrség National Park, the Slovenian side speaks German and English sufficiently. Contrary to this, at the national park directorate there is a relatively small number of people who can speak foreign languages daily. This makes communication difficult between Goričko and the senior management, and this was noted by the Slovenian party during the interview for this study. This deficiency is frequently spoken of during personal contacts (for instance, they cannot negotiate with the director neither in English, nor in German etc.).

According to the Hungarian Nature Park's experience, Slovenians prefer German in international relations, Austrians naturally speak German and wish to do so, also Hungarians prefer German, however, primarily it is true for the Nature Park and its Hungarian partners. The Nature Park mostly makes itself understood in German with the Slovenian and Austrian parties.

Along the Slovenian-Hungarian border there are institutions that speak both Slovenian and Hungarian as well. These are typically the representatives of local minorities and their representation of interest and cultural organs. The Hungarian or Slovenian language use is generally not typical in cross-border co-operation. This roots from the small proportion of those who know both minority and majority languages, if we look at the totality of project partners and stakeholders.

Coming to the two main co-operative partners nowadays: between Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Park the working language is primarily English, secondarily it is German. The German language skills of the Slovenian partner are better than that of the English, however, Hungarians speak less German, so as a compromise, English remains the solution. In the past it posed an even more serious problem to find the suitable language. Since István Szentirmai, Head of Environmental Conservation Department, has been actively participating in the
communication with the Slovenian partner, they perfectly understand each other. Besides Mr Szentirmai, Miklós Bodonczi (project manager, Tender management department) speaks excellent English, thus there are persons to communicate with. To understand each other, Marina Horvat, head and guide of the Goričko Landscape Park's Centre for Visitors, offers great help; she is from Mostje and is presently living in Murska Sobota. Horvat, member of the Slovenian Hungarian minority, interprets in many cases if the parties do not understand one another, because there is no sufficient funds for an appointed interpreter in each case. The direct and unequivocal communication is hindered when discussions have to be organised including an interpreter. If twenty people sit around a table, it takes hours to agree on project matters after having listened to the interpreter (i.e. project Academy of Crafts).

It would be most effective in the co-operation of the two parks if the projects were monolingual, since numerous problems root from the fact that everything has to be filled in Slovenian as well as in Hungarian. Immense amounts of turmoil result from 'to and fro' translations. Moreover, the parties feel that they pay enormous amount of money in vain for certain translation agencies. There were such translations made by professional translators, which had to be retranslated, since the agencies were not familiar with the terminology. In the Slovenian-Hungarian relation practically there is no appropriate professional translator. Last time in the Butterfly atlas it was eliminated in such a way that the authors wrote the texts in their mother tongue and in English, while experts translated those from English into the respective mother tongues. According to the Hungarian national park, bilingualism should not be forced in the projects.

The regulation of the cross-border co-operation programme poses many problems. Thus, it is recommended that project materials should be simply in English, such as numerous other international tenders (i.e. LIFE, etc.). To accomplish this, partners try to reach the governments of their countries so as to acquire more money to eliminate such problems as translation of materials. The governments are aware that this is a tripoint, but so far there have not been any changes in regulation neither at EU nor country level.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of the Őrség-Goričko cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features effect the cooperation</th>
<th>Goričko Nature Park</th>
<th>Őrség National Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Territory (km²)</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>439.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN category</td>
<td>V (Protected Landscape)</td>
<td>II (National Park)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties</td>
<td>Grad Castle</td>
<td>own lands and animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget (in EUR)</td>
<td>0.45 million</td>
<td>close to 1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>4 units</td>
<td>9 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources (person)</td>
<td>10 with 8 positions</td>
<td>40 with 29 positions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mandatory tasks
- monitoring, survey and study, protection, presentation and development of the natural and built environment
- plus: exercises ownership rights, genetic protection of ancient breeds, responsibility for issuing of permissions for all interventions and land use changes


To sum up, despite the undertaken ambitions the cooperation has not established any joint institution yet, therefore it cannot be discussed any further. While the cross-border nature of the landscape is a strengthening factor, the organisational structures are the ones that weaken the cohesion the most regarding any other weakening factor. Besides the lack of language skills especially on the Hungarian side, it is a problem that needs to be tackled. It is needed to emphasize that due to the fact that regulatory environments vary across borders, many differences can be found in their ability to cooperate regarding properties, budget and so on. All in all, the Hungarian Őrség National Park has more roles and responsibilities, allocated funds and so on to carry out its own compulsory and optional tasks, furthermore to actively participate in even cross-border projects.
6. The components of the work organisation

Since the beginning of the cooperation, it has not established its own working organization, only the following cooperation system can be studied (Please find all the other organizational issues in the previous chapter).

Meetings, common idea workshops are inherent to CBC programmes either in one of the Nature Parks, or in the National Park. One of the most significant activities aside from the CBC projects is the mutual, regular and frequent personal communication. Different personal bi-, or trilateral (Naturpark Raab including) meetings/talks, workshops, as well as online (e-mail), and telephone consultations belong here. The latter occurs 2-5 times weekly.

Lately, the bi-, or trilateral meetings have been initiated primarily by the Goričko Landscape Park. The reason for this is that among the three nature park members the Slovenians speak high level German and English, thus they can simultaneously communicate with both Austrian and Hungarian partners. Officially, in accordance with the agreement of 2006, the organisations of the three parks meet at least twice annually. The trilateral talks or workshops (excluding the project talks) occur once or twice every month. It is best to separate workshops and talks. To several workshops and meetings, apart from the experts regarded as employees of the parks, the partners invite the concerned local mayors and, depending on the topic, on occasion some non-governmental organisation representatives, thus expanding the partnership, creating a wider stakeholder group. At these meetings due to the presence of mayors, the questions about settlement level cross-border co-operations and the exchange of experience between settlement leaders are also important. The role of the workshops lies in helping settlement decision makers to see clearly which important elements certain regional actors invest in that are also important from a cross-border perspective. At the talks it is slightly different; there the participants are executive managers, chairs, topic related actors and experts. The topic of cross-border co-operation is always on the actual agenda at the negotiations of executive managers and chairs. Working group talks are a good basis for the alignment of interests and the exchange of expert ideas. An expert meeting does not only mean a round table talk, but also the partners visit the host’s best practice facilities, and they get a mutual insight into the exemplary current activities. Both Goričko Landscape Park and Őrség National Park applauded those invitations where one of the parties show its accomplishments and the measures leading there, and it is possible to exchange new solution proposals and ideas. The Naturpark Raab, agreeing with the two other parties and deeming the co-operation excellent, commented positively on the trilateral meetings.

We can talk about communication if we narrow down the tripoint nature park to the bilateral Hungarian-Slovenian co-operation. According to the Őrség National Park, between Őrség and Goričko there are annual regular meetings (1-2 occasions). These are thematic meetings where from both sides’ competent executives and those responsible for the given topic take part in
the discussion of certain areas of expertise. At the meetings, to the main activity of the participants’ joint programmes, suggestions for new projects and their discussion and approval belong. Specifically project co-operations always start with a call for tender, to which everyone has some kind of development ideas in advance. After the call for tender, they meet, discuss and consult about occurring ideas for the sake of regionally harmonised developments.

Although, they "only" occasionally meet in person, talks, that can be viewed as workshops are organised even if there is no actual project in which the actors could be partners. In relation to current matters, for example, if the following month one of the parties happens to organise an event, firstly they get in contact with the cross-border partner via e-mail or phone. One of the parties indicates that some kind of programme is to be organised, while the other party strives to use its own system of relationships to deploy groups and private individuals active in that area. These kinds of communications group around typically tourism policy and event organisation topics.

Recently, the parties have tried to launch an exchange programme, which has not been successful as of yet. This means that the colleagues on one side would spend a week on the other side, during which they would be able to get familiar with the work of the neighbour colleagues.
7. Main areas of activities/profile

Given the fact that the cooperation has not got its own development agency or some kind of institutionalized working organization, most of the main fields of action concentrate on an important aspect of the border situation along the state boundary that used to be nearly hermetically closed both physically and mentally. To be explicit, the main goal is to bring people closer together. This approach, regarding social cohesion, shall not be underestimated in such border area. There was little shared knowledge about each other, subsequently, it hindered any kind of cooperation, not to mention the project level or strategically based ones, nevertheless, mental borders have still remained alive and they have been performing division among people. Since they have a great share among common activities, the study would like to point out the joint activities in the field of events first. After that the projects can be seen as good examples and other important steps in the direction of joint planning, management and implementation will be introduced. We believe that addressing the case of cross-border projects in a relatively long chapter compared to the others is necessary, because through their research, we can identify which cross-border challenges have been dealt with and what kind of projects should be implemented in the upcoming years in order to avoid overlaps and to build on already existing synergies.

Nature conservation areas on the borderline frequently harmonise their programmes, they organise mutual events. Whether the Goričko or the national park has some events (i.e. in Hungary the Pumpkin Festival, in Slovenia the autumn fair) they always invite each other, provide a booth etc.. The common activities, disregarding the actions related to the projects, can be summarized with the following programmes, events and touristic areas:

- Painting competition: involving 1-5 graders from elementary school students in the area, in which all three nature parks participate.
- Nature park quiz: contest for 3-6 graders, in all three countries with the same tasks to learn more about the border region.
- Execution of Common weeks for the students of all three countries: two days in Goričko, two days in Őrség, and one day in Raab. The very first trilateral competition was tried in 2014. The youngsters explored the Goričo and the National Park while hiking and travelling in carriages. The programme was very popular with the students, they were really delighted. However, since the co-operation does not have enough funds, they are planning a one-day trip in 2015. The parties do not know how this programme will improve in the future. Contrary to this, the experience has been favourable so far. During the trip there is a chance for kids to meet on the tripoint border, where they can get in touch with three different languages and cultures.
- Nature park meeting: this can be regarded as best example. The Őrség–Raab–Goričko Tripoint Nature Park meeting, which is organised on the day of European
Nature parks, offers a local product market, play centres, handcrafting, nature trails, cultural programmes and gastronomic specialities to the local population and tourists. The meeting, beside cultural programmes and fairs, includes traditional peasant olympics, where teams of the countries compete against each other in reaping, tree chopping, and in other areas. The Peasant Olympics, or competition of three countries, and the whole meeting are very popular. The residents of all three countries take part in it in relatively big number, including cross-border guests. The Olympic Games take place with 15 participants, competitors, who come from all three parks. At the end of the competition series, a common award ceremony takes place. The series is mutually organised by the three protected areas, alternating the venues among them. The first games took place in Őriszentpéter, the second one in Goričko last year, in 2015 the Austrian partner is expected to host the games.

- Reaping contest in Selo: Central-European countries, Hungarians and Slovenians as well, compete against each other in traditional manual reaping. In its organisation the Goričko partakes as well, and also the Őrség National Park is invited. The national park will be represented - more will participate from its organisation. The national park has its own booth at the event. Due to the presence of the Hungarian minority also, the Hungarian language publications are readily purchased.

- The Őrség Pumpkin Festival: beside the local municipalities the Őrség National Park is present as organiser. Primarily the emphasis is on pumpkin contests, pumpkin food tastings and the purchase of local products. Related to this, there are programmes and events also on the Slovenian side, they expect visitors to see the pumpkin exhibition and other programmes in the settlement of Bodonci.

- They frequently organise such trips (in the frame of trekking and bicycle tourings) that touch upon both countries and in whose organisation and execution all three sides actively take part. The Bicycle marathon belongs here starting in September (bicycle tour in three countries) or the trilateral hikings in the Tripoint between Budinci and Orfalu.

- Mutual sign postings: common sign posting of the so called 3 country-bicycle route and the cross-border trekking routes.

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36 In 2015, Magyarszombatfa, Nagyrákos, Őriszentpéter, Szalafő settlements will provide the venues.
8. **Initiatives related to the first nature park: Projects prior to the establishment of the Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Park**

With help of Slovenia-Hungary-Austria Phare CBC Programme, operating between 2000 and 2003, the development strategy for the border areas of the three countries was prepared in the Autumn of 1999 (TRI-D). The strategy extended to three districts of Burgenland (Güssing, Jennersdorf and Oberwart) and Styria (Feldbach, Fürstenfeld, Radkersburg) in Austria, to the Pomurje region in Slovenia, and to three micro-regions of Vas (Körmend, Őrség and Szentgotthárd) and Zala (Őrség-Göcsej-Hetés, micro-regions along the Kerka and in Northern-Zala) counties. This meant that such a programme was born that particularly focused on the tripoint region, which integrated the total area of Őrség and Goričko into a mutual regional strategy after the demolition of the Iron Curtain. The document that was prepared in the framework of the Regional development strategy in the border region co-operation, pointed out the aims related to the following sectors: transport, infrastructure, border crossing points; environmental and natural energy resources; economic development; tourism; agriculture; industry; human resources and cultural heritage.

The strategy expressly focused on problems that could be solved trilaterally, however, to elaborate on the projects, which could have solved those problems, there were no sufficient funds since the trilateral PHARE programme was a one-time chance only. After 2004 only the bilateral cross-border co-operation programmes continued, by now the strategy has been discarded.

Before the establishment and consolidation of the Őrség National Park, the Natúrpark (Nature Park) played a leading role in elaborating on cross-border tourism projects on the Hungarian side. From these co-operations with the Slovenian party we will present one good practice. The Natúrpark Regional Nonprofit Kft. took part as project developer in the call for tender of the Hungary-Slovenia Phare CBC Small Project Fund 2001 in harmony with the Hungarian-Slovenian Common Programming Document (2000-2006), developing that from its frame. In the "Tourism management of Őrség-Goričko Nature Park" project the DRUSTVO Dota was the cross-border partner organisation from Črenšovci. The total budget of the project was 52,000 EUR, the fund was 46,000 EUR allocated by the Phare.

The project wished to facilitate the more efficient management of the region's tourism with the collaboration of the actors representing the cross-border nature park's community.

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37 http://w3.rkk.hu/nyuti/borderregion/sa/w2_case.pdf

38 Source: http://www.vati.hu/files/sharedUploads/docs/szolven_magyar2.pdf (22-23.o.)
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interests. The aim of the project was to extend the touristic supplies and their appropriate presentation of today's Hungarian-Slovenian cross-border nature park (Őrség–Goričko). The parties realised that the target area is a cross-border natural area, in whose development strategy, tourism meant first priority. The aim of the project was furthermore to build a cross-border co-operation network. Essentially it realised the touristic measures of the aforementioned cross-border TRI-D strategy. The common control of tourism appeared as a priority area in the area development strategy.

Among the activities, beside the creation of the co-operation’s condition system, the realisation of certain model programmes was present. The sample programmes meant long-term traditional touristic events and publications, which strived to establish a common tourism image for the border region.

The ŐrségNet Hungarian-Slovenian and English language touristic database meant continuous international promotion for the region, it contained basic information and practical touristic information. The creation, maintenance and update of the touristic database with the same content were also mutual, which served as a base for the common introduction of the region.

Bilingual, Hungarian and Slovenian programme guide and event calendar were released in both countries. Stage setting tools were purchased, making it possible in the co-operation region to present different cultural and touristic programmes. Three touristic events were realised attracting a great number of curious people: Szerek és Porták Fesztiválja, Naturally Őrség!, Days of Bloom.

The planned result of the project was that the participating organisations would be able to develop and implement touristic programmes with the help of the project. The planned activities simultaneously aimed at the improvement of tourist information, promoting of the border region and the foundation of a higher quality, harmonised series of programmes. In conclusion, the activities aimed at the cross-border tourism management of the area.

The project also had a ground-breaking role in that the participating regional actors in the area of appearance on the internet, publication editing and event organisation, could get first-hand experience about the benefits of common appearance and programming. This was the first occasion that the Slovenian partner’s tourism development activity, which had been going on for years, could intrinsically join the initiatives on the Hungarian side, and vice versa. The results could achieve a kind of multiplying effect, that is, they opened the way for newer and more cross-border relations and touristic co-operations.
8.1 Joint trans-European co-operations

Since their foundation, the National Park Őrség and the Goričko Landscape Park, they have participated jointly in one project on trans-European level as Associated Institutions among 23 other institutions. The project was called ‘Transnational ecological network’, or ‘TransEcoNet’, shortly.

TransEcoNet – Landscape without borders, implemented through the Central Europe Transnational Programme 2007–2013 with the help of 2.293.617,00 € ERDF contribution out of the total budget, 2.901.082,12 €.

The project was born from the realisation that there are numerous ecologically valuable landscapes in Central Europe that do not fit administrative borders, and whose analysis, treatment and development require cross-border trans-European approach. National parks, landscape protection areas, other national protected areas and EU protected areas, which have natural values, are a really coherent and complex system. The partners wished to react to the fact that the cross-border dimension of ecological networks, which mean natural-geographical units that exist independently from borders, pose an ever-growing challenge due to the fragmentation of habitats and topographic regions caused by human activities.

The leading partner of the project was Technische Universität Dresden, Institute of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, Chair of Remote Sensing from Dresden, Germany. 15 Project Partners were the following: the German Leibniz Institute of Ecological and Regional Development from Dresden and The Saxon Regional Conservation Foundation - National Park Saxon Switzerland Information Centre from Bad Schandau, the Austrian Vienna University of Technology, Institute of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing from Vienna, University of Vienna, Department of Conservation Biology, Vegetation and Landscape Ecology from Vienna, Vienna University of Technology, Institute for History of Architecture and Art, Building Research and Preservation from Vienna and the Austrian League for Nature Conservation Burgenland, the Czech Silva Tarouca Research Institute for Landscape and Ornamental Gardening from Brno, Public Benefit Corporation Bohemian Switzerland from Krásná Lípa and University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem, Faculty of the Environment from Ústí nad Labem and the Polish Karkonosze National Park from Jelenia Góra as well.

Last but not least, one Hungarian (The University of West Hungary, Sopron) and three Slovenian partners took part in the project, Geodetic Institute of Slovenia from Ljubljana, University of Nova Gorica, Faculty of Environmental Sciences and the Regional Development Agency Mura Ltd. from Murska Sobota. The development agency, which has an important role regarding the cooperation of Őrség and Goričko, collected and analysed data related to Pomurje region, especially on the Mura River. Moreover, workshops, seminars, exhibitions were implemented as well as a documentary film was produced.
The aforementioned **Associated Institutions** along with the Őrség National Park and Administrative Authority of Goričko Regional Park included institutions from Slovenia (The Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts from Ljubljana, Slovenia; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering from Ljubljana; Kozjanski Park Administration from Podsreda), Hungary (Fertő–Hanság National Park Administration from Sarród) furthermore from Czech Republic (Charles University Prague, Department of Philosophy and History of Sciences from Prague; Czech Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection from Prague; National Park Administration České Švýcarsko from Krásná Lípa; Administration of Protected Landscape Area Labské pískovce from Děčín; National Park Administration Krkonoše from Vrchlabí), Slovak Republic (Poloniny National Park Administrative Authority from Stakčín; WOLF Forest Protection Movement from Tulčík; Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development from Bratislava), Germany (National Park Administration Sächsische Schweiz from Bad Schandau; Administrative Authority of the Biosphere Reserve Oberlausitzer Heide-und Teichlandschaft, from Mücka; Saxon State Ministry of the Environment and Agriculture - Department of Nature Conservation from Dresden; Office for Regional Planning Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge from Radebeul), Austria (Imagno Brandstätter Images from Vienna; National Park Administration Neusiedler See–Seewinkel from Apetlon; ECOVAST-European Council for the Village And Small Town from Vienna), Italy (Università Politecnica delle Marche-DARDUS-Facoltà di Ingegneria from Ancona) and Azerbaijan (National Aerospace Agency from Baku).

In the frames of the ecological network analysis of TransEcoNet, the territory of the Hungarian–Slovenian partners were among the four trans-boundary project regions within the six Central European countries that were in the focus. The border sections and areas of Central Europe were divided into the following four project regions: Northern Project Region, Central Project Region North, Central Project Region South and Southern Project Region, in which the territories of both Őrség National Park and Goričko Nature Park were included. The TransEcoNet Southern Project Region incorporated the two protected areas furthermore a wider range of natural landscapes along the border areas of Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. Amongst others these meant the valleys of the rivers Raab, Pinka, Strem in Austria, the Mura River basin, and stretched to the south to the Kozjanski Regional Park and the river Sava in Slovenia along the border to Croatia. TransEcoNet partners from these border areas handled as the territories as one joint cross-border region, and conducted their activities in the previously defined focal areas of Southern Burgenland in Austria, Őrség in Hungary, Pomurje and Kozjanski Regional Park in Slovenia. Within the Southern Project Region the partners focused on the mentioned focal areas and investigation areas that had been defined in their respective work package.

A total number of 6 work packages were set up.
TransEcoNet project aimed at establishing a comprehensive inventory of the aforementioned trans-European protected areas and protecting the ecological networks, including their both natural and cultural heritage. The partners of TransEcoNet were working towards the following objectives in general:

- To elaborate strategies and give recommendations how to develop and manage transnational ecological networks in Central Europe regarding future land use and biodiversity conservation,
- To provide these recommendations to European, national and regional planning authorities, hence fostering a sustainable development of natural landscapes,
- To raise public awareness for natural and cultural heritage of transboundary landscapes,
- To contribute to a better connectivity of European ecosystems like the Alps, the Green Belt and the Carpathians.

The project partners elaborated, analysed and assessed parts of the Central European ecological network regarding trans-boundary connectivity and existing gaps; land use changes since the end of the 18th century; ecological functionality of landscapes and services they provide to society and national planning tools, regulations and transnational cooperation initiatives dealing with ecological networks.

Hereinafter, the study lists and presents the major activities which took place either in the Slovenian or the Hungarian side of the protected cross-border area.

**Within Work Package 3: Eco-topologies - Inventories of ecological networks**

*Action 3.1 Inventory of existing networks:* a report related to the inventory of existing networks has been elaborated that deals with the valuation of the connectedness of protected areas across national borders within the TransEcoNet project regions, the definition of core and non-core areas (areas with high respectively weak protection status) and the definition of potential ecological corridors.

*Action 3.2 Biodiversity in networks:* the final report of this action studied and summarized the European and national legislation and policies on ecological networks, identified the target species, made an overview of trans-boundary and regional cooperation initiatives in Central Europe and sketched the future options of cross-border and regional cooperation on ecological networks.


Action 3.3 Gaps in ecological networks: the elaborated TransEcoNet gap analysis aimed at supporting a better connection between protected areas through/with the help of the identification of potential ecological corridors and the detection and prioritisation of gaps.

Within the Work package 4: History of ecological networks

Action 4.1 History of ecological networks: the general objective of the action was to visualise the history of landscapes which are part of ecological networks. In the frames of this action, a report on Historical maps of Central Europe has been conducted. In addition, the old maps were vectorised and in order the make the analyses comparable a common transnational map of land use change was initiated.

Action 4.4 Inventory of heritage: In the framework of the collection of non-cartographic documents showing landscape history, the Regional Development Agency Mura cooperated with 10 primary schools of Pomurje, near the border triangle with Austria and Hungary that was one of the focal areas of TransEcoNet. The pupils reviewed the cultural heritage of their home region in several workshops. With help of their grandparents, neighbours and friends, they collected old photos, postcards and pictures showing traditional agriculture in the area, showing the former landscape and also old tools and vehicles which were used. The pupils also interviewed elderly people about the old folk tradition and about the way of life on the Mura River some decades ago. That means tools, tales and myths were collected which relate to the cultural landscape of Pomurje.

Within the frames of Work Package 6, Identities and strategies - Raising awareness

Action 6.1 Perception of landscape change: surveys of oral history have been carried out in the border triangle. At workshops and in studies considering Őrség and the Pomurje region, several issues were touched and discussed, like the former and present state of landscapes, the impacts and changes on landscape and a comparison of the situation on both side of the state border.

Action 6.2 Documentary films: Landscape, people and their common history are also documented in form of film recordings in all trans-boundary regions of TransEcoNet. Several film parts reflect certain regional landscape situations and cultural heritage. Such documentary film called Valleys of the Pinka and Raab/Őrség/Goričko (AT-HU-SI) was also part of this action.

Action 6.4 Thematic publicity: A number of activities raising awareness of ecological networks are compiled in this action. People should get aware of their regional landscape and its ecological values, natural heritage and cultural identity. In spring and summer of 2011, people could visit two exhibitions on Slovenian cultural heritage implemented within TransEcoNet. The exhibition, titled as “The young days of my grandparents”, was set up at three places. Two of them were in the castle of Beltinci and in the castle of Grad, the administration and information centre of Goričko Nature Park. Local schools have compiled materials regarding the cultural heritage of their home region. They investigated landscape situations, working and living
conditions of their grandparents in the early times. With the help of the activities, the children discovered the life in the early times and they became aware about contrasts the old and the new/current way of life. The Slovene project partners of TransEcoNet, the Regional Development Agency Mura, the University of Nova Gorica and the Geodetic Institute of Slovenia worked closely together with the Goričko Nature Park in order to organise these series of exhibitions.

Additionally, the first interview-workshop took place in Őriszentpéter, Őrség, Hungary on 22 July 2010. At the workshop, the majority of the respondents, many mayors from different settlements from Őrség and the representatives of the Őrség National Park gathered together. The study presentation was followed by a public forum where the facilitators tried to find a common solution for the problems of the landscape and people regarding Őrség, together with the aforementioned participants including local inhabitants, decision makers and the representatives of the National Park. During the meeting, the following questions were being discussed:

- What kind of future do you want to for the landscape in Őrség and what role could you play with your own activity in that?
- Seeing the past, do you see any possibility to harmonize the farming and the nature conservation?
- How would be possible to start/improve the communication between the stakeholders, local people in the region (forestry, regional planners, local governments, green authority, national park)?

Firstly, the participants had to answer these questions in small groups, and after the group discussion, the questions were openly discussed together. This forum, aimed at conserving the landscape, can be seen as an important step and as a Hungarian-side model towards establishing and organizing a forum/platform where all affected people and stakeholders have the possibility to participate and cooperate in long term.

To sum up, TransEcoNet, which was carried out from January 2009 until July 2012, contributed to the pan-European inter-linkage of valuable ecosystems and to a sustainable cross-border territorial development and it tried to reach an improved/informed public awareness of ecological networks. Therefore, it can be seen as a real good example on how the cross-border protected landscapes with rich natural and cultural heritage can be developed jointly.

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41 [http://transeconet.nyme.hu/index.php?id=18776]
8.2 Green Belt Initiative

Two projects, in which the Nature Park Goričko took part as a project partner on transnational level, were all based on the European Green Belt Initiative. At the beginning of the introduction of the initiative, there is a need to discuss its importance. The idea of a European Green Belt based on the German Green Belt was articulated by the Friends of the Earth (BUND), Germany and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) for the first time in 2002. The first scientific meeting, seen as the start of the initiative, took place in 2003. This happened in parallel with the establishment of the Hungarian Őrség National Park, only few months earlier than the establishment of Goričko Nature Park in Slovenia as part of the three country nature park Goričko-Raab-Őrség in the border triangle with Austria and Hungary.42

Countries which have signed the Declaration of Intent in 2013 on the European Green Belt until now are: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.43 Slovenia and Hungary participate in one of the four organizational regions of the Initiative together with Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Italy and Croatia.

The European Green Belt Initiative focuses on the areas that once were separated by a frontier known as the Iron Curtain. Because of the restricted access and the strong former barrier, a unique biodiversity has kept and evolved along the border zones. It is important to note that a line which performed separating functions, but after the dissolution of the former Eastern bloc and together with the European integration process can act as a unifying element of Europe’s natural environment since.

By following a course of which large sections were part of the so called Iron Curtain, the border between East and West, one of the most divisive boundaries in history, the European Green Belt symbolizes the European effort for joint cross-border activities in nature conservation and sustainable development. Moreover, the initiative aims at better harmonising human activities with natural environment and at increasing opportunities for the socio-economic development of local communities. In accordance with the vision behind it, the European Green Belt offers the chance to take one of the world’s leading symbol of human division and transform it into a model for future nature conservation in Europe.

Cross-border conservation projects contributed to the integration of communities across administrative state boundaries too. Besides the promotion of increased understanding between East and West, between old and new EU member states and candidate countries, the Belt also explains the need for nature conservation to the general international public.

42 http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/fileadmin/content/downloads/the-initiative/Fact-sheet_EGB.pdf
43 http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/fileadmin/content/downloads/Declaration-signed-04-09-2013_with_Slovak_Republic.pdf
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Owing to EU funding and support from the adjoining countries on the regional and national levels, the stakeholders along the Green Belt have been engaged in implementing two multinational projects. The projects’ main aims are to protect the Green Belt as an ecological corridor and memorial landscape, to develop trans-boundary cooperation and to promote sustainable regional development.

The first project in which the Goričko participated was project CADSES Interreg IIIB Protection and Valorisation of the longest Habitat System in Europe (abbreviation: GREEN BELT), with the duration between April 2006 and May 2008. The project partners along with Logarska dolina d.o.o., Solčava and the Nature Park Goričko were the Association for Rural Development in Thuringia, Erfurt as Lead Partner; BUND - Friends of the Earth Germany, Erfurt; Thuringian Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Environment, Erfurt; University of Applied Science Erfurt; Institute of Systems Biology and Ecology, The Czech Academy of Sciences, České Budějovice; Oziveni-Bohemian Greenways, Prague; Hnuti Duha, Friends of the Earth Czech Republic, Brno; Institute for Nature Conservation Austria in cooperation with the Austrian League for Nature Conservation, Graz; Austrian League for Nature Conservation Burgenland, Eisenstadt; Slovak Environmental Agency, Banská Bystrica; Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, Bratislava; Hungarian Cyclist Club, Budapest; Castanea - Society for Environmental Protection, Sopron; ETP Foundation – Sustainable Development Projects, Sofia.

The vision of the GREEN BELT was to facilitate the transformation of the former “death belt” into a green “life line” by focusing on the use of the natural potential of the project region to foster a sustainable economic development. GREEN BELT elaborated pilot studies in the fields of traffic, tourism, regional marketing and education. The project also aimed at improving the communication between the people once separated and at raising the awareness that nature protection can be compatible with sustainable regional development. The main results included:

- Contribution to a sustainable trans-national Green Belt networking for the protection and valorisation of the longest habitat system in Europe,
- Feasibility studies on the topics “Gap analysis of the Green Belt”, “Sensitive traffic development”, “Involvement of the local population into Green Belt tourism”,
- New common corporate design of the Green Belt initiative: website, printed material and mobile exhibition and leaflet "Central European Green Belt" in seven languages
- Green Belt workshops for stakeholders on the local, regional and national level
- Pilot projects: Signposting of thematic cycle trails and an adventure hiking-trail in selected areas along the Green Belt

In the followings, the study deals with the most important activities and results of the project regarding the cross-border cooperation of three borders.\textsuperscript{45} The project activities included the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Green Belt Workshop, held between 24\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} August 2006 in the centre of Goričko, Grad. A European Nordic Walking Path has been designated with three milestone-like information tables on the territory of Goričko (at castle Grad, municipality of Cankova and the Tripoint) that now connects the Slovenian side with Austria and reaches the Hungarian border. On 9\textsuperscript{th} October, 2006, an information stone of the European Green Belt was erected, which was the first in the line of the former Iron Curtain stretched from the Barents to the Black Sea. Nature Park Goričko has become an integral part of the way to form a necklace of protected areas along the northern Slovenian border with other protected areas in Slovenia and Europe. A so called walk passport was issued in which a tourist can mark the places what were visited so far along the border. The whole project for Goričko was mostly based on the project Nordic Walking on Green Belt by the help of the Phare, Slovenia–Austria 2006. The project results included the creation of co-worker expert network, common corporate design, web page in 8 languages, a Calendar, a brochure about the Slovenian/German greenbelt and video interviews about the everyday life during the highest isolating performance of the Iron Curtain, etc.

Other activities were mostly focused on the intention on strengthening social cohesion among once hermetically separated people on different sides of borders. A video interview called “Attention! State border” was created. Village theatre plays were all based on stories about crossing the border. Public events such as walking days (e.g. trilateral hiking to the border stone, walk between Budinci, Slovenia and Orfalu, Hungary) and swimming were organized with the explicit intent to contribute to the dissolution of mental borders. From the point of view of the cooperation with the Hungarian side, the designation of a cyclist circle road between Budinci, Andovci, Čepinci and Orfalu in Hungary had great importance.

The other project dealt with the European Green Belt, it was called as “Promoting the ecological network in the European Green Belt” (short form: GreenNet). It lasted from April 2011 until March 2014. The total budget of the project, implemented through the Central Europe Programme co-financed by the ERDF, was 1.953.143 EUR, out of which the ERDF contribution was 1.498.538,05 EUR.

The partnership was consisted of the Lead partner Association for Rural Development Thuringia and partners as follows: Nature Park Goričko, BUND-Project Office Green Belt; Friends of the Earth Germany, Austrian Institute for Nature Protection and Landscape Ecology Styria, Ametyst - Environmental Protection Association (Jihozapad, CZ), Regional Environmental Center, Country office Slovakia (REC Slovakia), C.E.T.A. - Centre for Theoretical and Applied Ecology (Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, IT), University of Applied Science Erfurt (Thüringen, DE), University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna, IRUB (Wien, AT), Austrian League of Nature

\textsuperscript{45}http://www.celotajs.lv/cont/conf/conference/110322-CN/ presentations/43_Desnik.pdf
Conservation Lower Austria (Wien, AT), Regional Management Burgenland GmbH (Burgenland, AT).

The project aimed to support and strengthen policies, strategies and approaches to safeguard the ecological network of the Green Belt. The further enhancing of nature protection in the Kučnica/Kutschenitz–Mura Rivers along the Slovenian–Austrian border, which was one of the six chosen GreenNet pilot regions, was aspired by applying local and regional tools, instruments and strategies to enhance nature protection, civil participation and public awareness. The project contributed to the development and implementation of a joint transnational strategy for management. Other main topics are political lobbying on EU- and national level as well as the scientific networking on Green Belt issues. In details:

- a common transnational methodology defined regional goals and landscape quality objectives for the pilot regions, precisely the following possible fields of action for the Kučnica/Kutschenitz–Mura pilot region:
  - Collection and evaluation of water ecosystem data for joint water management and,
  - management plan of Nature Park Goričko,
  - Collection and evaluation of spatial data for spatial plans using by communities,
  - Communication with relevant stakeholder,
  - Suggestions for water management,
  - Revitalization with purchase of habitats/biotopes,
  - Suggestions for funding extensive land use,
  - Work with media,
  - Raising awareness.

- A GIS tool has been elaborated in order to visualize and evaluate the data collected during regional surveys and inventories,

- transnational benchmarking of tools and instruments for nature conservation,

- development of tools for safeguarding ecological networks,

- transnational management and protection strategy,

- “Charta of the Green Belt”, comprising of a common transnational management strategy and Greennet toolboxes,

- promoting the European Green Belt as World Heritage.
8.3 Mutual cross-border co-operation projects

The border region’s two main actors, the Őrség National Park and Goričko Landscape Park, have realised two mutual projects so far, in which both participated as project partners. The former was the Landscape in Harmony project, the latter the Upkač/Magas fák gyöngyei (English: Pearls of high trees), and both were realised within the framework of the Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013. Henceforward, we will focus on these two projects.

The leading partner of the project 'Sustainable use of Natura 2000 habitats along the Slovenian-Hungarian border’, shortly Landscape in Harmony project (SI-HU-1-2-012), was the Őrség National Park Directorate itself. This was the first CBC project - proving the bigger project management capacity compared to that of Goričko - that was successfully implemented by the lead of the national park. Among the partners on the Hungarian side were also the Slovenian Minority Local Government of Apátistvánfalva Settlement (AÖK), on the Slovenian side the Goričko Landscape Park, Prlekija Development Agency (PRA) that deals with the majority of project management matters, as well as the Ecological Centrum SVIT (ECS).

Therefore, in the development and realisation of the project five partners took part. The Őrség National Park Directorate, as the nature conservation manager of the Őrség Natura 2000 area, carried out the co-ordination of the project, harmonized and continuously checked the work of the partners. Accomplishing the sustainable use of the habitats on the Őrség Natura 2000 areas was its priority task. The Goričko Landscape Park was responsible for the nature conservation management of the Goričko Natura 2000 area, the Prlekija Development Agency for the improvement of the Mura Natura 2000 area. The partners wished to contribute to find a common solution for cross-border intact Natura 2000 area’s nature conservation problems.

The two nature conservation organisations and the PRA contributed to the project with their knowledge in ecosystems and sustainable agriculture. The main task of the ECS, as ecological product developer, was to develop and promote nature-friendly agricultural products. The AÖK contributed to the project by the nature-friendly management of valuable habitats in its area, and by mediating the interests of the Slovenian minority. During the realisation of the project, it meant an advantage that the partners had had previous cross-border co-operations, and experience in implementing similar tenders (Phare CBC, Interreg IIIA, LIFE Nature).46
The project's implementation period was from 2009 to October 2012. The total cost of the project was 1 317 193,66 EUR; the total obtained public funds 1 251 333,93 EUR, and the first cost 65 859,73 EUR. The obtained ERDF sum was 1 109 300,99 EUR, thus the fund supported 85% of the overall cost.

The justification of the project was that the three Natura 2000 areas, which comprise the project's target area, represent a unified natural region, their natural values essentially are identical and are in connection with each other. Due to this, the nature conservation activities in the areas of Őrség, Goričko and Mura have an impact on the habitats on the other side of the border, they require a unified, cross-border management. The partners realised that the alliance of the three areas gives a greater chance to eliminate the problems.47

It is still true that the common nature conservation challenges and harmful, in many cases hardly reversible procedures in the areas can be summarized as follows:

- The decrease of agriculture, especially the total disappearance of animal husbandry, endangers the rich natural heritage. With the decrease of pastoral farming the most valuable grassland habitats are in danger.
- The abandoned meadows are overgrown with weeds, and in long decades they were exposed to forestation, in consequence of which, the majority of the flora and fauna (for example orchids, butterfly species) have disappeared.
- The transformation of grassland into arable land.
- The disappearance of grassland habitats and along with this, the extinction of the ecosystem there, the decline of biological diversity.
- On the not abandoned, still agriculturally cultivated lands, the spurt of intensive arable land cultivation, and in respect of ecological advantages, spread of incorrect management practice.
- The included homogeneous forests and pine plantations have been significantly extended over the last 200 years, disappearance of mixed oak-beech stands, intense use of forests and clear-cutting instead of selection cutting and complex traditional use of forests (pasturing, gathering, woodcutting etc.)
- The appearance of extensive monocultures that are not characteristic of the area and go against topographic and soil characteristics, causes the pollution of potable water and deterioration in life conditions, besides the spread of agriculture inherent in chemical input and fertilization, and the disappearance of protected natural values.
- The incorrect management related to the farmers' lack of awareness

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- With the deterioration of the agriculture, the area has plunged into an economic crisis, unemployment has grown, standards of living has dropped and all this gradually appeared along the border.\textsuperscript{48}
- The one-dimension of the traditional mosaic-like landscape structure, the disintegration of farming forms adjusted to the landscape features, and in general the degradation of the landscape, all effect adversely the quality of life of the local population and the touristic potential.

In consequence of these, the project aims at the contribution to sustainable land use, spreading nature-friendly agricultural methods, as well as promoting the habitats and protected species of cross-border areas. Grasslands, their treatment and preservation were given particular attention. Farmers, the local population, visiting tourists and experts comprise the target groups.

The overall aim of the project was the preservation of the biological diversity of Natura 2000 network by developing a sustainable landscape use model based on the natural, economic and social advantages of the target area. The target system breaks down as follows:

- The assessment of the potential of the landscape utilisation that preserves biological diversity in the Natura 2000 areas of Őrség, Goričko and Mura.
- Mapping out the Natura 2000 habitats, plants and diurnal butterflies of the areas,
- Assessment of economic and social relations, as well as farming and nature conservation opportunities.
- Development of new agricultural and touristic products,
- Enhancement of products' commercial viability by establishing a local trademark,
- Development of a common criteria system of nature-friendly farming, communicating it towards farmers, introduction of "green point" system,
- Preservation of biological diversity by realising sustainable land use,
- Procuring machines suitable for nature conservation management of the grasslands, and establishment of milk processing facility,
- Reconversion of arable lands to grasslands, their treatment,
- Promoting the habitats and sustainable use of Natura 2000 areas,
- Preparing tourist guide books that present the habitats, plants and diurnal butterflies of the Őrség, Goričko and Mura Natura 2000 areas,
- Preparing and spreading publications and games that introduce nature-friendly farming.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} http://landscapeinharmony.eu/hu/projekt-bemutatasa/a-projekt-hattere/#a-projekt-hattere
\textsuperscript{49} Source of point \textsuperscript{1}
During the project, the natural, economic and social potentials of the three concerned Natura 2000 areas. The Natura 2000 habitat map of the border region was prepared, the vegetation mapped out (on 60 000 ha), so were the priceless diurnal butterflies of the area (on 90 000 ha), out of which a Butterfly atlas was compiled. The reason for the assessment of the diurnal butterflies was that they are apt indicators of the grassland's ecological condition. The vegetation's assessment took place with habitat-mapping, which was conducted in the whole area of Őrség and Goričko. During this, the habitat types were differentiated, the occurrence of protected plants recorded, and a Geographic Information System database established.

Beside natural values, the economic and social relations were analysed, the situation, opportunities and demands of the local farmers were taken into account. Furthermore, opportunities of sustainable land use were assessed among the population. On the basis of the assessments, a sustainable landscape use model was prepared, which determined the directions of the area's development, showing guidance to local farmers and political decision makers, determining future development directions. The guidelines of the nature-friendly farming were determined, and a guide was prepared for the farmers, which were presented at forums. Besides, the opportunities for animal husbandry development were assessed, and they developed a plan to make four model farms flourish. By presenting the model farms they wished to achieve the spread of best practices and examples with the project.

Special emphasis was put on local product development and its promotion. In its framework, to encourage the production of ecological products they established a small milk processing facility (in Ratkovci), where cheese and other dairy products are produced from local milk, while cattle contribute to the sustenance of grasslands. "Green point" system (assesses the locality of the product and its effect on the environment) was introduced to evaluate farming. Furthermore, they provide the farmers who farm in a nature-friendly way with a local trademark, in order to help local products reach the market, and encourage farmers to use nature-friendly production methods.

Guidelines for nature-friendly grassland farming were developed, which were propagated on more forums. Thus, boards and posters were made, tourist guide books were printed, which served to bring natural values of the areas closer. These present the most significant habitat types, protected plant species, as well as diurnal butterfly species. In general, these were prepared in three languages in respect to the border region. With the multilingual publications they encouraged and promoted the sustainable land use and nature-friendly farming methods. A nature documentary was shot covering this topic, which presents the natural values of the area, the past and present of its grassland framing, also with informational purpose. For the project a website was also created, whose main task is to propagate the

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50 Source of point 1 + http://landscapeinharmoney.eu/hu/projekt-bemutatasa/projekttevekenysegek/#projekttevekenysegek
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informational materials, documents, which were made during the project, to the widest possible range of people. A board game was also created, which also serves to promote nature-friendly grassland farming. Its name is 'Gazdálkodj természetesen' (Economize naturally), in which you win if you economize your meadows the best possible way so the most flowers, butterflies and birds find their habitats. Apart from all these, four grass management machineries were purchased and these are used for grassland maintenance purposes. Last but not least, a cross-border educational trail was made during the project, therefore, interactive signposts have been placed in Kercaszomor (2 locations), Velemér, Szalafő–Felsőszerez, Őriszentpéter–Keserűszerez, Kondorfa, Bukovnica, Kobilje (two locations), Gibina, Selo, Gornji Petrovci and Dolenci. The educational trail presents nature-friendly grassland farming methods and draws attention to correct reaping techniques and times, as well as it introduces which protected species can be saved by keeping to these perspectives.

The biggest achievement of the project is the sustainable landscape model, which solves the preservation of biological diversity by taking economic and social opportunities into consideration, and building on the landscape advantages, it also has economy and tourism development effects. The partners hope that the future development of the area can be based on this model. Resulting from the project, new agricultural products were created and their popularity grew with producers and consumers. The agriculture's nature-friendliness slightly intensified, the communication between nature conservationists and farmers improved, and also did the conflict management between agriculture and nature conservation. The nature conservation management of grasslands of at least 200 hectares and the preservation of its diversity have been solved with the procurement of new machines. The natural values of Natura 2000 habitats have become more popular due to the publications.

It is important to note that, though, the project has been finished, the partners keep working for the preservation of the border region, which is rich in natural values, and for the facilitation of sustainable farming in harmony with nature.

Prior to the closure of Landscape in Harmony, in 2011 the realisation period of the project Magasz fák gyöngyei (Pearls of high trees), or project Upkač, started (project number: SI-HU-2-2-013), which ended in 2014. As it has been referred to, the project was also realised within the Slovenia-Hungary Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, with the only difference that the documentation was submitted in a later call for applications. In this project the leading partner was the Mura Development Agency, besides the DOPPS BirdLife Slovenia, Szlovén Vidék Gazdaságfejlesztési és Szolgáltató Kft. (Slovenian Countryside Economic Development and Service Ltd.) in Hungary, the Őrség National Park Directorate and Goričko Landscape Park participated as project partners.

51 http://www.patkosstudio.hu/tanosvenyek/46/harmoniaban-a-tajjal-termeszetbarat-gyapgazdalkodas

52 Source of point 1
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The budget of the project turned out as follows: the obtained ERDF sum was 1 008 699,33 EUR, the overall obtained public funds were 1 186 705,12 EUR, the overall cost was 1 338 004,48 EUR; the first cost was 151 299,36 EUR.

More factors justified the project. These factors group around the preservation, potential economic utilization and making a local product of orchards' rich biocenoses (biological communities) The so called hay meadow orchards, which are rich in species and have a unique farming form, pose a challenge since the majority of orchards have been destroyed, parts of existing ones are unattended to, there are many neglected and abandoned areas. The partners strived to save their genetic values and characteristic biocenoses. The partners recognised that in consequence of the danger of the orchards' disappearance, the preservation of meadow orchards and their farming are an important nature conservation and social task. They pointed out that the preservation of hay meadow orchards should be higher priority in the Goričko and Őrség National Park, since these habitats and the related farming provide the indispensable interrelated mechanism of the border region, and the subsistence of landscape and local society.

The main objective of the project is the long-term and systematised preservation and sustenance of the biological diversity of hay meadow orchards, as well as the assurance of the border area's economic and social development (exploitation of economic opportunities, reduction of emigration). The objectives of the project can be summarized as follows:

- Development of local products: the revival of traditional hay meadow together with fruit cultivation, reviving and tending to abandoned orchards, as well as helping farmers with that,
- Revitalisation of hay meadow orchards in critical condition: renewal of the area of the remaining hay meadow orchards, as well as establishing new hay meadow orchards so as to preserve the habitats on the long-run,
- Making farmers interested in the renovation, cultivation, maintenance of the abandoned orchards,
- Establishing a co-operation in the future that provides exchange of information and experience between centres with similar perspective in the border region,
- The establishment of integrated and proactive communication between those who deal with the renovation of hay meadow orchards (founding the association of borderline fruit-processors) and of cross-border partner networks,
- Establishment of a training network in the target groups of the project area (in order to gradually spread the knowledge acquired during the project, in the border areas),
- Preservation of the cultural and farming heritage of the border area with special attention to the Slovenian minority in Hungary that forms a part in the project.

The target group of the project primarily consisted of local farmers and fruit cultivation experts, since the success of these kind of projects and that of the future of hay meadow orchards
depends on the engagement of these two groups. Besides them, the target groups consisted of local residents and tourists in relation to the sales of local products from the different fruit trees.

In the frame of the project numerous activities were carried out, henceforward, these and the accomplished useful results will be presented in the study. Firstly, the seeking out and collection of plant and animal species in the orchards of the border region took place, from which a unified digital database was created. Apart from these, the procurement of tools (i.e. scythes, saw, ladders etc.) necessary for the maintenance of the areas took place. A machinery fleet has been established in Felsőszölnök. This meant a purchase of one tractor and several types of machineries from the project sum.

The renovation of existing orchards (i.e. in Felsőszölnök) was also part of the project, this was carried out in more orchards, mainly with the guidance of experts from Maribor. There were many old and dry branches on the previously ill-treated trees, which have been cut, and by preserving the young twigs, they have made the trees fertile again. During the project, producers received saplings and by planting them they could renew the tree population, which also helped the sustenance of hay meadow orchards.

In Felsőszölnök, in the frame of the project, the Alma-lak (Apple-house) was built on the purchased plot whose edifice primarily provides room for apple processing produced in the orchards. Thus, it was an important step in the preservation of traditional apple cultivation to hand over a new fruit juice producing small plant. It has been possible since 2014 for farmers to take their products there so fruit juice can be made to be sold later, while sustaining traditional landscape management and unique habitats. It is important to note that the range of products can be extended: not only apple, but also pear can be processed in the plant, and later on more unutilised by-products (pomace) can be used to make vinegar or pálinka. This processing procedure has been mastered by many locals so they can prepare fruit juice without external help. With these they would have liked to encourage locals so in time fewer abandoned, unattended area would be in the region and a living, attractive, well-working landscape would come into existence.

The Open Hay Orchards Network has been established, and by joining that, farmers are to present their orchards to interested guests and allow the purchase of fruits and products made from them. The orchards joining the network receive a unified signboard, and the national park directorate makes them known by giving away free common publications with maps and putting them on its website. The centre element of the network constitutes the tasting facility and the orchard, which presents the rarest local fruit types, as well as the habitats of hay orchards, all in Őriszentpéter–Keserűszer. In the house it is possible to taste local fruit products (dried fruits, juices). Besides this, in the orchards of the national park and the farmers who joined the project bird and bat holes have been placed to preserve the local unique biocenoses (plant communities).
The long-term preservation of the ancient fruit types' genetic value necessitates the storing of their samples even at the lowest security risks possible. It is guaranteed by the Csörgőalma Gyümölcsöskert (Queening Orchard), which is independent from private farms, is in stable State possession, operates in the asset management of the national park directorate, and was realised within the project. They established the appropriate infrastructure of the orchard, where there are relaxing pavilions tables, benches, information boards, bicycle racks, as well as fences and gates fitting the landscape. To cover the sustenance works of this orchard, grass managing machineries were procured.

In the centre of Goričko Landscape Park and Őrség National Park one office has been established respectively, which works on the renovation and preservation of hay orchards and their habitats. During the project, it was possible to acquire professional knowledge and raise awareness in relation to hay orchards. For the sake of preserving habitats, educational encouragement of the project participants and others responsible was undertaken. They held nature days, made publications, organised events (workshops, round table talks, presentations, counselling, seminars, conferences) for the sake of suitable farming methods. It has to be particularly emphasised that in the cross-border region fruit producers and fruit processors were able to take part in workshops. Last but not least, they created thematic routes.

The result of the project was that the sustainable and systematised preservation of the habitats became possible, along with the possibility for the wider economic development of the border region with cross-border regional development perspective. In consequence of the realisation of the project, the chances of the hay orchards' survival have immensely increased, and by educating correct treatment to farmers it is possible to preserve their habitats. By promoting the products made in the orchards, farmers have better chances to sell their products. The increase of the abandoned and later reused hay orchards' natural values was characteristic during the project, and by their correct treatment and long-term sustenance it will be successful to preserve and protect rare and priceless tree types, habitats, protected plant and animal species. Due to the successful preservation and sustenance of natural areas, economic co-operation and the exchange of experience have increased, regarding the production and sales of ecological commodities. Awareness was raised successfully in many farmers that for the sake of economic exploitation of hay orchards with long-term farming, it is expedient to establish suitable mechanisms and infrastructure, in many places this has happened. Parallel to this, the spread of hay orchards' significance took place in public, among local residents.

The project contributed to the exploitation of the development opportunities of nature-friendly farming, as well as to the added value increase in the economy. These activities, in case they constitute a long-lasting, complex, self-enhancing system, can favourably affect the population retention capacity on the long run through the preservation of landscape values, as well as the workplace and value creating effect of landscape farming, which can utilise those values in a sustainable way.
8.4 CBC projects carried out by the Goričko Nature Park

With the active partnership of the nature park, altogether five projects financed by the CBC Programme were put into action since the foundation of the organisation.

In the framework of the Slovenia–Hungary Cross-Border Operational Programme 2007–2013, apart from the already mentioned two joint projects, four projects got financed by the partnership with Goričko but without Ōrség National Park. These mainly focused on craft traditions and local handicraft products as well as on cultural, people-to-people kind of activities serving the strengthening of social cohesion.

In the framework of the Slovenia–Hungary Cross-Border Operational Programme 2007–2013 a total of five projects were carried out. Apart from Goričko, partners taking part in the project “Academy of Crafts” (abbreviated as AC), led by the Municipality of Veržej, were the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training; Hegypásztor Kör; Martineum Roman Catholic Foundation; Regional Museum of Murska Sobota; Pomelaj, the Rural Development Cooperative; Prlekija Development Agency; Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum; Society of Folk Art in the Parish of Zala and Institution of Marianum Veržej - The DUO Centre.

The project was put into action between 15 July 2009 and 14 July 2012, the obtained ERDF fund amounted to EUR 758,362.56, the proportion of the financial contribution was 85 percent, the total public contribution was EUR 879,159.64, the total cost was EUR 892,191.25 and the first cost was EUR 13,031.6.

The fact that in the case of some trade related to craftsmanship, the number of craftsmen who could transfer their knowledge to the newer generations is trifling, was noted as the ground of the project. For that very reason, addressing all those target groups to whom this knowledge could be successfully transferred is important, particularly on account of knowledge and experiences going down to posterity.

The objectives of the project among others were to keep alive the traditional rural trades as well as to transfer the knowledge of the already forgotten ones and to elaborate new and innovative forms of training in connection with them. The main aim was to establish an interdisciplinary international centre, namely the Academy of Crafts, dealing with informational education and training on account of the new craft products and services. Hereinafter the study presents only those activities in detail which were carried out either in the Ōrség or Goričko part of the cooperation area or by the active participation of Goričko Nature Park.

Goričko Nature Park contributed largely to the survival of rural trades since a wide variety of craft workshops (weaving mills and potteries) were set up under its leadership. It also held potter and weaver training programmes connected to the workshops beside organising one-day workshop programmes for children on three occasions. The nature park created travelling shows presenting six trades (waver, feltmaker, spinner, thatcher, potter, blacksmith) as well as
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flyers and brochures related to them. All the undertaken activities, in the framework of the Nature Park project were carried out mainly in Grad and in Prekmurje.

The aim of the Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum in the eastern part of Őrség and Zala County was the examination of craft heritage and still existing handicraft trade that can still be found.

AC projects had a significant role in the long-term preservation, revivification and development of handicraft trade and industry, thus attractiveness of the cross-border area increased and cooperation between partners working on both sides of the border, craftsmen, local communities, educational and cultural institutions as well as external experts also got stronger. Transfer of knowledge and experience on cross-border level was attained, which can support the realisation of new projects in the future. By close collaboration of partners, tourism service providers and craftsmen a unified and rich supply of tourism services based on craft features could be created on both sides of the border.

„Academy of Crafts 2” (abbreviated as AC 2) was carried out as the second part of the project with roughly the same partners. The project was put into action between 15 July 2011 and 14 July 2014, the obtained ERDF fund was EUR 845,546.55, the total public contribution amounted to EUR 994,760.71, the proportion of the financial contribution was 85 percent, the total cost was EUR 1,170,306.718 and the first cost was EUR 175,546.

This project was basically initiated for the same reasons as the earlier one (AC), but was given special attention. This way the objectives were also virtually identical, with the only difference that in the second part a greater importance was attached to the disadvantaged groups, for example to people with reduced working capacity and the disabled. In the provinces there are not enough real job opportunities especially for the disabled and those with reduced working capacity. For that very reason, alternative activities like handicraft, where all of these people can work with the right attitude, are of even greater importance – as told by the partners. The results also form part of the sequel of the earlier project.

The objectives of the project included the elaboration of a programme for disadvantaged groups and children with special needs in addition to the popularisation of handicraft trade and

53 The project was led by the Municipality of Veržej and the partners were the Institution of Marianum Veržej - The DUO Centre; Society of Folk Art in the Parish of Zala; Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum; Prlekija Development Agency; Pomelaj, the Rural Development Cooperative; the Regional Museum of Murska Sobota; Goričko Nature Park Public Institute; Hegypásztor Kör and Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training.
its initiation into tourism services. Among the project activities we wish to highlight the project tasks of Goričko Nature Park:\(^{54}\):

- Organising a free study visit for tourist guides, service providers, travel and event organisers, this way making possible to organise excursions and holidays in Prekmurje;
- altogether 9 tourist packages were created, in one-day and longer versions, calling at craft workshops where tourists can test their manual skills;
- a detailed study was created about the craft workshops and their addresses also got collected;
- programmes connected to handicraft: pottery workshop, weaving and spinning programme for primary school children, crocheting and creative workshop programmes for children;
- 10 portable stalls got purchased on which Slovenian craftsmen can present their activities;
- promotional information points were established and the clothing design for the staff of Academy of Crafts Centres was created;
- studying old clothing and exhibiting historical baroque clothing in the castle of Grad in the framework of an international study visit with Slovene partners.

Concerning the whole of the project, regarding some of the strands on the level of the cross-border area we can speak of the further development of the earlier project. Information centres were established, education and training in connection with craft trades were assessed and enhanced, initiation of handicraft trade into tourism services got more emphasis while new active tourist packages were created for different target groups in the topics of training and research which were then carried out on a pilot basis. Furthermore, the clothing of the staff for information and the uniform design of stalls promoting handicraft were designed, international comparative studies were created about the preservation, realisation and enhancement of craft trade in the cross-border area and studies were made on the handicraft fairs organised in the cross-border region.

Apart from handicraft, cultural and social activities also played a significant role in the history of Goričko’s previous partnerships.

These include “MURA-RABA TV II” (the full title of the project is “Cultural and Media cross-border co-operation of the land between Mura and Raba River II.”), the first project which Goričko Nature Park was not part of. The leading partner of the project was HI-FI Videostudio D.O.O. from Slovenia while other project partners on the Hungarian part were Szentgotthárd Television and Cable Operator (Gotthárd TV) and Association of Slovenes in Hungary. The total

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budget of the project was EUR 721,848.48, the ERDF fund was EUR 583,342.82, the total public contribution was EUR 102,413.22 and the first cost amounted to EUR 36,052.44.

Regarding the **objectives** of the project, the contribution to cultural exchange should be highlighted, thus Hungarian and Slovenes had the opportunity of getting to know the culture of one another better. Furthermore, increasing awareness to the culturally valuable border area (its popularization) was also among the main aims. The cultural cooperation and the exchange of content-wise rich bilingual programmes contributed to the enhancement of the attractiveness and the popularity of the border area on both sides of the border.

From the activities only those that contain usable elements for the cooperation between Őrség National Park and Goričko Nature Park will be presented and underlined. “Info Points” also required substantial investments, entailing information points across Goričko and the Hungarian Rába Region providing tourists and locals with various data about the local sights while also offering internet access.

In the framework of the project, a bilingual magazine programme entitled *Mura-Rába TV* was created, being a production of TV AS but aired both on the Slovenian and Hungarian side on a weekly basis. In the meantime, Gotthárd TV also created a weekly bilingual magazine programme which was also aired on both sides of the border. Both programmes were 25 minutes long. There were other activities in the project as well (programmes in Hungarian and Slovenian presenting the life of people on both sides of the border, media camps for youngsters from Prekmurje and the Hungarian Rába Region) encouraging the enhancement of relationships and the sense of belonging concerning local residents from Prekmurje and the Hungarian Rába Region.

The project had a positive impact on the social cohesion of people living in the regions as it contributed to the recognition of the life and customs of local residents coming from those regions featured by the project as well as to the diminishing of the lack of knowledge about the people on the other side of the border. The project was of special importance mainly concerning Slovenes coming from the Rába Region that is part of Őrség National Park since through the project they had the opportunity to strengthen their cultural identity in the areas next to the shared border.

Last but not least, project “Neighbour to Neighbour”, full title of which is “*Porabje and Goričko, bounded in culture*” was also carried out between 2009 and 2012 with the help of CBC SI/HU. Beside the leading partnership of Slovenska Krajina Development Agency in Hungary and apart from Goričko Nature Park, from the Slovenian side Centre for Health and Development Murska Sobota and from the Hungarian side Municipality of Felsőszőlnök and Alsószőlnök as well as National Slovenian Self-Government took part in the development. The obtained ERDF fund amounted to EUR 910,761.06, the obtained total public contribution was EUR 1,028,106.18, the proportion of the financial contribution was 85 percent, the total cost amounted to EUR 1,209,536.682 and the first cost was EUR 181,430.5.
The main objective was the improvement of the attractiveness of the region, mainly from the point of tourism, while strong emphasis was put also on the cultural, ethnographic memories and heritages. Particular effort was made to establish richer and more valuable relationships among youngsters as well as to strengthen cultural identity.

Also within the project, the organisation of Goričko Nature Park undertook the publication of a bilingual recipe book containing the traditional dishes of the Rába Region and Goričko as well as of a guide about the cultural and ethnographic values of the border area. On top of this, the following activities took place in the area of Goričko Nature Park or Őrség National Park:

- 3 permanent exhibitions were elaborated: a Slovenian ethnographic collection in Felsőszölnök, an exhibition presenting the cartwright’s trade and its traditions in Alsószölnök and another one presenting vernacular architecture in Filovci;
- 2 already pre-existing exhibitions were further expanded: the pottery memorial room of Kétvölgy was extended with a movie about pottery of the Rába Region, screened continuously on the scene and the content part of the exhibition entitled “Life next to the Iron Curtain” was translated into Slovenian;
- workshops were held mainly on the topic of handicraft (pottery) and gastronomy (pig roast), by which specific elements of the heritage of the border area can be presented and learned;
- travelling exhibitions were created from the products made at the workshops;
- with the participation of cultural groups, children and residents of the cooperation area, cultural events and film days were organised on both sides of the border by which a new tourism product was created interpreting the natural and cultural heritage of Prekmurje and the Rába Region;
- new publications, such as “Songbook of the Rába Region”, “Slovene grammar” and “Traditional bread baking” were issued as well as a gastronomic pocket dictionary in Slovenian;
- cultural and natural heritages of the cooperation area were archived with the means of modern technology: the ethnographic film is about handicraft while the promotional documentary video deals with the activities of the project;
- the traditional tour of Neighbour to Neighbour between Orfalú and Budinci was organised.

One of the first cross-border projects of Goričko Nature Park called “Living with Natura 2000 in Goričko – cross-border biodiversity” was a successful tender for the grant of the Phare programme of cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Austria 2003. The theme of the call was the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development in the cross-border area.
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The project partners included Lebende Erde and Vulkanland from Austria (L.E.i.V.), being the administrator of the neighbouring Natura 2000 areas in Styria. Other Slovenian partners were the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Regional Unit Maribor; Institute of Agriculture and Forestry Murska Sobora; The Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia; and the Central School of Agriculture in Rakičan and Goričko Držištvo.

The total value of the project, carried out between September 2005 and 30 August 2006, was EUR 126,789.84 and the requested funding grant was EUR 114,110.85, 90 percent of the total budget. The project area covered the municipalities of Goričko Nature Park.

The aims of the project were the following:

- Integrating knowledge about the importance of nature protection management practices to preserve the habitats of rare and endangered animal and plant species;
- contributing to education and raising public awareness with the help of information activities;
- contributing to the development of the management plan for Natura 2000 territories,
- familiarizing themselves with the practice of the management area of Natura 2000 in Styria, Austria;
- putting the professional principles into practice regarding ecological restoration of important habitats;
- introducing opportunities about local handicraft products from natural sources for complementary activities of households and agricultural holdings in the protected nature area of Goričko Nature Park.

In order to achieve the objectives, the main activities were implemented:

- Professional development of coordination between institutions and stakeholders in the preparation of measures for the protection and development;
- elaboration of expert guidelines for mapping habitat types;
- creating a book about typical habitats, flora and fauna (Natura 2000) and the environmental measures of the Agricultural Programme as well as preparing articles for publication in local media;
- preparation of worksheets for learning groups of different ages;
- implementation of experiential learning;
- fieldwork for the students of the School of Agriculture in Rakičan;
- use and restoration of ecologically important habitats;
- implementation of a competition for the "product of nature and of nature" and sales promotion of the castle of Grad and other info-centres.

As a result, coordinated professional principles for a Natura 2000 management plan were set up. A booklet with the description of habitats and species was issued under the title “Nature
and Man”. A collection of worksheets for environmental education helped to work with the pupils in the wild. Local products were selected on an open competition, furthermore, a wetland was restored. Besides the previously mentioned common thinking with the Austrian Nature Park, the other most important field of the cooperation for Goričko was the pilot introduction of nature science workshops for children from primary schools in the area of the nature park as well as experiential guiding for park visitors. Evaluation of the pilot implementation which was conducted on the basis of short questionnaires showed that the new approach was very well received by the pupils. Goričko Park was convinced that the offer of nature science days covering various topics and habitats as well as involving elements of nature interpretation and technical activities such as weaving and pottery, this way interpreting cultural heritage in Grad (the seat of the Nature Park) is well accepted by visitors.

8.5 CBC projects carried out by the Őrség National Park

Some projects were carried out by Őrség National Park being partner or beneficiary, without the participation of Goričko Nature Park. Each of the projects were different, however, they generally included activities in connection with natural environment, in the fields of nature and environmental protection, as well as cultural tourism and ecotourism (including local products).

The project Munkalehetőségek teremtése védett területeken (Creating jobs within protected areas) was the first major project, which was financed by the Hungary-Slovenia Phare BCB 2003 Programme, with the total cost of EUR 148,667. The beneficiary was the Őrség National Park Directorate and the cooperative partner was Prlekija Development Agency.

Among the objectives of the project was to promote employment of long-term unemployed by programmes for education and employment within protected areas, including the National Park, Kerka Stream Nature Park, the Natura 2000 territories on both sides of the border and the Goričko Nature Park itself, which did not own the nature park status at that time. Another objective was the formation and the application of qualified manpower with special knowledge to fulfill tasks regarding the natural protection of the National Park emphasizing two aspects: the nature conservation education and agri-environment.

The project was realized with almost the same content on both sides of the border. Illustrative materials were published about the natural assets of the National Park and the production methods, information boards were placed next to the nature trails and to the educational garden. Further tools for promoting education and tools ensuring technical background for theoretical training were purchased.

A 160-hour accredited conservation leader training programme was held for 30 people and a 120-hour accredited agri-environment training programme was held for 30 people; each of the trainings contained a mobility abroad. Within the framework of the trainings, it was possible to take part in 2 consultations where the participants could listen to a short summary of the
education material of the additional project, presented by Slovenian guest lecturers. After having completed the training, the participants of both groups passed a final exam. The Directorate of the National Park undertook the employment of 5 people from both of the groups for 12 months, offering them a renewal of contract in the case of mutual satisfaction.

As a result of the project, unemployment dropped by 3 persons and the number of those with special skills increased by 57. Since the training was accredited by the aspirant, they can continue working as an adult education institute. The illustrative materials purchased and prepared for the theoretical training were being used continually in the educational and tourist activity of the National Park.

The projects Ecoremediation and Őrállók útja (The Path of Watchmen) were organised within the frameworks of Interreg II A Community Initiative Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia Neighbourhood Programme 2004-2006, both of them realized with the leading partnership of Őrség National Park’s Directorate. In the project Ecoremediation, sustainable water management, the total cost of which was HUF 69,832,000, the project partners were the West-Transdanubian Environmental and Water Authority and Municipality of Kercaszomor from Hungary and the Prlekija Development Agency from Slovenia.

The project was initiated due to the fact that even though Kerka Stream was a highly biodiverse habitat in the past the regulation of the stream had negative effects on the ecosystem of the whole valley. In this way, the aim was to restore its previous condition. Within the framework of the project the rehabilitation of a 4 km cross-border part of Kerka Stream’s basin was realized. A nature trail, information booklets and a film was prepared related to the project.

The project Őrállók útja (The Path of Watchmen), properly known as Őrállók útja creation of common touristic area, was also realized with the leading partnership of Őrség National Park, from January 2006 until the end of August 2007. The project partners from Hungary were decisively from Őrség (the Municipality of Őriszentpéter, the Municipality of Szalafő, the Municipality of Kercaszomor, the Őri Foundation, the Directorate of Vas County Museums) and the Municipality of Hodoš, the Municipality of Šalovci and the Municipality of Moravske Toplice belonged to the partners from Slovenia. The rounded sum of aid was HUF 52 Million.

The vision of the project was to create an integrated Slovenian-Hungarian tourism demonstration area, called Őrállók útja (Tha path of watchmen). The specific aims of the project are summerized as follows:

- to present/demonstrate the natural, ethnographic and architectural assets, as well as traditional houskeeping/farming and popular crafts in an experiential and sustainable way, based on a variety of experiences, organised in a touristic package,
- to create advanced information databases and networks in the partner institutes active in the integration of development and the maintenance of development,
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- to create a common marketing and promotion strategy/pactice in favour of competitiveness, greater awareness on the market, more effective sales and sustainability,
- to preserve and develop minority identity and integration.

In the case of the national park, the following investments were completed:

- the creation of covered bike stands and outdoor resting places,
- the reconstruction of the barn, which was transformed into a craft workshop, including Folk Art Workshop, purchasing a potter’s wheel and an electric muffle kiln,
- the creation of four new nature trails and road signs (1. The history and the monuments of Szomoróc, 2. The wildlife along Szala Stream between Őriszentpéter and Szalafő, 3. Attractions of Felsőszer in Szalafő, 4. Nature trail “Körtike” from Csörgő-szer to Pityeszer,
- the acquisition of a horse wagon and horse harness,
- logo and design, web development, bilingual publications, as well as planning Study tour and conference.

Őriszentpéter renovated the old brick-burner, Szalafő reconstructed the community centre and created an exhibition unit, Kercaszomor reconstructed a harrow house and a tourist lodge, while the Directorate of Vas County Museums reconstructed a barn in Pityeszer.

On the Slovenian side the youth hostel of Hodoš was built, bicycles were purchased, a bike stand and a resting place were created.

The investment enriched the region’s tourism potential by elements which give the possibility to find out more details about the similarities and differences of cross-border cultures. As a result of the project each of the touristic attractions could be better connected, creating a cross-border ecotourism and cultural tourism itinerary.

Őrség National Park cooperated not only with Slovenia, but with Austrian partners as well. Within the framework of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Austria-Hungary 2007-2013, the project “Developing and establishing a network of nature and national parks in Burgenland and West-Hungary” (PaNaNet) was realized. The scope territories of the project were 4 national parks (Fertő-tó-Seewinkel National Park, Fertő-Hanság, Őrség and Balaton Uplands National Parks in Hungary), the 6 nature parks of Burgenland (Neusiedlersee-Leithagebirge, Rosalia-Kogelberg, Landseer Berge, Geschriebenstein, Weinidylle and Raab) and 4 nature parks of Western Hungary (Sopron, Írottkö, Őrség, Kerka).

The partners were the following: Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH, as leading partner, as well as Őrség National Park Directorate, Fertő-Hanság National Park Directorate, Balaton Uplands National Park, furthermore Nationalpark Neusiedler See–Seewinkel from Austria. The
total cost of the project, which was realized between April 2008 and December 2013, was EUR 1,949,936, the obtained ERDF fund was EUR 1,551,322.

The project was justified by the creation of several natural reserves along the Austrian-Hungarian border, on the implementation area of the project. However, coordination and communication between these territories was insufficient, therefore a project was needed to change this situation and harmonise the work and tourism management of the territories in different countries. A series of actions was needed, which tries to connect natural reserves, to stimulate the further development of nature tourism offer of regions and helps cooperation in marketing and public-relation work and utilize synergies.

Therefore the project reacted to these deficiencies and to the lack of cooperation in its target system. The overall objective of the project was to increase the acceptance among the population of the protected areas’ functions, values related to economy and quality of life. The so-called Pannonian nature reserves were positioned as typical offer by means of the durable connection of the territories.

The aim of PaNaNet was to promote the cooperation of national parks and nature parks on both sides of the border, creating tourist offer and products in common. Network features were reinforced by joint events, trainings, workshops dealing with the main topic of joint tourism development and the training/further training of nature tour guides. Hereinafter the study presents development activities, which can be translated into the cooperation between Őrség and Goričko or at least can be taken into account as future joint activities.

In the areas of touristic offer harmonization and product development, coordination meetings were organised, with the participation of representatives of national parks and nature parks. The PaNaNet International National Park and Nature Park Conference was organised in 2012, entitled “Ecotourism and natural heritage: regional products – good examples, best practices and mistakes to avoid”.

Participants agreed that regional and local products are part of our natural heritage, strengthening the identity of a particular area and contributing to the sustainable development of a particular region. Two presenters from Őrség also featured on the event. The conference was a great possibility for knowledge transfer and sharing experience about local products, partners could get information about each others’ aspirations, best practices and some of the local products, like the pumpkin seed oil of Őrség, were promoted as well.

To ensure a uniform presentation of landscape and cultural history, a common PaNaNet-level map was created. Linguistic difficulties caused some problem in the Austrian-Hungarian border area, thus so-called terminological crash courses were held to make participants acquire basic terms to help smooth cooperation. An important result was that within the framework of PaNaNet project tourist offer packages, guided tours were created.
Most of the tours concern Ōrség and Raab Nature Park, next to the Slovenian border. The programme package “Cultural Landscapes and Flavors in the Hungarian-Austrian Border Area”, which presents local projects, the package “Three Countries – One Aim” concerning Slovenia, based on bike tourism, and the package “West-Pannon water experience”, which organizes water tourism are the backers of the attractions of Ōrség and South Burgenland.

It is worth mentioning the “PaNaTour” experience tour. A bike tour was organized concerning the protected areas of the Hungarian-Austrian border area, which gave the possibility to meet the unique supply of ecotourism. The staff of these areas helped in the presentation of flora and fauna, as well as different habitats. Beside the project partners, decision makers, journalists, NGOs and locals could take part in the tour, promoting consultation and creating a common “Pannonian Touristic Brand”. Common tour guide trainings are also transferrable elements.

The benefits of the vision of partnership and project for Ōrség were better information transfer, and the possibility to draw the attention of tourists together to the natural values of the cross-border area, improving the competitiveness of the project area in the ecotourism market.
## Table 3: List of the granted projects by Őrség National Park, Goričko Nature Park, and Natúrpark Regional Development Ltd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short title</th>
<th>Title of the project</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Name of the recipient</th>
<th>ERDF fund (EUR)</th>
<th>Public fund obtained (EUR)</th>
<th>Objective of the development</th>
<th>Proportion of the obtained public fund (in % of the given CBC programme)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape in Harmony</td>
<td>Sustainable use of Natura 2000 habitats along the Slovenian–Hungarian border</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Őrség National Park Directorate</td>
<td>1,109,301</td>
<td>1,251,333.9</td>
<td>Nature protection purposes, sustainable use of habitats.</td>
<td>3.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP2</td>
<td>Goričko Nature Park Public Institute</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP3</td>
<td>Prlekija Development Agency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP4</td>
<td>Municipality of Števanovci</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP5</td>
<td>Ecological Centre Svit Pomurje Gornja Bistrica</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPKAČ</td>
<td>Magas fák gyöngyei</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Mura Regional Development Agency</td>
<td>1,008,699.3</td>
<td>1,186,705.1</td>
<td>Long-term preservation of the cultivated landscape as well as of rare and endangered plant and animal species of orchards. Establishment of a training network, conservation of the nature heritage, revitalisation of orchards.</td>
<td>3.61%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Goričko Nature Park</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>DOPPS – Birdlife Slovenia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Slovenska Krajina Development Agency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Őrség National Park Directorate</td>
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<td>Name of the recipient</td>
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<td>Public fund obtained (EUR)</td>
<td>Objective of the development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PaNaNet</td>
<td>Nature reserves network of Burgenland and Western Transdanubia</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Regional Management Burgenland</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Örség National Park Directorate</td>
<td>1,551,322</td>
<td>1,949,936</td>
<td>To raise awareness to the value of the protected areas concerning economy and quality of life and to achieve broad acceptance among the population in connection with it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Fertő-Hanság National Park Directorate</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>Nationalpark Neusiedler See–Seewinkel</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAMAPROM</td>
<td>Labour market development in the Slovenian–Hungarian border region</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Zala County Foundation for Enterprise Promotion</td>
<td>420,245.31</td>
<td>494,406.27</td>
<td>To bring forth the integration of disadvantaged groups of employees into the labour market, to intensify the activity of employers, to interactively introduce the body knowledge related to employment by modern tools of info-communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Zala County Regional Development Agency Non-profit LLC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Mura Regional Development Agency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Natúrpark Regional Development Non-profit Ltd.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Regional Labour Fund of Pomurje</td>
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</table>
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case Study of the Őrség-Goričko cooperation**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIO EXPERIENCE</strong></td>
<td>Encouraging sustainable countryside development with a new tourist offer of integral product “Bio experience”</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Sinergija Development Agency</td>
<td>983,469.57</td>
<td>1,157,023</td>
<td>To strengthen local products and farmers and link them to local tourism.</td>
<td>3.52%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Centre for Health and Development Murska Sobota</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Ecological Centre Svit Pomurje Gornja Bistrica</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>CELODIN Zala Foundation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Natúrpark Regional Development Non-profit Ltd.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ÖRRAGO</strong></td>
<td>Competence Network in the region of the trilateral nature park Őrség-Raab-Goričko in order to develop it into a model region</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Natúrpark Regional Development Non-profit Ltd.</td>
<td>1,813,863</td>
<td>2,133,863</td>
<td>To develop the tri-national nature reserve into a cross-border model region concerning ecotourism, regional products and cultural resources.</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Verein zur Förderung des Naturpark Raab</td>
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<td>PP</td>
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<td>Magyarszombatfa Municipality</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>Magyarlak Municipality</td>
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Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region  
Case Study of the Órseg-Goričko cooperation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour to Neighbour</td>
<td>Porabje and Goričko, bounded in culture</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Slovenska Krajina Development Agency</td>
<td>910,671.06</td>
<td>1,028,106.2</td>
<td>To strengthen the culture and lingual identity of people living in the border area as well as to increase the attractiveness of the region.</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP2</td>
<td>Centre for Health and Development Murska Sobota</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>PP3</td>
<td>Municipality of Felsőszőlnök</td>
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<td>PP4</td>
<td>Municipality of Alsószőlnök</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>PP5</td>
<td>National Slovenian Self-Government</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP6</td>
<td>Goričko Nature Park Public Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Academy of Crafts</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Municipality of Veržej</td>
<td>758,362.56</td>
<td>879,159.64</td>
<td>Preservation of traditional rural trades.</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP2</td>
<td>Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>PP3</td>
<td>Hegypásztor Kör</td>
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<td>PP4</td>
<td>Goričko Nature Park Public Institute</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP5</td>
<td>Martineum Roman Catholic Foundation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP6</td>
<td>Regional Museum of Murska Sobota</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP7</td>
<td>Pomelaj, the Rural Development Cooperative</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PP8</td>
<td>Prlekija Development Agency</td>
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**Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PP9</td>
<td>Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>HI-FI Videostudio D.O.O.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP10</td>
<td>Society of Folk Art in the Parish of Zala</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Szentgotthárd Television and Cable Operator</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP11</td>
<td>Institution of Marianum Veržej - The DUO Centre</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Goričko Nature Park Public Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Association of Slovenes in Hungary</td>
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**MURA RABA TV II.**

Cultural and Media cross-border cooperation of the land between Mura and Raba River II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short title</th>
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<th>Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>PP9</td>
<td>Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>HI-FI Videostudio D.O.O.</td>
<td>583,342.82</td>
<td>686,285.69</td>
<td>To strengthen cultural awareness, to develop informational society and network.</td>
<td>2.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP10</td>
<td>Society of Folk Art in the Parish of Zala</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Szentgotthárd Television and Cable Operator</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP11</td>
<td>Institution of Marianum Veržej - The DUO Centre</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>Association of Slovenes in Hungary</td>
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**AC 2**

Academy of Crafts 2

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<th>Short title</th>
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<th>Partners</th>
<th>Name of the recipient</th>
<th>ERDF fund (EUR)</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PP9</td>
<td>Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum</td>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Municipality of Veržej</td>
<td>845,546.55</td>
<td>994,760.71</td>
<td>Preservation of traditional rural trades.</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP10</td>
<td>Society of folk art in the Parish of Zala</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Institution of Marianum Veržej - The DUO Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP11</td>
<td>Directorate of the Museums in the Parish of Vas - Savaria Múzeum</td>
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<td>Prlekija Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Goričko Nature Park Public Institute</td>
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<td>Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training</td>
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Sources: http://www.si-hu.eu/images/uploads/A_M%C3%81SODIK_P%C3%81LY%C3%81ZATI_FELH%C3%81DV%C3%81S_KERET%C3%89RENDELKEZ%C3%81SSEL_RENDELKEZ%C3%81SSEL_PROJEKTEK_LIST%C3%81iscopal_fonh%C3%81S%E2%80%93RENDDELKEZ%C3%81SSEL_PROJEKTEK_LIST%C3%81JA.pdf, http://www.si-hu.eu/images/uploads/A%20M%C3%81SODIK%20FELH%C3%81DV%C3%81S%20KERET%20J%C3%81V%HAGYOTT%20P%C3%81LY%C3%81ZATOK%20LIST%C3%81JA%20OP%20SIs-%20HU.pdf, http://www.at-hu.net/at-hu/hu/projekt.php?we_objectID=39
To summarize, it can be said that Ōrség National Park and Goričko Nature Park play an increasingly important role in the development of border areas. However, it is worth concerning Natúrpark Nonprofit Kft., which played a leading role in touristic projects on the Hungarian side of the border earlier, but is currently concentrating mainly on local products and on the development of human resources.

In the planning cycle between 2007 and 2013, considerably more projects were realized than other developments financed by Phare and Interreg III Funds. One of the transnational projects and two of CBC programmes were common already, and one of the projects was guided by the National Park itself.

In the tri-border area Slovenian and Hungarian projects became more important, while the Austrian partner is becoming less relevant as for the increasingly close project cooperation. The only project which was realized with the participation of Naturpark Raab was the ÖRRAGO. The partner of the project was Natúrpark Nonprofit Kft., not the national park or the nature park.

Based on the fact that within the framework of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Slovenia-Hungary, five projects were realised, while within the framework of Cross-border Cooperation Programme Slovenia-Austria none of the projects were realized, we can say that the commitment of the Slovenian partner is obvious. In addition, the Hungarian partner took part in the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Austria-Hungary only by means of the PaNaNet. Goričko Nature Park was more closely involved in Trans-European Networks outside the tri-border area. Regarding this area, it is possible to emphasize two projects of the Slovenian Nature Park within the framework of European Green Belt Initiative.

According to the topic divided into different branches originating from their functions and competencies, the partners developed projects all of which were based on the natural environment of the border area and were strictly interconnected with each other. These branches were the following: habitat protection, sustainable landscape management, local product development, craft industry traditions and built environment or intangible cultural heritage or ecotourism. The main difference between the project contents of the two protagonists was that the Hungarian partner concentrated rather on landscape management and on the improvement of the ecological coherence, while the Slovenian partner had separate projects about craft industry traditions and Slovenian minority culture. Taking into consideration the activity of the Hungarian Natúrpark Nonprofit Kft., it is possible to say that the Hungarian partner was predominant regarding the touristic and economic developmental goals activities.

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56 They took part in TransEcoNet in the framework of Central Europe Programme as Associated Institutions.
The projects described above are winning projects of the Cross Border Cooperation Programme Slovenia-Hungary 2007-2013 (abbreviation: SIHU), which can well predict the budget-planning period 2014-2020 and the future cooperation between Goričko and Őrség.

Regarding the budget of all SIHU CBC projects, out of 43 projects with signed grant contract, the public financing of 6\textsuperscript{57} projects exceeded the framework of the smaller joint project (\textit{Magas fák gyöngyei}, en. “\textit{Pearls of High Trees}”) and the public financing of 5 projects exceeded the framework of the bigger joint project (\textit{Landscape in Harmony}), while the finanancing of 3 projects slightly exceed \textit{Magas fák gyöngyei}. Considering the developments in connection with environmental protection and tourism, the fourth most awarded project was \textit{Landscape in Harmony}, and the fifth most awarded \textit{was Magas fák gyöngyei}, while focusing only on the own topics of the projects (nature and environmental protection), they reached the second and third place ranked by value. The role of the two parks is relevant in cross border cooperation on the border areas of Slovenia and Hungary, since the projects aiming nature and environmental protection and ecotourism carried out by them tied more than half (51.46\%) of the total public financing.

The project \textit{Landscape in Harmony} got 3.81\% of the total public financing of SIHU, while project “\textit{Magas fák gyöngyei”}/Upkač got 3.61\%. Landscape in Harmony and Upkač altogether cost EUR 2,438,039.05, which is 7.43\% of SIHU. The players’ role can be regarded important also if we add the projects, which were realized by Goričko alone\textsuperscript{58} and which got 3,588,312.22 EUR public financing; this way, the two players of SIHU got 6,026,351.27 EUR, which is 18.35\% of the total public financing of SIHU. The two organisations have an even more significant role in nature and environmental protection: their two joint projects got 27.42\% of all public financing set apart for this purpose, through tenders.

The assets and the strategic support system of cross-border area (the priority of the branches mentioned) both helped the two parks to become protagonists of the development of the border region. As stakeholders, they try to take part in the initiatives regarding habitat protection and economic development based on sustainability and ecology as leading or project partners and naturally, organise spatial development.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{3PARK (renewal of living environment, revitalization of castle parks) 5.56\% of public financing of all winning projects; ŘEŠUJIMO SKUPAJ (mutual assistance in case of accidents or disasters) 4.98\%; VIA SAVARIA (preservation of culture and religious traditions, development of religious tourism, involve small settlements in tourism) 4.46\%; New road at Rédics (Hungary)-Göntérháza (Genterovci, Slovenia) border 3.88\%; Pannon Pleasure (creating a cross-border biking tourism destination) 3.82\%; BIOFUTURE (strengthening and supporting sustainable and effective energy use) 3.67\%.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Neighbour to Neighbour; AC; AC 2; MURA RABA TV II.}
9. Management, budget (revenues/expenditures)

Since the cooperation does not have an independent management structure, it neither has an individual budget. In other words, there is no common organisational system: there are three basically different structures, each of them with different functions, competences and finance and funding opportunities. Financial background, the lack of funds is the main obstacle of cross-border cooperation.

However, this does not mean that the lack of funding would make it impossible for border actors to take action. The lack of large, jointly managed financial funds or sources can be regarded as a rationalization of private and public funds, as factor, which shows into the direction of spending funds in a logical and effective way. Thereby the parties almost only realized developments requiring own contributions, which answered challenges or utilized existing endowments.

The greatest challenge for the future is the creation of real cross-border projects, despite the limited financial framework of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Slovenia-Hungary.

Despite the lack of own budget, the three main actors of the region have control over a relatively large amount of funding. Two of the actors, Goričko Nature Park and Őrség National Park get a high amount of public finance – they can count on varying amounts of revenue sources in each year from the state.

Concerning the financial manoeuvre of Őrség National Park we have to emphasize that the annual budget of the directorate is about HUF 300 Million. Development activities are financed by 10-30% of the budget, including cooperations with the Slovenian (and Austrian) partners. The amount invested for CBC is varying from year to year. The turnover is depending on the stage and the cost of the stage of the given project. In some years, serious investments are realized, in which cases several millions of HUF are invested in CBC projects (e.g. “Landscape in Harmony” project).

The financial possibilities of the participation of the National Park in cross-border cooperations depend on the revenue from the National Park’s activity and on the level of state support. Within the own revenues, the most significant sources are tourism (tourist guide and accommodation services) and agriculture (area-based agricultural subsidies, sale of animals and other products). These sources help the National Park to survive, and provide the opportunity of non-operational expenditures. However only a small part of it can be spent on developments.

Since their own revenues are not enough to be spent on regional development, the role of CBC-sources is of utmost importance regarding developments. Developments can be realized only from Hungarian and CBC-sources. Considering the cooperation between Őrség National Park
and Goričko Nature Park, common problems can be solved using EU funds. EU funds provide favourable conditions to create joint projects concerning nature conservation or tourism with the Slovenian colleagues and partners. State aid is minimal in a sense that the amount ensured by the state is hardly enough to cover wages and a part of the operating costs. The common development with the Slovenian partner is practically financed by the EU funds.

The smaller the mandatory private financial participation for the National Park is, the more favourable the tender is. Cross-border programmes are preferred by the national park, since mandatory private financial participation is relatively low. Furthermore, according to the current constructions, the mandatory private financial participation of the national parks’ directorates is fully ensured by the central budget. The greatest advantage of bilateral developments for the Hungarian party is that projects don’t cost the National Park anything. The financial engineering instrument is the following: 10% is financed by the government and 5% should be financed by the National Park. However, the Park gets the remaining 5% from the state.

In the Slovenian side, Goričko, the situation is less favourable. Similarly to the Hungarian side of the border, the main source of income is tourism, including the entrance fee to the castle, the sale of local products and accommodation service. However, projects have to be cofinanced from these own resources. Thus, Goričko has no “gratis” projects and it can take part in cross border cooperation projects financing 5% of the expenses from their own resources.

Since developments need to be financed from their own resources, they can only take part in a limited number of projects within a year or within an EU budget cycle, and the contents of their activities are limited as well. It is not possible for the nature park to take part in really big projects, since it cannot perform a 5% own contribution. The annual budget of Goričko Nature Park is EUR 450,000, which mainly covers the operating costs (paying salaries, heating, electricity). Similarly to the national park, developments can be realized in varying degrees: in 2014 the organisation only had EUR 5,000 for this purpose. Usually 18-20% of the annual budget, thus EUR 80-90,000 is being allocated for CBC purposes.

Among the three partners in question, the Nature Park (the Natúrpark Regional Development Non-profit Ltd. from the Hungarian side) is the weakest regarding resources and financial opportunities. This is based on the fact that the Nature Park has always been a local initiative. On the other two sides, including the Austrian part, nature parks are supported by provincial and State resources. On the Hungarian side of the border, Őrség National Park, contrary to its name, is functioning almost like a nature park considering financing. In the case of the Nature Park, budgetary implications of CBC programmes were especially high, about 50% - infrastructural developments not included in the budget (eg. the ground floor of the work organization’s centre in Alsószőlnök was built from the budget of the Austrian-Hungarian CBC
programme). The high rate highlights that cooperation in cross-border programmes have an important role in the Nature Park’s life.

All this is due to the fact that until very recently the activity of the Natúrpark Ltd. was generating tendering ideas, creation and realization of concrete tenders. One of the three main activities of the organisation includes participation in cross border cooperation programmes. The other two main activities include participation in rural development programmes (developing local products) and recently taking part in TÁMOP (Social Renewal Operational Programme) tenders. The value of cross border developments is about HUF 40 Million annually.
10. SWOT analysis (cooperation-based, not territorial-based)

10.1 External conditions of the cooperation: reinterpretation of the role of borders, cooperation frameworks, general impacts of the European Territorial Cooperation

STRENGTHS

- There is an increasing supply of resources for cross-border cooperation.
- Demolition of the Iron Curtain had ended, therefore barrier functions of borders had diminished.
- The economic barrier function of the border is minimal: the “cooperation” works very well concerning economic considerations as everyone knows where to go in order to access a given product or service.
- Even more stakeholders are included on the Hungarian side, such consortiums in which leading partners collect more of the small actors are organised and as a result, cross-border programmes are advantageous to even more people.
- The Slovenian side concentrates more on carrying out their projects with a more stable group of actors, like it is already in the case of Goričko.
- The presence of non-state bottom-up organisations (for example Natúrpark Regional Development Ltd.) brings a different quality to the system of the cooperation.

WEAKNESSES

- High expectations in connection with CBC sometimes caused disappointment, for which more actors desisted from further cooperation.
- Impacts of the mental detachment caused by the almost hermetic isolation from each other for decades can be observed today as well. Changing the mind of people takes more time than the completion of an infrastructure or a project would. Physical barriers had disappeared but some kind of a mental border (the “cultural iron curtain”) is still very much present.
- In previous cross-border programmes there were the so-called Small Project Funds that had disappeared in the last period which is much to be regretted. With its help, relatively small actors could access resources with ease without joining complex consortium systems. Apart from the concrete aim of implementation the role of the Funds was to establish and strengthen partnerships which were important in the foundation of cross-border cooperation.
- The typical kind of cooperation in the area is still the ad hoc, project-related one.
• It is a drawback that although there is a loose cooperation between the partners, they have practically no impact on each other. They have no means to “extort” timely and accurate performance as well as the invested money from each other.
• Regulation of the cross-border cooperation programme causes lots of problems, mainly due to the compulsory use of Slovene, Hungarian and English.
• The Slovenian managing authority and intermediate body manages issues much less strictly as it is in the case of Hungary. Therefore, concerning payments, delays of months or even one year can occur. At one time when a Slovenian partner had got the managing role in a project, it raised great difficulties for the Hungarian national park to be devoid of their 60 Million HUF for one year which they paid into the project alone.
• Previous tri-national cross-border programmes ceased to exist. In such a border area like the Slovenian–Hungarian–Austrian it bring about numerous anomalies and difficulties (for example, they cannot have a partner from a third country, consequence of which on the Slovenian side of the Austrian–Hungarian cycle path signs can only be in German and Hungarian because it is not allowed to spend money on Slovenian translation). Presently, the issue of projects involving a tri-border area is complicated due to bureaucracy.
• Impecuniosity of stakeholders from the border area and SIHUCBC being straitened is a general problem while it is especially the Slovenian side whose budget is limited. During calls only one or two joint proposals can be carried out.

OPPORTUNITIES

• The establishment of the Common Market, the Schengen Area and the European integration can contribute to the simplification of cooperation (elimination of restrictions concerning border crossing, lessening of activities subject to license, unification of EU standards, etc.)
• Further appreciation of the once, at the time of the Iron Curtain disadvantageous border location that nevertheless gained in value, by exploitation of the potentials of advantages coming from its peripheral quality (e.g. unspoilt nature and preserved traditions) through for example ecotourism.
• In consequence of the international legislative approximation, numerous cooperations can become simpler (for example the trade of local products).
• Concerning national and EU policy makers, it can be achieved that similarly to several international programmes (for example LIFE), the use of English language should be enough.
• Appreciation of the tri-border situation and further exploitation of synergies.
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THREATS

- While after the fall of the Iron Curtain Slovenian–Hungarian cross-border cooperation were characterised by massively increasing willingness, cooperation intensity may relapse into a lower level by the remission of the initial enthusiasm.
- National and EU-level development policy may change, consequently topic fields important to the two parks may fall out of their priority listing and the parks would not be considered as supported types of areas anymore.
- Disappearance of soft elements (e.g. meetings, trainings, marketing elements) while they still play a significant role in networking as the establishment and maintenance of new partnerships can be realised mainly within these frameworks.

10.2 Internal characteristics of the cooperation and the cooperating partners: concrete activities and results, characteristics in connection with the joint projects

STRENGTHS

- Experience of cooperation regarding previous years is overall positive and partners consider activities successful.
- Partners already know each other well and they know what to expect from one another. Mutual trust had developed and the practice of cooperation became established.
- Partners mutually realised that jointly, by coordinating their activities they can be successful because of their capacities and challenges are similar to each other.
- The trilateral natural park was created, laying down the formal framework of the cooperation (organisational framework, objectives, activities, etc.)
- A system of formal and informal meetings and workshops was created in the framework of which the concerned majors, NGOs and experts coordinate their activities.
- Partners have been working on growing number of fields, including project development and management, event organization and knowledge transfer at the same time, in order to strengthen territorial, economic and social cohesion on both trans-European and bilateral level.
- Activities serving the creation of the sustainable landscape management model of the border area were carried out on both sides of the border. Projects were typically accied out by adjusting to the landscape features. In view of these, CBC projects Landscape in Harmony and Upkač can be considered as good models.
- Significant success was achieved jointly especially regarding the preservation of grasslands and orchards, the protection of protected and endangered animal species and the production of local products. Cross-border development can be viewed as a
mixture of nature conservation and protection of cultural heritage on which a system consisting of local products and events that are often closely related to them, playing an important role in dissolving mental borders, can be built.

- Establishment of knowledge and the connecting database, exchange of know-how and the realisation of knowledge transfer. In recent times efforts were made to focus specifically on the organisation of joint study visits in order to get to know the solutions of one another regarding different problems. It was acknowledged that there are such sectors and special fields in which one partner can transfer experience and knowledge to the neighbour organisation and this mutual learning process in fact starts to be typical nowadays. The work that has already started in the area is very important because it allows all parties to experience, through study visits and workshops, in what fields their partner can serve as an example for best practices.

- Partners try to cooperate in organising cross-border events by providing participants and facilities as well as attending events of each other with a stall.

- The strength of the Slovenian side is that regarding communication with local communities as well as different PR exercises, they are more advanced than the Hungarian partner in respect for their multilingual portals and the fact that they have a lot more activities intended especially for local people. Apart from these they often concentrate on cooperating especially with the local people.

- The strength of the Hungarian partner is nature conservation as they have got significantly larger capacities and more facilities for restoring and managing habitats than Slovenes do.

**WEAKNESSES**

- The fact that despite cooperation arrangements and several joint activities an own strategic document has still not been elaborated is adverse from the point of the future.

- There is no common institutional system and working group though partners had already planned its establishment.

- Although there is a unified cross-border landscape, due to the national regulatory environment, the capacity of actors to actively participate in cross-border cooperation is rather different (Slovenes have a narrower scope of tasks and authority, scarcer resource and staff, etc.)

- Concerning local organic products there are significant differences between the two sides of the border. Despite the process of liberalisation in recent years (guest tables, chance for local markets to participate) the regulation on the Hungarian side is more unfavourable. Processing and marketing of local products (as a farmer or as a caterer) as well as management is incomparably easier in Slovenia. Local products produced along the border cannot be delivered to the Hungarian producer market and sold there.
The opposite is also true, that is, cross-border market of local products is hindered by the fact that there are hardly any products that could be exported due to the quantity being too small.

- Considerable organizing and dissemination of knowledge is needed in order to allow border residents to cross the border for an event. The Pumpkin Festival can be considered as the one and only exception since compared to any other events, for local actors it still does not come naturally to include sites that are only a few kilometres from each other, in their mental maps. Cultural programmes and festivals are still not popular enough for locals. In order to make local communities comfortable with the thought of crossing the border and consequently make them think about moving in the border area as crossing over to the neighbouring town within their country while also considering the facilities for crossing borders, substantial progress is needed.

- Őrség National Park is not part of the European Green Belt Initiative yet.

- One of the major difficulties of genuine cooperation is the lack of language skills, especially on the Hungarian side, where language competences are rather weak. Translation is costly, can cause misinterpretation and slows down the process of cooperation.

- The mentality, work ethic and speed of work of Hungarians and Slovenes are quite different which manifests most clearly in connection with deadlines. Slovenes work really precise and correct, on the other hand they are slow, disinclined to hurry and to work overtime. They do their duty thoroughly and in a leisurely way taking no account of deadlines. On the Hungarian side people work more like in Balkan style, that is, unlike Slovenes they do not stick to constrains (working hours, etc.), nevertheless, they do the given task by the deadline at all costs, sometimes unfortunately at the expense of quality.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Drive forward the direction of cohesion-based territoriality integrated planning irrespectively from projects and funds continues.

- There will be more opportunity for cooperation mainly in issues concerning sustainable farming and nature conservation.

- The sustainable landscape management model can be exemplary for other similar valuable natural areas.

- Best practices on one side of the border can be adopted in the future as well.

- One of the main priorities of future cooperation will be about the networking of actors producing, developing and selling local products.

- Due to joint publications and the sign system supporting multilingualism an increasing number of people will cross the state border and visit the border area on the other side.
• Increased participation in European Green Belt, launching of developments serving the strengthening of the cohesion by linking European ecological networks and improving the knowledge of residents about each other.
• People living on the two sides of the border can mutually gain experiences about each other and get to know one another, consequently they will be comfortable with crossing the border from which the development of a joint regional identity and the dismantling of mental borders can be expected.
• With the help of Őrség National Park and Natúrpark Ltd. the Hungarian side can catch up quickly concerning local products and the already issued content will receive more effective support.
• The Slovenian State launched programmes for Slovenian minorities (for example apple juice processing facility, promotion of cattle farming, etc.) by means of which cross-border projects reaching the level of local people can be elaborated in the border area.
• Successful establishment of complete bilingualism.
• Successful elaboration of institutionalised and well-functioning cooperation on tri-border level. A tri-national cooperation would be especially effective from the perspective of regional development concerning the exploitation of territorial capital.

THREATS

• The circle of partnership cannot expand further and parks cease to be initiator stakeholders in the development of the border region. Concerning the coordinated development of the regions of the two parks, widespread partnership cannot be established and all of the cooperation will consider Őrség National Park and Goričko Nature Park as their natural partners by what the circle of partners will focus only on them.
• Mandatory and voluntary activities of parks cannot be carried out from the direction of the state.
• Due to the scarcity of CBC resources, only a few of those joint projects that may have significant effect concerning regional development can be submitted by partners, while funding dries up.
• Multilingualism will do not receive adequate attention, consequence of which language skills will not improve further, making communication between the two partners more difficult.
• Without thinking of the level of tri-national cooperation, original objectives cannot be realised and partners cannot exploit the territorial capital at disposal.
## 11. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

Regarding future plans and goals of the cooperation, two types of future initiatives can be identified: plans that mainly focus on the territory of the given partner only, and ideas that aim to develop the cross-border region jointly. Since the cooperation has not elaborated any kind of development plan, the study can present only the following single table about the development ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of goals</th>
<th>Potential fields of cooperation</th>
<th>Órség National Park</th>
<th>Goričko Nature Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The partners' own goals</strong> (both in their territories and in relation to the trilateral cooperation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational development</td>
<td>Establishment of parking places and a visitor centre at the Pityerszer Ethnographic Monument; enlargement of the ranger network</td>
<td>Goričko would like to remain the number one initiator regarding the trinational park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature conservation and environmental protection</td>
<td>Major habitat restoration plans especially in forests and along the Raba river</td>
<td>Nature conservation; management of Natura 2000 territories; protection of species; water management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use management, local products</td>
<td>Development of the agricultural sector is always actual because of the expanding livestock, newly built barns and currently bought pastures (investment in required infrastructure and equipment)</td>
<td>Promotion of eco-friendly agriculture among local farmers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism</td>
<td>Development of water tourism and cycling</td>
<td>Sustainable tourism and recreation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint development ideas</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge transfer</td>
<td>Both partners have attempted to start an exchange programme which has not been successful yet. It would give an opportunity to the parties to spend a week on the other side of the border in order to be familiar with the work of the neighbour colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Goričko Nature Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project level</td>
<td>Continuation of Landscape in Harmony and Upkač/Magas fák gyöngyei (see in Chapter 6). Besides habitat protection, both would concentrate on the production and processing, marketing and consulting of local products, furthermore on nature-friendly farming. The main objective is to embrace the local economy. The main difference between the two aforementioned projects would be that the project called Upkač would focus on orchards, while the Landscape in Harmony would deal with the sustainable farming of meadows.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint organizational background</td>
<td>Keeping the current level of cooperation that has been reached and deepening it if it is possible</td>
<td>Establishment of the previously planned trinational nature park with its office situated at the seat of Gorčko Landscape Park with Slovene, Hungarian and Austrian colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: self-edited, made from the information extracted from the interview

It should be emphasized that due to the very limited budget allocated to the Slovenia–Hungary CBC Programme, there is no much financial background for many big projects. Other developments which have been considered priorities absorb a significant amount of resources. If a few big infrastructures were built, such as new border crossings, then nearly half of the total budget of the SIHU would be spent. Thus, partners try to be realistic and pragmatic by limiting their own goals to few areas of the cooperation. They have decided jointly and in harmony to focus the limited capacities in order to build on the results of two former projects implemented together in the frames of the SIHU 2007–2013 (see Chapter 6), namely on Landscape in Harmony and Upkač. Instead of implementing new projects, partners are interested in taking advantage of the synergies created during the aforementioned CBC projects, so they would like to submit the application with almost the same project partners for the second, upgraded versions of the given projects. To sum up, there will be a slight shift towards sustainable agriculture and local products while nature protection goals will remain one of the major goals as well.
Furthermore, the need for a more formalized and trilateral cooperation (with the Austrian nature park) platform has also been expressed, especially regarding the Slovene partner. It has been underlined that a joint cross-border management plan and a joint office (working organization) of the parks, which could integrate nature and landscape protection goals with sustainable development of the region and the well-being of local communities, would be crucial.
12. Unique, regional or own resources the cooperation can be based on

In this chapter the study reveals what kind of unique regional or own resources are available in the area of cooperation. Mainly those common or complementary factors will be presented, which can strengthen the cohesion of border areas and which can provide a basis for a territorially integrated strategy.

Within a macro-regional framework, border areas can be found in the belt of the former Iron Curtain from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean. As it has already been mentioned in the introduction, the rigid separating role of the border was valid not only between Austria and the socialist countries, but also between the former separate passenger Yugoslavia and Hungary, part of the Eastern bloc lead by the Soviet Union (USSR).

On account of the restricted access and strong former barrier, which are the characteristic features of borders, a unique biodiversity has kept and evolved along the border zones. It is important to note that a historical dividing line can act as a unifying element of Europe’s natural environment since the dissolution of former Eastern bloc. What is more, the European integration process can substantially boost the unifying elements in Central Europe. There is a potential in connecting to the ‘green belt’ that can offer unspoiled nature with some interesting former defensive structures and keep the oral history of the formerly divided Europe. Joint European cross-border efforts in nature conservation and in the integration of once segregated communities can be launched.

The European tourism policy puts key emphasis on bicycle tourism, playing an important role in linking tourist attractions. These routes highly contribute to the preference of environmental friendly modes of transport, putting ecotourism at the forefront. In Europe, several routes of the EuroVelo network significantly contribute to increasing cohesion within the Danube River Basin. EuroVelo 13 is named as Iron Curtain Trail. This is the longest designated bicycle route of Europe, following the trace of the Iron Curtain that divided the continent for almost 50 years. Nevertheless, now it serves as a means to connect the attractions of the Eastern and Western member states. The route reuniting Europe has been selected as a model project by the European Parliament in 2005.

The section of the Iron Curtain Trail on the Hungarian and Slovenian border is located almost entirely on the Slovenian side of the border. It crosses the border close to the Hungarian village of Kétvölgy, and then the route sticks closely to the national border making its way through a quiet countryside dotted with small settlements such as Domanjševci, Prosenjakovci, Motvarjavec and Kobilje. The route links the natural attractions of Goričko and Őrség with the Southern Slovenian–Hungarian border section that is more about viniculture, spa and cultural tourism considering the city of Lendava or the thermal bath of Lenti. Besides bicycle tourism,
there is a chance for the two sides to jointly integrate to the European Nordic walking routes since some parts of Goričko have been reached.

It can be said that the Slovenian-Hungarian border has a more or less untouched and diverse landscape. While in the Middle Ages the hilly terrain along the borders promoted settlement focused on defence purposes, this formerly favourable condition became a barrier of socio-economic development from the 19th century, therefore modern manufacturing industry or cities could not develop.

One of the belts of the former Iron Curtain was not developed for military or defence reasons, thereby population density remained low. In addition, mainly on the Hungarian side, border areas and small settlements were non-preferred areas for State urban development and industrial policy, while the Slovenian side remained a smallholding system, which kept the mosaic structure of the landscape. However, the peripheral location resulting isolation is particularly favourable from the point of view of nature conservation and the conservation of folk-peasant culture. In this manner, unique habitat-islands, types of farming, architectural and intangible cultural heritage were conserved, which can serve as basis for cooperation and harmonized development of the region.

The climate of Slovenian-Hungarian cross-border areas is wet subalpine, which is caused by the distance from the Atlantic Ocean and the closeness to the Adriatic Sea and the Alps. Therefore, pre-Alpine, Atlantic, sub-Mediterranean and continental climate are predominant. The climate of border areas is balanced, hot summers are rare and winters are not too cold. Average temperatures in summer are higher than the national average temperature, because of the high average precipitation and frequent cloudiness. The lack of heat in the summer is a factor attracting tourists. The richness in animal and plant species of border regions is mainly due to its unique climate. Most of these species cannot be found in the surrounding areas, or they are relicts or endemic species.

The two areas, Goričko and Őrség, are home to 32 threatened plant and animal species protected by the Habitats Directive and 23 species protected by the Bird Directive on more than 90,000 ha of protected area. The protected species form a huge variety of flora and fauna, including butterflies (scarce large blue), amphibians (yellow-bellied toad, Italian crested newt) and birds (red-backed shrike, European honey buzzard, etc.)

There are 2 identical habitat types on both sides. One of them is the lowland hay meadow (Alopecurus pratensis or meadow foxtail, Sanguisorba officinalis or great burnet). This type of meadow is rich in flowers and it is fresh green in the spring. Precious species of the hayfields of Vendvidék (“Slovene Raba Region”) and the neighbouring Goričko are the usually brightly colored vermillion waxcaps (hygrocybe miniata) and vaxy caps (hygrophorus), which stem from the Alpine region.
The local type of farming, regular mowing and haying helped the establishment of these fungal species, typical of snowy meadows of mountain areas. In the case of both Órség and Goričko the most endangered habitats are dry meadows, since if they are unkempt, they become feral because of the lack of mowing. On dry meadows some protected flora species can be found which are threatened if the meadows are uncared-for.\(^59\) The other important habitat type is the alluvial forest with Alnus glutinosa or common alder and Fraxinus excelsior or European ash (with Alno Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae). The woodlands are especially rich in wild games and in mushrooms on both sides of the border.

Hydrographic characteristics are similar. Due to the unfavourable precipitation patterns, there are more small moors, wetlands and swamps in the region, which provide very good conditions for unique plant communities (phytocoenosis). The most serious threat to wetlands and transition mires is dehydration. Most of the plant species in these territories are rare and protected species, since they need special circumstances to survive.

These are for example some sphagnum species, the globeflower \((Trollius europaeus)\), the lemon lily \((Hemerocallis lilioasphodelus)\), the siberian iris \((Iris sibirica)\) or the daffodil \((Narcissus angustifolius)\). The most part of transition mires, which can be found in wet valley floors, synclines without outflow and gives place to relic species (species from the end of the Ice Age), safeguards its characteristic wildlife for more than twenty thousand years. The presentations of unique attractions hold considerable touristic potential. An example of this is the specially protected transition mire of Szőce, which is crossed by a nature trail introducing the mire’s special wildlife.

Artificial, barrier lakes are typical of the area for a long time. They have a great role from the point of view of tourism and recreation; they are perfect for fishing, having a picnic, cycling or bathing in the summer. These lakes are for example Lake Vadása near Hegyhátszentjakab and Lake Hársas near Szentgotthárd in the Órség, or more lakes on the territory of Goričko (e.g. Ledavsko jezero, Bukovniško jezero). Most of these lakes serve the recreation of the inhabitants in the afternoons/evenings and at the weekends, and the demands of tourists seeking natural experiences at the same time.

Among others, high water table and aquifers prevent high precipitation from infiltrating into the ground, that is why drainage water often accumulates in small basins. To exploit these hydrographic, soil and topographical conditions, artificial stagnant waters, called “tóka” were usually applied, which created a specific landscape management and ecological unity. Most of these can be found in the Órség, which partially goes beyond the border, and they adapted to

\(^{59}\) In order to tackle this problem, regional actors already tried to familiarise farmers with the methodology of environmentally friendly grassland management within the framework of some projects, since regular mowing in good time may resolve the problem.
natural basins and drainage areas. “Tóka” is a deep hole used for water collection, a small lake, a puddle, or a pool. Small stagnant waters were used for watering domestic animals, watering garden plants, doing the laundry and bathing. After a while several types of amphibians established in these water collection holes, among others different types of protected salamander species.

Watercourses, which determine the topography of border areas to a large extent, have an important role in the specificity of the species of flora and fauna, since they give place to habitat-oases. Different sections of Rába, Mura and Kerka River might be important cross-border touristic routes for water tourism – it is possible to go on boat, kayak and canoe trips.

It is important to mention that Hungarian-Slovenian borderlands are rich in thermal waters, in the Upper Pannonian sand layers it is possible to find thermal waters at a temperature of 57-70°C. This can be a basis for either energy production or agriculture based on renewable resources. The level of geothermal energy also favours bath tourism and health tourism in the region (e.g. Lenti, Szentgotthárd, Moravske Toplice).

As it was already mentioned, large natural areas represent significant ecotourism-potential. The objective of the continuously developing ecotourism of the region is to form a sustainable, “gentle” tourism in accordance with the natural environment by diversifying local economies, granting livelihoods to local farmers and keeping the landscape intact for local population. In the regions of Őrség and Goričko, these objectives were realized mainly by rural tourism – there are single-family houses and smaller boarding houses in place of large, high-end hotels. This situation forms a basis for many small enterprises, especially on the Hungarian side.

Cycling tourism and walking tourism are supported by walking trails and bike trails, nature trails, demonstration and resting places. Both in the areas of Őrség and Goričko, there are one-day excursions, nature tourism, which let the visitors to be acquainted with the flora and fauna of the region (e.g. observation of moths, excursions in flowering seasons). In addition, cycling tours are also frequently organised in the territory. Tours (walking and cycling tours as well), which involve both countries are frequently organised – both countries take part in the organisation and management of these tours (for the items see first part of Chapter 1).

Both sides of the border are rich in natural assets and this characteristic renders the landscape attractive together with the cultural and architectural monuments. The facilities of ecotourism, rural tourism, gastro-tourism and cultural tourism linked with each other make the length of stays longer and render the expenditures of guests higher. On the whole, there is a great potential of enhancing cohesion in locating similar attractions on the same route and compiling joint programme packages; creating a cross-border recreation-tourism region.

It is important to emphasize that, however natural environment has diverse landscape features this characteristic alone is not attractive enough from the regional and European point of view. Really significant resources are, as it was already mentioned, the conservation of natural assets,
which is strongly linked with linguistic-cultural and gastronomic potential, including local products.

One of these resources is traditional small peasant farming. Local people formed the landscape by their small parcel farming, in harmony with the nature, conserving and maintaining its diversity. Mosaiced landscape management adapted to the conditions left behind a varied landscape, rich flora and fauna, a living and functioning region with similar farming practices on both sides of the border.

Until the 19th century, landscape management was determined by topography: agricultural production was a typical farming practice on the hilltops, whereas on the hillsides and in soggy valleys, it was mostly meadow and forest management. Even today, his specific spatial fragmentation can be observed in the case of individual micro landscapes; it is possible to “read” the cultural landscape.

Nowadays arable crop production, which requires large areas, is rarer causing increasing forest cover. Most of the forest cover in Hungary can be found on these areas, except the higher regions middle-mountain areas. Forests had raditionally more functions: besides logging, litter collection, mast-feeding, collection of herbs, fruits and mushrooms were done in the forests.
Forest management had an important role in this region. Selective management created multiaged and mixed forests, a part of these can be found even today.

The specific element of the originally mosaiced, small parcellated landscape structure is the so-called hay-field orchard, which once could be found on nearly all farms of the border areas. On steeper slopes, extensive hay-field orchards could be found, which grow/grew traditional types of fruits, like “búzérő” plum, “zabérő” pear, “scone” apple, or “pumpkin” apple (special local types of fruits), which can be utilized as dried fruits, jams, or pálinka (strong spirit).

Orchards of local people in the Őrség were planted of acient fruit trees centuries ago. The trees were planted far apart from each other and grassland under the trees was maintained by mowing. In the orchards, hundreds of fruit varities were available which were different in their time of ripening, size, colour, durability and fields of use. Trees were not sprayed, in spite of this they lived for a long time; they grew high and grew sound and bounteous fruit. Trees and the lawn under the trees gave place to a special biocoenosis, the members of which were cavity-nesting birds, bats, diurnal butterflies and orchids. Fruit varieties in these orchards are unique, they are the living carriers of biological and genetical diversity of plants grown in the territory – and because of all this they are part of the cultural heritage of the territory and they are the basis of local agro-economy (including rural and gastro-tourism) and ecotourism at the same time.

Besides natural assets, the region has an outstanding built, ethnographic and cultural-historical heritage. A unique, so-called “szeres” settlement structure was formed, which is a transition between group settlement and scattered settlement. The former guardians or watchmen built their homes called “szerek” on hilltops and loggings. These are actually types of settlement made up of a few houses, some additional farm buildings and gardens. The most famous Hungarian “szeres” villages are Ispánk, Szalafő, Nagyrákos and Őriszentpéter, which is the center of Őrség National Park, but the charasteristics of “szeres” settlements can also be found on the border of Goričko Nature Park, at settlements on the territory of Őrség region and at some of the settlements near southern Burgenland. Settlements of Vendvidék (Slovene Raba Region) and (Hungarian) Raba Region have similar charasteristics to Őrség’s settlements, however, scattered settlement structures are more widespread. Scattered settlement structure is determining on the other side of the border, in the territory of Goričko as well.

The heritage of the built environment includes specific peasant and farmhouses that reflect the traditional building materials, such as wood, clay, and straw. Several houses have straw thatched roof. The most famous collection of buildings that represents the traditional house type and the so-called “szeres” settlement is the Pityerszer ethnographic monument (skanzen) in Szalafő. The Slovenian side also boasts with these kind of buildings, e.g. Croatian’s estate (Hrvatova domačija) in Rogašovci, while some other houses are thatched with reed in both countries.
In addition, it is important to mention the monuments of folk wooden architecture and monuments of church architecture made of stone. The former group consists of the so-called “skirted” belfries (Pankasz, Kercaszomor, Magyarszombatfa–Gődőrháza, Nemesnép) and wooden belfries (e.g. Selo, Slovenia). The latter group consists of the fortress churches, which also had a defensive function in the Middle Ages. These churches are built in Romanesque and Gothic style on Árpád Age foundations (Velemér, Őriszentpéter, Hegyhátszentjakab, Szőce).

Similar important religious monuments can be found on the Slovenian side, including the Ducal Rotunda of Saint Nicholas and the Virgin Mary, a Romanesque building from the early 13th century in Selo, and the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to Saint Martin with Romanesque portal dating to the 13th century, in Domanjševci. Furthermore, the castle of Grad, the biggest castle in Slovenia housing the park administration as well as the accommodation and the museum, this way being a prominently important asset for the Slovenian side.

Border areas have a wide range of local products. The different organic, handmade and bioproducts can retain the population of rural areas through the development of local economy (creating new jobs, increasing added value). Production, processing and sale of products on one hand promote the creation of sustainable landscape management, the rise of ecotourism and help to reach environmental protection management objectives. On the other hand local products help the reinforcement of identity and region branding, based on handicraft, which brings together traditional crafts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the producer/service provider</th>
<th>Product/Service</th>
<th>Seat of activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jožica Celec</td>
<td>gingerbread figures</td>
<td>Prosenjakovci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7Zita, Terezija and Ernest Toplak</td>
<td>clay figures, clay hearts</td>
<td>Dobrovnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drago Škodnik</td>
<td>thatched roofs, bird feeders, nesting boxes</td>
<td>Rogašnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bojnec</td>
<td>potteries and pottery museums</td>
<td>Bogojina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman Rajsar</td>
<td>painted eggs</td>
<td>Grad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrijela Fisar</td>
<td>crochet products</td>
<td>Cankova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardka Merklin</td>
<td>painted eggs</td>
<td>Grad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeta Urisk</td>
<td>painted eggs</td>
<td>Dobrovnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jožef Želko</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Mačkovci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geza Kisilak</td>
<td>hand-made shoes</td>
<td>Rogašovci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jožef és Damijan Rogan</td>
<td>thatched roofs</td>
<td>Kuzma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniela Topolovec</td>
<td>folkweave products</td>
<td>Hodoš</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franc Franko</td>
<td>wrought iron products</td>
<td>Puconci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maja Rauch</td>
<td>textile toys</td>
<td>Prosenjakovci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeta Cipot</td>
<td>corn husk products</td>
<td>Odranci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anton Žökš</td>
<td>wooden souvenirs, candles</td>
<td>Maribor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name of the producer/service provider</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Franc and Darja Zelko</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Mačkovci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kmečka sirarna Gorički raj</td>
<td>cheeses</td>
<td>Prosenjakovci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovro Vehovar in Mirjam Celec</td>
<td>production of medicinal herbs</td>
<td>Kuzma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ema Grah</td>
<td>traditional bread-baking</td>
<td>Kuzma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Štefan Gjergjek</td>
<td>fruit and vegetable production</td>
<td>Grad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.park-goricko.org/de/informacije_seznam.asp?id_jezik=1&id_tip1=8&id_tip2=2&id_tip3=0](http://www.park-goricko.org/de/informacije_seznam.asp?id_jezik=1&id_tip1=8&id_tip2=2&id_tip3=0)

As it was already mentioned above, the cultivation of hay-field orchards linked with environmentally friendly grassland management is of great importance on the Hungarian-Slovenian border. In order to preserve grasslands, various instruments to cultivate grasslands in an appropriate way stimulate farmers. Most common types of grown fruits are apple and grapes. It must be highlighted that processing of pumpkin seeds is highly significant on both sides of the border, since many farmers produce pumpkin seed oil, which is also sold to tourists.

Salads with home-made pumpkin seed oil dressing are typical for north-eastern Slovenia.

High-quality jams and syrups are produced from the different types of fruits and grapes, for example the jam made of “kormin” grapes or the different spicy apple jams.

According to tradition, almost every farmer has a small vineyard where he produces "his own" wine on the Slovenian side.

From other fruits grown in the region, excellent spirits drinks are produced. Pálinka made of “kormin” grapes is popular in the region, however, a complementary characteristic of the Slovenian side is oenology, therefore wine tourism has an important role there. In many villages, farmers produce honey that they sell to tourists and local people in special flavours (e.g. lavender honey).

All in all, the border region is rich in traditional foodstuffs and regional dishes such as dödölle, pumpkin and poppy-seed strudel, and fried saffron milk cap from the Hungarian side, while some dishes are enjoyed on both sides, for example gibanica layer cake or goulash. Some commonly used ingredients in regional cuisine are not widespread in the whole territory of the countries, for example poppy seed and red paprika in Slovenia or pumpkin oil and apple in Hungary.

Quality schemes defined by EU legislation enable the protection of agricultural products and foodstuffs in EU markets. According to Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of Slovenia, many times referred to as „the gold of Őrség”
there are a few that have been designated and protected among the Slovenian Protected Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs. Štajerska-Prekmurje pumpkin seed oil (Štajersko-prekmursko bučno olje) has Protected Geographical Indication. Farmers from Štajerska and Prekmurje regions have been producing oilseed pumpkins and processing their seeds into oil since the 18th century. They produce them according to a traditional procedure of pressing roasted pumpkin seeds using heat. Prekmurje layer cake (prekmurska gibanica) and Prekmurje ham (Prekmurska šunka), a smoked and dried meat product, produced from fresh hind legs of pigs are among those products that have gained the Traditional Speciality Guaranted scheme. Higher quality scheme covers the farming of chickens for meat production of the Home-bred Goričko Chicken trademark. Home-bred Goričko Chickens have to be originated from Goričko Nature Park, and hatched, fed and slaughtered in the territory of Slovenia. They are fed on compound of high quality only. Poultry houses are smaller with fewer animals thus creating better conditions for rearing and animal welfare.

On the Hungarian side, pálinka, a traditional fruit brandy, protected as a geographical indication of the European Union, has a growing importance. Only fruit spirits mashed, distilled, matured and bottled in Hungary can be named as “pálinka”.

Pálinka distillation has respect again in Hungary. As a sign of development of fruit and pálinka culture, producers and processors of more and more settlements are involved in the production of high-quality pálinka. This unique, complementary characteristic of Hungary is reinforced by the fact that the geographical indication “pálinka” can be used in Hungary based on the Regulation (EC) No. 110/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council, and therefore from the label “pálinka” no other European farmers can have direct or indirect trading profit.

The pear pálinka of Göcsej (göcseji körtepálinka), produced on the Easternmost geographical and historical micro-region of Őrség National Park is one of the eight pálinkas that has received the label “product with protected designation of origin”.

Local people put a great emphasis on livestock breeding as well, which is why indigenous breeds still exist, mainly on the Hungarian side. The grasslands owned by Őrség National Park Directorate are utilized by the Directorate’s own livestock, grazing and preparing hay for the animals. The Directorate keeps Hungarian Fleckvieh Cattle, Grey Cattle and


62 The base of the dish is shortcrust pastry topped with four different layers of fillings (poppy seeds, curd cheese, ground walnuts and grated apples), separated by a layer of filo pastry.

63 The uniqueness of this ham is in the drying and the long maturing process under the specific regional climate conditions.
Muraközi/Medimurje horse (the only stud of this kind in Hungary) with the aim of gene preservation and land conservation, while Hungarian Cigája (Tsigai) Sheeps and donkeys are kept for demonstrational purposes.

Not only products of plant origin, but also **products of animal origin are processed** in the region. In more settlements, different cheese types (mainly goat cheese and cow’s cheese) are produced. To render cheeses more specific, producers usually add spices to them. Pig slaughterings are frequent in the area, during which sausages and black pudding are prepared to be offered raw or roasted at various festivals.

Besides products of agricultural origin and food, a great emphasis is placed on **handmade products**. Pottery, which has rich traditions, stands out from other folk crafts. Pottery is based on the important local raw material source: clay. Thus, clay soil is not only the reason for unfavourable arable farming, but also for the remarkable rate of meadows, pastures and forests on both sides of the border and the reason for pottery. Rural crafts and other traditional activities are parts of natural and cultural heritage of the region and enrich rural touristic offer.

It is true that pottery has a crucial role in border areas (it is possible to find pottery houses, exhibitions and master craftsmen in more settlements), however, wickerwork/basketry, woodcarving, gingerbread baking and candle making also have rich traditions in the region of Őrség and Goričko. Furthermore, thatch builders still exist, who continue the traditional roofing method, which today is unfortunately only a way of preserving heritage. A characteristic of folk crafts is that professional knowledge and practical skills are passed on from generation to generation and these are connected to modern forms and demands. Besides the aforementioned crafts, other handicraft branches are present in the region, which should be incorporated in tourism and in the preservation of traditions.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name of the producer/service provider</th>
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<th>Seat of activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attila Albert Jr.</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Magyarszombatfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zsuzsanna Erzsébet Balla</td>
<td>spruce syrup, dandelion syrup</td>
<td>Kondorfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>János Balogh</td>
<td>traditionally manufactured 100% pumpkin seed oil</td>
<td>Szalafő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pál Bartha</td>
<td>Kormin grape pálinka</td>
<td>Szalafő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>János Cseke Jr.</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Magyarszombatfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferencz Porta</td>
<td>rural accommodation</td>
<td>Szalafő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>István Gerencsér</td>
<td>Kormin grape jam</td>
<td>Őriszentpéter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kétvölgyi Inn</td>
<td>rural accommodation</td>
<td>Kétvölgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erika Kovács</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Felsőjánosfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viktória Kovács-Mesterházy</td>
<td>spicy and vanilla-cardamom apple jam</td>
<td>Őrimagyarósrd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Köcöle Ltd.</td>
<td>Dödölle from the Őrség</td>
<td>Őrimagyarósrd</td>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mariann Tóth</td>
<td>goat cheese with pumpkin seed</td>
<td>Szentgotthárd-Farkasfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferenc Vörös</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Magyarszombatfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gábor Vörös</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Magyarszombatfa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibor Zaicz</td>
<td>spicy goat cheese, spicy cow cheese</td>
<td>Szalafő</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyula Zsohár</td>
<td>pottery products</td>
<td>Őriszentpéter</td>
</tr>
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Source: [http://nemzetiparkitermek.hu/mainpage.html](http://nemzetiparkitermek.hu/mainpage.html)

On the Hungarian side of the Őrség in 2012-13 it was possible for local producers and accommodation providers to apply for the usage of the “National Park Product” trade mark, which promoted ecotourism. At first, only potters could apply for this title, but in 2013 other local producers and accommodation providers could apply as well. However, last year this possibility was not available any more and there were no similar cases on the other side of the border. The objective was to help local products and services to reach the market and to stimulate farming compatible in harmony with the nature, production of traditional products and tourism services.\(^{64}\)

In the case of most products, handicraftsman can be found on both the Hungarian and Slovenian side. One of the exceptions is for example egg decorating, which is a separate craft only in the territory of Goričko, or it is particularly important only in this region. Another craft, which has different characteristics on the different sides of the border is pottery – on the Hungarian side it is much more common, and there is a higher number of potters. On the whole, in Slovenia there are less crafts - however, especially on the territory of Goričko and in its wider environment along River Mura, living handicrafts which had already dissapeared in the other parts of Slovenia might be discovered,. Craft traditions still have masters who can share their knowledge and experiences and render small-scale craft industry an alternative source of income.

Last but not least, it is important to mention the factors and resources influencing the social cohesion of borderlands. Viewing borderlands in a broader sense, not only the attractive natural environment with great potentials should be mentioned, but the “border situation” as well, which is a historic heritage that has been typical for centuries. In addition, if Austria is included, a further curiosity is the tri-border situation, which is the meeting point of three different cultures. When Hungarian people arrived in the Pannonian/Carpathian Basin in the 9th-10th century, they created their border surveillance system in the region of Őrség. Őrség

itself was named after the watchmen who were settled on the western border to watch the borderline from the hills – in return they gained different privileges. The current territory of Őrség and Goričko became a borderland during the Ottoman rule in Hungary as well. Between 1600 and 1690, following the siege of the castle of Nagykanizsa by the Ottoman Turks, the southern, southeastern part of the border region became occupied territory (Vilayet of Nagykanizsa).

Battles fought against the Ottomans are part of the past. The most famous of these is the Battle of Saint Gotthard in 1664. Excluding a short intermezzo during World War II, the state borders have been dividing Őrség and Goričko since the end of World War I. The fall of the Iron Curtain now helps to connect people and helps them to mentally process the times of severe separation. However, the guard towers and military objects of the previous regime and their system of division can be reintegrated in society and economy in the form of tourism and people-to-people actions.

From the point of view of religions, most of the villages in the Őrség (except Vendvidék/Slovene Raba Region where the majority of the inhabitants is Catholic) are Calvinists, from the beginning of the Reformation to date, so it is like an island regarding religion, separated from the surrounding areas. The importance of Protestant Churches has even further increased by the fact that beside the Slovenian Catholic majority, the biggest Evangelic communities live in Prekmurje, in Slovenia. Cohesion is created not only by Calvinists and Evangelics, but by Catholics as well: the majority of Goričko, Vendvidék/Slovene Raba Region and Raba/Rába Valley is for a large part Catholic.

Part of the curiosities of the border region are local dialects, which cross the border. The uniqueness of Prekmurje Slovene65, a supra-dialectal regional variety of Slovene, should be highlighted. This region was constantly under Hungarian influence since the 11th century and it was therefore different from other Slovenian regions in many respects. Although there were attempts already in 1848 to link Prekmurje people with other Slovenian compatriots in the west, but they continued to live a remote life in relation to other parts of present-day Slovenia. Thus, together with Resian, Prekmurje Slovene is the only Slovene dialect with a literary standard that has a different historical development from the rest of Slovene ethnic territory. Standard Prekmurje Slovene was not written with the Bohorič alphabet used by Slovenes in Inner Austria, but with a Hungarian-based orthography. Prekmurje Slovene, especially its more traditional version spoken by Slovenes living in Hungary, is not readily understood by speakers from central and western Slovenia. That is why some linguists have even argued that Prekmurje Slovene is a distinct (regional) language, while it is one of the few Slovene dialects in Slovenia that is still spoken by all strata of the local population.

65 The dialect is also known as Pannonian Slovene, East Slovene, or Wendish.
National minorities, which are indigenous on both sides of the border, have an important role in social cohesion. The vast majority of Slovenians forms a small linguistic island at the settlements of the historic Vendvidék/Slovene Raba Region – the name of which refers to the Slovenian origins – as the continuation of Slovenian ethnical space. The six-neighbouring/adjacent settlements bordering Szentgotthárd from the south (Felsőszőlnök, Alsószőlnök, Szakonyfalva, Apátisvánfalva, Kétvölgy, Orfalu) gives place to major Slovenian communities, which have the opportunity to choose bilingual kindergartens and schools (Felsőszőlnök, Apátisvánfalva). In Szentgotthárd, it is possible to learn Slovenian language in secondary school as well. The biggest Slovene majority village is Alsószőlnök, situated near the tri-border area, however, proportionally many Slovenes live in Szentgotthárd as well, in the cultural centre of Hungarian Slovenes. The Hungarian Slovene minority can be informed about the news of Prekmurje and Slovenia via its official press. After the Hungarian change of regime, a continuous bilateral communication was formed between the Hungarian linguistic island and the home country.

The majority of Hungarians of Prekmurje live in the southern part of the Slovenian-Hungarian border area (Dolinsko region) and their centre is Lendava. However, representatives of the minority live north of this region as well. In some of the villages on the Slovenian side of the Őrség (e.g. Hodoš, Krplivnik), which is a basically Hungarian ethnographic landscape, Hungarian minority accounts for a significant proportion in spite of the diminution and assimilation.

The relationship of Hungarian and Slovenian minorities is characterized by reciprocity. The Slovenian government provides native Hungarian national minority with extensive minority rights: in the villages where the proportion of Hungarian minority is high, the official language is Hungarian beside Slovenian. Hungarians in Slovenia enjoy bilingualism, and similarly to Hungary, teaching of minority languages is guaranteed at the level of elementary and secondary schools. A part of Slovenian speaking people in Prekmurje acquire Hungarian language as an optional subject.

After decades of isolation, with the collapse of the Iron Curtain, minorities can renew their relationships with compatriotes from their home country. Having their own values, they can be active participants in dissolving mental borders and developing cultural economy including cultural tourism. Now the joint, cross-border organisation of public education and cultural activities can promote the preservation of their identity.

Ethnic disagreements do not endanger the success of cooperation. On the contrary, the ethnic diversity can be source of cooperation and integration. The development of interethnic relations greatly influences the cooperative atmosphere, development prospects and the cohesion of the entire region in an indirect way. Intercultural dialogue and „people-to-people projects” aiming get to know each other should be promoted in this region as well. Furthermore, multilingual information injunction should be widely disseminated on both sides.
of the border. As a result of having lived together for a long time, people came to know each others’ cultures and in part each others’ languages as well. Some of the locals understand both Hungarian and Slovenian languages – these bilingual groups, which usually have dual identity at the same time, can act as catalyst and bridge in the further reinforcement of social cohesion.

Various events promote the sense of belonging together in the border region, and at the same time enrich tourism services. Along the Hungarian-Slovenian border it is possible to find appropriate programmes throughout the whole year for all ages, which are usually organised in connection with natural values and local products, stimulating relations between locals from the two sides of the border, presentation of cultural heritage and saling products of local farmers and craftsmen. Programmes are connected to fairs, where home-made foodstuffs (e.g. jams, honeys, syrups) or handmade products (e.g. pottery products, wicker baskets, homespuns/folkweaves) can be presented.

The greatest festival of the Őrség is the event called “Hétrétország” (A land of seven meadows), which is organised in Őriszentpéter and the surrounding settlements every year in August. The event, which lasts for 10-12 days, is organized by the “Őrségi TeleHáz” (Őrség TeleHouse). The various programmes for all ages involve concerts, theatrical performances, folk music and stargazing. In addition, locals await guests in their opened farms.

Őrség Pumpkin Festival, which is one of the most visited events among the neighbouring Slovenians, has cross-border relevance. Similar to this event, is the International Pottery Meeting, which is fully about hand-made pottery products. The objective of Őrség Fair and the Fair at the Valley Bridge (Völgyhíd)/Völgyhíd Fair is the presentation and sale of local products.

The largest programmes on the Slovenian side are connected to Grad in Goričko, Grad Castle, such as various fairs organised in the Castle itself. Events on European Heritage Day are similarly connected to the Castle, during which it is open to all participants free of charge. This year, the International Traditional Easter Egg Exhibition is going to be organized for the 18th time in Dobrovnik.

In addition, around Easter-time even more programmes in connection with the celebrations are awaiting tourists, which allow talented local Easter egg decorators to present their works of art. The objective of most of the programmes organized in the territory of Goričko is to increase the opportunities of local farmers and producers and to provide them with better economic opportunities. This is why most of the events here are also connected to fairs of local products. Nature reserves along the border often harmonise their programmes and organise joint events, such as the Őrség – Raab – Goričko Trilateral Nature Park meeting within the framework of the European Day of Nature Parks, where the usual programmes are awaiting the guests (market of local products, playhouses, handicrafts, hiking, cultural programmes, culinary offerings, “three countries olympic competitions”). Events, which last several days aimed at
larger and wider audience and related to several settlements are usually organized on the Hungarian side.

To sum up, it can be said that the most apparent strengthening factor regarding the cohesion of the border areas is the cross-border nature of the landscape since the state borders are not aligned to landscape borders. There are three micro-regions that overlap the state borders, while the whole area is part of one single big landscape unit. From the point of view of natural environment, the landscape boasts with high biodiversity that has been preserved for centuries. There are same habitat types, species with high conservation value (e.g. relict and endemic species). Taking into account the trans-European level, the region is part of a bigger ecological network called the European Green Belt to which the cooperation can actively connect. Owing to the unspoiled nature, the area is suitable for ecotourism and other activities such as recreation for locals that are consistent with the landscape.

The human elements of the landscape are also similar on both sides of the border which makes them also an important strengthening factor regarding cohesion. The land use has been adapted to the natural features of the landscape, such as terrain or soil. Because of the similarities in landscape management, the local products are also similar. The local products serve as basis for rural development in the form of joint production, processing and their distribution, especially which can only be found mainly in this cross-border region.

The region has always been some kind of a border area; this historical fact also unites the areas on both sides. The border region is also a trilateral one; it is a meeting point of three distinct cultures, for which reason there are some ethnic, linguistic, religious and gastronomical features that both (or all if Austria is included) sides share.

All things considered, the whole area can be viewed as a unified territorial unit and managed jointly as a functional, integrated cross-border region and it has the potential of sustainable development based on the capacity of the cross-border landscape.
13. Synthesis, Summary

In line with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the European integration process, the roles and effects of borders have been changing, thus new forms of cross-border cooperations have emerged in the Danube River Basin, including the one with the participation of Őrség and Goričko.

First of all, it needs to be clarified that despite a CBC project, aimed at creating a joint institutional structure and working organization, there is no institution responsible for coordinating cross-border developments. Other major factors that harden their cooperation are definitely the different nature protection regimes, the lack of language skills and the limited amount of budget and funds.

In contradistinction to the geographical aspects that represent the most important strengthening factor regarding cohesion, the structural characteristics of the cooperation are among the biggest hindering factors. The regulatory environment varies across borders weakening the parks’ abilities to cooperate efficiently. There are significant differences regarding roles and responsibilities, budget, human resources and so on. The Hungarian side is a more powerful, authority-like organization having more mandatory and optional tasks, allocated funds, etc. Consequently, it is the Őrség National Park which can carry out more activities, and can be even the leader of cross-border projects.

In essence, the real cooperation between the two protected areas began after the demolition of the Iron Curtain and intensified after the EU accession with the help of growing funds allocated to the INTERREG Community Initiative and later to the European Territorial Cooperation objective.

Three major periods of their cooperation have been defined. The first one lasted from the emergence of Phare programmes until their run-out, approximately between 1995 and 2003. During this period cooperation were mainly without a comprehensive, territorially integrated approach, based on a permanent platform instead of sporadic connections.

The second period between 2004 and 2009 brought a partly institutionalized and a more formal cooperation. The territorality and strategic thinking gained bigger consideration. There was a shift towards a coordinated, strategic partnership. Two important documents, which set the main goals, activities and organizational system, were agreed by the partners: the first, on the formation of a trilateral nature park, was signed in 2006, and the latter in 2009.

The third period started around 2009 and it still has not ended. This period brought the idea that regardless money, besides project-based cooperation a common strategic thinking and a joint planning is needed between two protected areas. Regular meetings, joint programmes have become frequent and common.
Despite the ambition set in the Memorandum of 2006 for a joint trilateral park authority the cooperation is not operating like one park entity but rather like three separate ones, each following its own national policy system and governance structure. Due to the lack of a shared or joint working organization, it was possible to present the system of formal and informal meetings or workshops only.

In accordance with the Memorandum signed in 2006 a joint working group was set up. This organizational structure has been left fundamentally unchanged ever since. The meetings are held in a rotational system, each year on one of the other parks’ territory. The members delegated by the three parks officially meet at least twice a year, the trilateral meetings or workshops are held 1 or 2 times a month. It is worth differentiating between workshops and discussions/meetings – considering workshops, besides the employees of parks, partners invite the mayors concerned and, depending on the topic, some representatives of NGOs too in order to enlarge the partnership by integrating a wider range of stakeholders. Due to the presence of mayors, these kinds of events focus more on the potentials of CBC cooperation. The meetings are somewhat different. Participants are always the executives, managers, directors and experts on the given topics. The meeting of the leaders forms a good basis for reconciliation and exchange of thoughts. It is not about cross-border project cooperation only but more practical cooperation. Partners examine the results and activities representing best practices so they gain insight into good model activities performed by the host partner.

Focusing only on bilateral cooperation between Őrség and Goričko, meetings take place between the two parks 1 or 2 times a year. These meetings are thematic, where people responsible for the given topic get together from both sides. The main activities include the suggestion, discussion and acceptance of joint programmes and new projects in order to coordinate their development ideas.

Taking into consideration the geographical aspects of the cooperation, it should be underlined that the most important geographical feature of the border region is that it is a nearly completely homogeneous area since state borders are not aligned to the landscape borders. The whole area is part of the same macro-regional landscape. However, there are three micro-regions that overlap the administrative state boundaries. The cross-border nature of landscapes means that there are only slight differences between them regarding terrain, climate and so on. Even the land use adapted to the capacity of the natural environment shows many similarities on both sides of the border. From historical point of view, the hilly region turned into an unfavourable area for deploying modern industry and making a living for large urban centres around the 19th century. Due to the restricted access and the strong former barrier characteristics of borders during the Cold War, a unique biodiversity has been kept and evolved along the zone of the Iron Curtain. Owing to travel and construction restrictions, the mosaic natural landscape has been mostly preserved. In addition, settlement and industry policy of the states also helped preserving the pristine nature by excluding border areas from
beneficiary territories. Major urban centres and industrial activities have never affected the landscape in an irreversible way. All in all, it is due to historical reasons together with geographical features that the most important feature of the cross-border region along with its homogeneity is its unspoiled natural environment, characterised by high diversity with many indigenous and relict species and same habitat types in both countries.

The extensive semi-natural areas represent significant potential for ecotourism, nature, bicycle, water and rural tourism. The constantly growing importance of ecotourism is consistent with the natural capacity of the landscape, and the sustainable green tourism supports the diversification of local economy while preserving the unspoilt character of the natural environment for the inhabitants.

The peripheral location, which caused isolation, helped to preserve a rich landscape that incorporates unique forms of farming, handicraft, folk architecture and intangible heritage, on which cross-border cooperation and development can be built in order to strengthen cohesion. So, the most important geographical features of the cooperation are strongly connected to the natural environment, such as land use (including the unique settlement pattern), language and culture, gastronomy and/or local products.

These features give the opportunity to see the whole area as a homogeneous unit; consequently, there are significant potentials in managing and developing the cross-border territory jointly. It is also important to emphasize that the area has always been some kind of a border area, so the border effect has had a huge effect on the territory. On trans-European level the area is situated along the valuable ecological networks situated in the border zone of the former Iron Curtain, the European Green Belt. It is also important to note that for the proximity of Austria, the area is also a trilateral border and contact zone of three different cultures.

The importance of the cooperation mainly comes from the fact that a region/area with unfavourable character can be changed. The periphery, alienated border areas with closed, barrier-like borders can be turned into cooperative ones, into an integrated cross-border network which supports open borders.

Cooperation has been selected as the best practice model mainly due to the initiatives launched in the topic of sustainable development based on the joint characteristics and assets of the cross-border landscape. Joint projects related to this kind of development were among the most successful and important ones concerning budget as well as the results.

The sustainable landscape management model would be exemplary for other similarly valuable cross-border natural areas from the point of developments especially in ecological farming and ecotourism. Partners have achieved outstanding results in projects based on the natural
environment of the cross-border region and they strongly interconnected the areas with each other, namely in the following fields:

- nature conservation and environmental protection,
- land use and farming,
- handicraft,
- local products and trademarks,
- built environment and intangible cultural heritage,
- ecotourism.

Good practices include promotion of multilingualism in a trilateral border zone where three completely different cultures coexist beside each other. The outcome of these activities are: protected semi-natural areas, habitat restoration, preservation of high biodiversity, and ecotourism, harmonised with the landscape potentials. Moreover, employment is also stimulated through the promotion of local economy and its output. Besides the activities resulted in physically open borders, their active contribution to the dissolution of mental borders has been crucial as well. Given the fact that the cooperation has not got its own development agency or some kind of institutionalized working organization, most of the main fields of action concentrate on the most important aspect of the border situation along the state boundary that used to be nearly hermetically closed both physically and mentally: bringing people closer together. This approach regarding social cohesion shall not be underestimated in such border area.

From the point of planning, partners have been trying to move in the direction of a long-term, strategic and cohesion-based approach, and to coordinate their work in the field of project development and project management, event organization and knowledge transfer too. Partners have been striving to learn from each other, from those who have more knowledge, better experience or more tools regarding the analysis, elaboration, implementation or monitoring of a specific area, e.g. habitat protection or local products. Furthermore, study tours and workshops have been organized. Partners have become regional stakeholders by putting this approach and the aforementioned best practice model into practice in order to strengthen the cohesion of the cross-border area.
14. Conclusion

In this chapter, the objective of the research is to present policy recommendations, which can be a practical synthesis to the previous chapters and might be used by stakeholders and policymakers. Recommendations based on the assets of border areas, the experiences of joint projects and activities realized so far, and best practices, formulate a short, conceptualised possible set of interventions.

On organisational level, the undertaken institutionalization of cooperation should be continued, in order to render coordination more effective and programme implementation more successful. Although workshops and meetings were created which can be regarded as good practices, establishing a common office, work organization or a fixed platform system related to thematic areas could be progressive. If applicable, a cross-border network of rapporteurs (employees, who are responsible for the implementation of joint activities) may be sufficient as a first step.

Concerning financing, the further optimisation of the use of resources is recommended. This objective could be served well by a development concept or strategy, which could identify the main priority areas and specific measures in connection with them. Another reason for the validation of the principle of concentration is the general resource scarcity, including the financial framework of organisations, especially the Slovenian partner and the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Slovenia-Hungary. A good solution can be the further development of completed projects based on their results and synergies. In connection with the allocation of resources, the majority of own contributions and amount of subsidy should be assigned to sustainable landscape management, which is the best practice model.

Regarding the achieved results, financial possibilities and plans of partners in the planning cycle that started in 2014, the support of production, processing, sale and popularization of local products may represent a large proportion in the case of the financial allocation of developments. The development of local products contributes to the preservation of sustainable agriculture, which is adapted to the local landscape and to the survival of farming types, as well as local products which are a part of the cultural heritage, thus helping the support of rural farming. All this can give a certain legitimacy to partners, strengthening their role in the development of Slovenian-Hungarian border areas.

It seems appropriate to enlarge the scope of partnerships to a certain degree and to strengthen the already existing ones. Due to Slovenia’s limited capacities when it comes to the fulfilling of project management tasks concerning cross-border initiatives, certain Slovenian development agencies might be playing a considerate role even in the future.

Especially if the parties do not wish to or cannot create a common organisational unit responsible for cross-border affairs. This is also the reason why it would be recommended to
integrate new partners, because the main goals and competences of parks are focused on nature conservation and can thus (from regional perspective) primarily “only” apply considerate spacial organisation force in these sectors.

During all other projects, mostly the ones treating subjects such as economic development and cultural projects, they have to cooperate with many private enterprises, public institutions, NGOs and municipalities if they want to reach a complex, territorially integrated effect that truly crosses borders. They could initiate joint multilateral partnership agreements or long-term contracts to ensure the cross-border territorial development of the Őrség and Goričko landscapes with most coverage and integrating most sectors.

Moreover, we must not forget about the trilateral naturpark cooperation treaty in collaboration with the Austrian Raab Naturpark. Cooperational projects like this in the tri-border area are very rare, which is why the Hungarian and Slovenian parks could reach significant results even at European level. If the border area could join into the European Green Belt even more successfully – which is of transeuropean significance -, it would also bring upon the broadening of the geographical scope, which would thereby set a good example in the reintegration of the once isolated post-Iron Curtain regions and their population, as well as the dismantling of physical and mental boundaries.

The mutually correlated cultural heritage and social connectivity activities that strengthen nature conservation approaches, local product development, tourism-related investments and social cohesion can only be accomplished effectively by crossing borders. For this, demand-oriented, long-term territorial planning is needed, based on a mutually developed draft package that is at least at a conceptual level. With regard to future plans, it is unfavourable that despite the cooperation agreements, all various common projects and other activities, no integrated strategy plan has been accepted yet. It could thus be up to the future to create, apart from documents outlining not so much the progragmmes, as more just the frames of the cooperation that helps to create the basics, a cross-border territorial strategy as well.

Because of the drafting and effectualisation of the future territorial development plan, but also because of the environmental and economic sustainability of future cooperations, it is important to stress again the fact that the border area’s fate is strongly dependent on its common landscape resources. Creating sustainable, cross-border landscape management is fundamental for any other intervention.

The landscape characteristics of the Őrség- Goričko demand common thinking and cooperation across borders. The fact that they do not recognise borders is one common feature of the landscape’s environmental processes and their territorial spreading. Therefore, in the cooperation’s future strategy, the common cases of nature and environmental protection as well as landscape management will feature as separate items.
Sustainable landscape management based on local resources means potential development through local products for the agriculture, tourism, social space building and the creation of an attractive living environment, through which it supports job creation and economic diversification intentions that determine to a large extent the overall legitimacy of the cooperation.

Thus, the mostly unspoilt, semi-natural countryside with high levels of biodiversity can serve goals other than environmental protection. The common feature of the remaining and restorable habitats is that by presenting them, local economy can be diversified, environmentally conscious thinking can be spread and an attractive rural living environment based on cultural-landscape values can be formed.

The landscape simultaneously offers space for the various functions of natural habitat protection, socio-cultural heritage and landscape management as well as tourism and housing. The coordination of the physical presence of all functions can assist the more sustainable and effective use of natural resources in the area. The most important task with interventions related to landscape management is to explore the landscape values and potential of the area and composing a strategy based on the above, respecting it to the core and putting sustainability in focus. The strategy must serve the preservation – or in this case, restoration - of landscape resources and the coordination of other development concepts based on them.

In the border area, it is definitely worth paying special attention to landscape structure and management. The construction of reasonable spatial order adhering to the values and capacities of the landscape, as well as to social needs cannot be effectuated by settlement or even country, separated from one another, in isolation. It is inevitable that this area, dealt up by administrative borders but held together by landscape, be managed by unified ideas in the future as well.

The integral management of environmental questions raised in the area would be done by a so called environmental management centre, which is partly a common institution, but more likely brought to life within the framework of Őrség National Park. Among the centre’s main tasks, many development and coordination tasks would feature which has proven to be good practice and is connected to the sustainable management of the landscape crossing the border. The centre would have access to all the necessary professional work organisations and equipment. The main tasks of the environmental management centre could be the following (note: the works displayed are not in priority order, they are more of a summary of soft suggestions and are to be treated as a certain useful actionplan):

**Nature conservation- and environmental protection-focused developments: creation of sustainable landscape management**

- measuring and monitoring of landscape resources and valuable ecological networks of the region, in particular regarding the potential of sustainable landscape management
that preserves biodiversity (e.g. registration of protected species, maintenance of GIS database),

- exploration and inclusion of actors concerned by landscape management, measuring their needs and their economic potentials (e.g. collection of profitable agricultural products in the region, measuring land and water management prospects)
- establishment of the region’s landscape management strategy and coordination of the implementation of the strategy,
- Active participation (generating project ideas, developing and carrying out projects) in cross-border projects,
- dissemination of green thinking, carrying out actions which raise awareness and promote social cohesion among the local population (e.g. further development of already existing, in several cases joint programmes, such as Nature Park Meeting, Nature Park Quiz, painting competition, common cross-border tours etc., furthermore organization of school activities, board games which educate to nature-friendly farming, professional conferences, Peasant Olympics and other competitions etc.),
- Organising and conducting awareness-raising campaigns aimed at local farmers:
  - Development of common criteria of nature-friendly agriculture and their communication towards farmers, introduction of the “green point” system (which evaluates the localness of a product and the impact of its production on the environment)
  - Putting together farmer training programmes in collaboration with the training institutions
  - Conducting module-based courses (e.g. applying common agricultural policy system tender options; rural, country and gastro tourism; special and curiosity products; applying renewable energy; sharing best practices related to local products and knowledge on regulation background),
  - Establishing the directives of eco-friendly agriculture and preparing a guide for farmers
  - Developing model farms and presenting them as best practices
  - Organising study trips and farmer’s forums
- Enforcing directives concerning effective resource use during the realisation of cooperation development plans
- Coordination and promotion of environmental initiatives (e.g. elimination of illegal waste, joint actions against adventitious species)
- Synchronising the work of nature conservational security services.
Developments concerning product development: creating cross-border ecological product clusters by overall management of production, processing, sales and promotions

- Promoting production and consumption of local products (with brochures and events)
- Compilation of the inventory of biological, ecological, handmade and other traditional products, defining the range of products that can be manufactured sustainably,
- Developing an identity manual and a local trademark,
- Knowledge transfer and management (spreading techniques that are both of a traditional, intangible cultural heritage nature and also new, innovative techniques)
- Supporting the infrastructural background of nature friendly, ecological farming (e.g. by acquisition of common machinery able to treat grasslands and hayfield-orchards)
- Developing the sales system of products (e.g. e-sales network, initiating local manufacturer’s/farmers’ markets, stimulating participation in visitors centres, installing shelves of local goods, coordinating canteens’ raw material purchases,
- Common, synchronised event organisation (e.g. gastronomic festivals), as well as participation: organising markets with handicraft and biological products, multi-location tasting tours and product introductions, common stalls with local products, installing counters
- Interactive demonstration of rural, farming lifestyle and traditional crafts, as well as native animal breeds,
- Shaping personal producer-customer relationships: interactive workshops and site visits (e.g. apple juice making, pálinka distillation, gibanica baking, pottery), launching of manufacturing and consumer blogs, organising home delivery services,
- Developing local processing (e.g. pumpkin seed press, small apple juice making facility, dairy processing plant).

Developments focused on tourism: developing the region’s eco-tourism by jointmanagement and development of destinations as well as linking them to one another.

- Foundation of TDM organisations by the unification of already existing offices and visitor centres,
- Establishing touristic cadastres and integrated tourism information platforms and database with online access in both languages,
- Integration of significant service providers, compiling and offering programme packages,
- Common participation at tourism fairs and the major events, busy hubs and tourist attractions of the region,
- Introducing cross-border nature park as a “new” cross-border destination to the market (organising study tours, forming a common stand, publishing brochures, putting up a marketing campaign in both countries),
- Creating a common image,
Establishing, introducing a common Tri-Border Nature Park pass,

Developing a common, bilingual tourism portal with unified content, (which does not only aim at information exchange, but also makes offers and reservations possible),

Developing a tourism information system optimised for smartphones,

Publishing tourism-related leaflets (thematic and regional leaflets in multiple languages),

Establishing new, unified information points within the region (supported by brochures and maps),

Effectuation of the border region’s complex eco-tourism development:
  o Selecting itineraries (thematic itineraries, nature trails, hiking trails) and establishing the necessary rest areas, observation stations, multilingual marker systems,
  o Construction of ecotourism visitors centres, eco-houses,
  o Creation of background infrastructure for environmental education (e.g. establishing forest schools) and setting up ecotourism training facilities,
  o Development of exhibition locations (developing locations which present a wildlife rich in endemic and relict species, manufacturing of traditional local products and nature-friendly land use)
  o Creation of services linked to ecotourism (e.g. bicycle rentals, boat harbors, camping areas)
  o Creation of a bicycle tourism infrastructural network, establishing a bicycle road system covering the whole border area with the related services;
  o Developing an equine tourism infrastructure network;
  o Organising cross-border excursions to familiarise people with natural and cultural values, as well as for the sake of social cohesion.

One of the primary tasks of the environmental management centre would thus be to set up the region’s landscape management strategy and coordinate its implementation. Its primary aim is to explore the area’s existing landscape assets and potentials and then organise the interactions of people and their environment accordingly. In this strategy, the land use structure ensuring the border area’s livelihood and focusing on the increasing and safekeeping of land potential, should be established by human-scale solutions. The strategy should not only consider the already existing qualities, but should also establish spatial order between concepts of development.

This is also why we recommended the partnership system’s development in the above.

All in all it can be said that agriculture’s rentability and the priority of ecotourism development are unthinkable without coordinated land use built on the principles of sustainability, and even the quality of life of the people living in the border area is highly influenced by how far we are
able to establish an attractive, competitive environment. Intervention can result in a mosaic landscape structure in which territories with outstanding nature and environmental protection functions are not permanently fragmented and are connected by eco-corridors. Effectuating harmonic land use that fits natural conditions and which equally meets the requirements of locals and tourists, of farmers and holiday goers is advised. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that within the complete cooperation mechanism, it is recommended to continue with the exemplary cooperation in exchanging best practices, as well as turning complementarities (in the field of resources, experiences, results, etc.) arising in various different thematic areas to the benefit of the mutual learning process.

Last but not least we need to highlight the social cohesion activities of both associations so far. It is advised to continue along the line of the steps taken in order to loosen the divisive nature of borders in people’s minds. Spreading programmes and attractions from across the borders of neighbouring countries, more frequent meetings of young generations, as well as further support of multilingualism can be especially important measures in the process of mutual familiarisation of cross-border areas that are often still presented as “terrae incognitae”. This may lead to establishment of a mutual regional identity, which cannot be built but on a shared living area (l’espace vécu, Thirdspace).
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[Links to various resources related to cross-border cooperation, including websites and PDF documents]
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of the Őrség-Goričko cooperation

http://www.si-hu.eu/images/uploads/A%20M%C3%81SODIK%20P%C3%81LY%C3%81L%20FELH%C3%81DV%C3%81S%20KERET%C3%89BEN%20FELT%C3%89LESEN%20J%C3%93V%HAGYOTT%20P%C3%81LY%C3%81TOK%20LIST%C3%81%20OP%20SI-HU.pdf

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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Vidin – Zaječar
(Northwest Bulgaria-Eastern Serbia)

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1. Introduction – Basic discourse

The cross-border cooperation in the Danube region is very attractive and fruitful topic. However, when we do research in this region, we have to keep in mind some geographical attributes which determine the region for centuries. In general, the collaboration between both countries in developing border regions is very poor or primitive, which is a result for many reasons.

First of all, we have to know that the particular report concerns two typical Balkan states, namely Bulgaria and Serbia. Both countries are one of the oldest states in Europe, The Bulgarian state is more than 1300 years old, while the Serbian is more than 1150 years old. Both countries have aspects of common history and geography, nevertheless, these aspects are very often presented in a controversial and propagandist way, serving the political regimes in the period of the 20th century. Both countries had a common Ottoman Empire period, consequently, formation of their national identity, and contemporary national territory took place in the last 140 years. This is the reason that ethnic minorities exist in the territories.

Bulgaria and Serbia are very typical examples of states with local political opposition in the Balkan context. After the Ottoman Empire period and the 20th century wars (the Second Balkan Wars, the WW I and the WW II), Bulgaria and Serbia had been always on the opposite parties and they fought against each other.

Even in the “Cold War Era”, when Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were located in the “Soviet part of the Iron Curtain”, cross-border cooperation never developed into an active and cohesive policy. More or less, even closely located territories remain heavily isolated from each other, and now these border regions are the poorest and most depopulated regions in both counties. Consequently, these regions are often called as “regions with structural difficulties”.

Since 1989, there have been very strong political changes in the so called Western Balkans, which have caused the appearance of seven “new” European countries. These processes and the birth of new border regions generated the regional disparities even more visible. Only in the recent 10 years, after the acceptance of Bulgaria and Romania in the EU, the cross-border regions have established initiatives and they have started to orient toward more sophisticated functional changes.

Several projects were approved that designed to “start” the cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Serbia in the period 2007-2013. The current project report illustrates that the situation is relatively “static” and dependant on financing and project calls. The initial remark is that the project calls activate both parties, although the regional cohesion sustainability suffer. Because of that, the current project report researches not only the activities implemented in the particular regions and programs, but the research try to discuss the “forward and backward linkages” that are needed to move the cross-border cooperation ahead.
2. The cross-border cooperation development Bulgaria-Serbia

2.1 Cross-border cooperation Bulgaria - Serbia – Case study district of Vidin and Eastern Serbia /focusing on Zaječar district/

2.1.1 Cross-border Cooperation Programs - successful instrument for cross-border partnership establishment

The specific geographic location of Vidin district /Bulgaria/ and Zaječar /Serbia/ respectively in the northwestern part of Bulgaria and in the Eastern part of Serbia determines their involvement in the CBC1 Program between both countries.

Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program for the period 2007-2013 was carried out in a way to ensure an adequate development platform for further financial assistance for Bulgarian-Serbian border region. The objective is to support CBC along the new borders of the enlarged European Union after 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania were accepted. The IPA Program was made on the experience and interventions allocated within the “Neighborhood Program” Bulgaria and Serbia in the period 2004-2006.

The Contemporary Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border programs objective is to define a suitable strategy for a common future development of the border region.

In anticipation of the EU enlarging policy, an External Border Facility Program was allocated in 2003 to prepare new cross-border co-operation programs, starting from 2004 onwards between Bulgaria and Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

In 2003 the “PHARE External Border Initiative” was designed for Bulgaria following bilateral discussions between the Bulgarian and the European Commission authorities. The main objectives defined in this Initiative were the following issues:

*Table 1: Objectives of the PHARE External Border Initiative*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 main objectives of the PHARE 2003 External Border Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To improve cross-border cooperation at local level between Bulgaria and Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To support the further development of the economic potential of the border regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To pave the way for the future /2004-2006/ PHARE CBC/neighborhood programs between Bulgaria and Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program*

1 cross-border cooperation /CBC/
2.1.1.1 CBC between Bulgaria and Serbia - the beginning /2004-2006/

The Neighborhood Program between Bulgaria and Serbia for the period 2004-2006 respected the current situation /the status quo/ in both countries’ border regions in the socioeconomic sphere and the establishment of institutional relations. On this basis, the program’s overall objective and priority axes aimed to increase the cross-border contacts between Bulgaria and Serbia as regards to sustainable economic development and cohesion in the social, institutional and economic sphere. The key moment in the program was to implement actions which focused on the idea “people to people” interaction, i.e. actions that directly accounted the specific needs and requirements of the local people in the border regions.

Table 2: Objectives of the Neighbourhood Programme between Bulgaria and Serbia for the period 2004-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall objective of the Neighborhood Program Bulgaria and Serbia 2004-2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To increase cross-border contacts mainly through interventions addressed to the territory and its economy and through strengthening of institutional relations”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Priority Axes of the Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Promotion of sustainable economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Support to social, institutional and economic cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. People to person’s actions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program

Within the territory of Bulgaria, the Neighbourhood Program included the territory of 5 districts that correspond to level NUTS 3 /EUROSTAT/: Vidin, Montana, Sofia district /partials - 5 of 22 municipalities/, Pernik and Kyustendil.

The program implementation period 2004-2006 can be characterized by the following kind of pros and cons:

Positive key moments in the Bulgarian-Serbian border region’s development:

- Bulgarian-Serbian jointly implemented cross-border initiatives resulted in the successful foundation of cooperation that was established in the period 2004-2006;
- Capacity improvement of the regional and local structures as regards to cross-border partnerships. Intensification of relations between both countries generated by the regional development /Bulgaria and Serbia/, one of the positive moments from the program implementation;
- The idea of continuous cooperation generated many contacts at the local level;
- Border area development and bilateral cooperation structures strengthened as a result of the successful project implementation;
- Improved coordination and cooperation process between the stakeholders.
Neighborhood program implementation - Critical issues and difficulties:

- Exceptionally high demand for cross-border projects was reported on one side and the limited available funds under the program on another side. Therefore, high number of eligible project proposals were applied, but not financed;
- Problems during the program implementation were caused by the lack of experience because the actions and procedures were implemented for the first time;
- Different national regulations were present regarding project financing.


Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program was built on the initial achievements under the CBC-activities supported by the existing bilateral programs up to the end of 2006. In this regard, the Program for CBC Bulgaria and Serbia 2007-2013 continued to support the cross-border regions considering one keyword – cohesion (meaning territorial cohesion). Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program 2007-2013 focused on the following key aspects: competitiveness, results sustainability, quality of life and environmental protection.

In the process of program development for the period 2007-2013, all the “lessons learned”, acquired during the 1st Neighborhood Program Bulgaria-Serbia 2004-2006, were reflected.

The keywords of the strategic framework for the period 2007-2013 were the following issues: territorial cohesion of the cross-border region, competitiveness, sustainable development, economic synergy /see Table 3/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To strengthen the territorial cohesion of the Bulgarian - Serbian cross-border region, its competitiveness and sustainability of its development through co-operation in the economic, social and environmental area over the administrative borders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To bolster the infrastructure enabling social and economic development and improvement of the environment on both sides of the border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To increase economic synergy in the region and improve the capacity to jointly make use of common regional potential for improving regional well being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To promote the principles of sustainable development of the cross-border region in all matters pertaining to increased mutual understanding and respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program
The three Specific Program objectives should be achieved through:

- **For Specific objective 1**: improving access to transport, information and communication services, and cross-border systems for utilities and environmental protection.
- **For Specific objective 2**: developing policy and social networks, a sound framework for cross-border business support, collaborations in particular sectors such as culture, tourism, research and development, environmental protection and education, an active exchange of best practices, and joint regional planning and the preparation of the region’s economic sector for participation in the joint EU market.
- **For Specific objective 3**: developing successful models of cooperation, in the business, local stakeholder and policy levels in key priority areas.

Vidin region has a strategic location within the CBC’s Programs with Romania and Serbia. In order to achieve the overall and specific objectives that were defined within the Programming document, Bulgaria and Romania jointly agreed the main CBC directions, called Priority Axes. During the period 2007-2013 Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program has supported projects in the area of the following 3 Program Priority Axes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Axes defined in the Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program 2007-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 1. Development of small-scale infrastructure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words: physical and information infrastructure, infrastructure concerning environmental issues, assistance for project preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 2. Enhancing capacity for joint planning, problem solving and development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words: linking and networking on institutional, business and educational levels; sustainable development through efficient regional resource utilization; people to a person’s actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority Axis 3. Technical Assistance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program*

The specific location of Vidin region determines its involvement in another cross-border cooperation program with Romania - Operational Program Romania - Bulgaria 2007-2013. The districts of Vidin and Montana, Bulgarian eligible regions under Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program are covered by this CBC Romania - Bulgaria 2007-2013.
The program supports projects under the following priority axes:

**Table 4: Overall Strategic Objective and Priority Axes defined Programa-Bulgaria CBC Programme 2007-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Strategic Objective</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To bring together the people, communities and economies of the Romania - Bulgaria border area to participate in the joint development of a cooperative area, using its human, natural and environmental resources and advantages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Axes /4/</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority Axis 1. Accessibility: Improved mobility and access to transport, information and communication infrastructure in the cross border area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Axis 2. Environment: Sustainable use and protection of natural resources and environment and promotion of efficient risk management in the cross border area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Axis 3. Economic and Social Development: Economic development and social cohesion by joint identification and enhancement of the area’s comparative advantages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Axis 4. Technical Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.cbcromaniabulgaria.eu/](http://www.cbcromaniabulgaria.eu/)

The National Authority responsible for coordination between the programs IPA Cross-border Programs Bulgaria - Serbia and Romania - Serbia, Sector for Programming, Management of EU funds and Development Assistance, Ministry of Finance /MoF/ of the Republic of Serbia. Apart from the program structures, both CBC programs in Serbia are covered by a local office of the Ministry of Finance in the town of Bor.

2.2 The South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program - an instrument for CBC between Vidin region and Eastern Serbia

The South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program played a key role in the framework of the Regional Policy’s Territorial Cooperation Objective, improving the integration and the competitiveness in the area with all the complexity and diversity.

The development opportunities for CBC between Bulgaria and the neighboring countries concerned different development areas. Good results created the project called “TRANSDANUBE - Sustainable Transport and Tourism along the Danube” which was implemented with the financial support of the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program.

The project was implemented within 24 months, in the period between October 2012 - September 2014, and it was divided into six work packages /WP/, which could be separated into two big groups. The first group consisted of WP 1 and WP 2 which were dedicated to project, financial management and internal/external communication. The actions, involved in
these work packages, were concentrated on the need to appropriately coordinate and implement the project, establish partnerships and to fulfil the technical obligations of the project. On the other hand, WP 3 to WP 6 were dedicated to operational working program.

*Table 5: Transdanube project timeline in the period 2012-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WP 1 Project management</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 1.1 fulfillment of start-up requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 1.2 Project management, including financial management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 1.3 Steering and monitoring of the project implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WP 2 Communication and Dissemination</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 2.1 Communication Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 2.2 Media communication / dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 2.3 Non-media communication / web site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 2.4 midterm and final conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 2.5 Internal communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WP 3 Transport and Tourism System Analysis</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 3.1 Development of common methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 3.2 State of the Art - Sustainable mobility in tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 3.3 Good practice collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WP 4 Sustainable mobility offers + demonstration</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 4.1 Sustainable mobility action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 4.2 Sustainable transport offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 4.3 Manuals for development / implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WP 5 Mobility and tourism marketing (information / packages)</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 5.1 Tourism mobility information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 5.2 Soft mobility offers and packages /transnational and regional/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 5.3 Marketing strategies and measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WP 6 Stakeholder involvement, evaluation, follow up actions</th>
<th>Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 6.1 Cooperation and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 6.2 Regional and national stakeholder involvement, training and awareness raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 6.3 Transnational and EU-Stakeholder involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ACT 6.4 Follow-up preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: http://transdanube.eu/*
Transdanube project took into consideration the main development trends in the sectors of transport and tourism in Europe. The project could be characterized by the following key moments with negative environmental impact:

- According to the World Tourism Organization /UNWTO/ and the United Nations Environment Program /UNEP/, 75% of the environmental negative impacts of tourism is caused by the traffic. At the same time the public transport is continuously losing its importance and the tourist are travelled by their own cars. Therefore, we can say that one of the most serious future challenges for Europe will be the management of these upcoming floods of travelling in a sustainable way.

- In this regard, reducing the negative impact of the trips and the traffic on the environment is the first step in striving for improving the attractiveness of tourist destinations. In particular, the individual travelling and the air transport are among the least environmentally friendly means of travelling. On the other hand, the lowest environmental impact is caused by the railway, bus and water transport, as well as by hiking and cycling.

- The implementation of more environmentally friendly forms of transport and the development of soft mobility offers for tourists are important measures to maintain a high environmental quality and thus a high quality of vacation and live.

In this regard, the widely accepted project objectives aim to implement the principle of sustainable mobility in tourism like a conception in the whole region of the Danube, in their role as a starting point in regional strategy for sustainable mobility in tourism development. These objectives represent a set of measures to overcome the existing gaps in the sustainable mobility system within the regions along the Danube, and reflect the common vision of the project partners for development of sustainable mobility in tourism.

**Table 6: Transdanube project common vision**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transdanube project common vision: 3 key moments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provides a common understanding of the concept of sustainable mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The first step on the way to implement the concept of sustainable mobility in tourism in the regions along the Danube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relies on the findings of the transnational SoA /State of the Art/ Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the main key moments defined in a common vision for the region, the following project objectives for development of sustainable mobility in the tourism sector along the Danube were determined:
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of Vidin – Zaječar (Northwest Bulgaria-Eastern Serbia)

![Diagram of objectives](http://transdanube.eu/)

Figure 1: Transdanube project widely accepted objectives
Source: http://transdanube.eu/

It becomes clear that the objectives defined are concentrated in the following four topics:

- Transport, mobility - sustainable mobility offers developers;
- Tourism - sustainable tourism products/packages, etc.;
- Information system - provides sufficient quantitative and qualitative information and destination marketing, with aim to promote sustainable mobility in tourism;
- Financial, organizational and legal framework.

Table 7: Main topics of development defined in Transdanube project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable mobility offers</th>
<th>For each development topic must be defined:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable tourism products /packages, etc./</td>
<td>• Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and marketing</td>
<td>• Minimum standards to be achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing options, organizational and legal framework</td>
<td>• Indicators to monitor the progress in achieving the defined objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://transdanube.eu/

One the most important moments in the implementation of the project was the utilization of a transnational/cross-border approach during all the project activities. Another key moment, defined as paramount for the development of sustainable mobility in the whole Danube region, was the transfer of “know-how”, information in different languages, etc.
The main objects of the project are the principles of sustainable mobility and sustainable tourism taking into account all the three pillars of sustainability, i.e. economy, ecology and social aspects.

Based on the foregoing data, we can mention the important role of each stakeholder in the process of defining objectives and the basic principle application:

**TRANSPORT SECTOR:**
Must provide a customer oriented, high quality offer of environmentally friendly means of transport (especially trains, buses and boats).

**TOURISM INDUSTRY:**
Should create new, attractive offers that take environmental friendly mobility into consideration.

**DESTINATIONS**
Must assure excellent connections to local and supra-regional transport and guarantee for environmentally friendly mobility (public transport, footpaths, cycle tracks, horse carriages, alternative traffic systems etc.) inside the destination.

*Figure 2: the role of the project stakeholder defining objectives, achieving new principles and basic principles application
Source: http://transdanube.eu/

The most serious risks and challenges about the Cross-border region of Vidin-Zaječar are some technical, infrastructural and institutional/organizational issues. The whole area has not enough tourist friendly infrastructures outside of the cities and villages. Underdevelopment of tourist friendly infrastructure caused difficulties in implementation and the real organization of the touristic trip. On one hand, the only one possible sustainable way of transport is the public bus transport. However, most of the tourists make their trip using cars. The reason for this tourist behavior is the lack of appropriate transport connection between the basic settlements in the cross-border region and the poor road infrastructure make cycling extremely dangerous. Beyond these problems, regular cross-border public bus connections, which would connect the towns – Vidin-Kula-Zaječar, do not exist. Consequently, the only one way to travel into the cross-border region is by car. All these conditions make substantial obstacles to economic development if the regions and they hinder tourism.
3. Determination of geographical confines

3.1 The districts of Vidin and Zaječar - geographical confines

The district of Vidin is located in the North-West part of Bulgaria. To the North, the area borders are connected with the Republic of Romania, to the West with the Republic of Serbia, to the South it is bounded by the Balkan Mountains /Stara Planina/ in Bulgaria, and to the East it is bordered by the administrative district of Montana /Bulgaria/. The geographical position of Vidin region has favored its development as a transport, trade, cultural and political center. Strategic importance has the Northern boundary of the region - the Danube River, making opportunities for cooperation with other countries in the Danube region.

Both rivers, the Danube and the Timok formulate natural, but also political borders with Romania and Serbia. The Danube is the second longest river in Europe. It runs through the territory of Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine. The Danube is the major international transportation artery. There are 16 ports in Bulgaria. Six of them, namely Vidin, Lom, Samovit, Svishtov, Ruse and Silistra, have international significance for trade and business.

The Timok River downstream serves as a political border between Bulgaria and Serbia. It is a tributary river of the Danube. The river flows into the Danube between the Bulgarian village of
Baley /Балей/ and the Serbian village of Kobisnica /Кобишница/. Within the Serbian territory, the River passes through the following counties: Pirot, Nishava, Zaječar and Bor.

The town of Vidin is an important transport “Gate” of Bulgaria and it plays a key role in the transportation system of the whole region. Two Trans-European transport corridors pass through Vidin, to be specific №4 Dresden/Nuremberg - Prague - Vienna/Bratislava - Budapest - Craiova /Romania/ - Vidin - Sofia - Kulata - Thessaloniki/Plovdiv - Istanbul, which connects Central with South East Europe. The second one is №7 Rhine - Main - Danube, which connects the Black Sea and the North Sea.

The only one place that can be considered as a multimodal node is the city of Vidin. There will be a future project that will create a multimodal center for transportation of cargo and tourists. /See Figure 4/.

Significant impact on the border region development has the building of the Danube River Bridge connects Vidin and Calafat /Romania/ named “New Europe”. The Bridge was officially opened in June 2013 and it offers a road and railway connection to Romania.

Figure 4: Transport corridors Republic of Bulgaria
The territory of Vidin region is a location of four border checkpoints /BCP/:

- BCP Vrashka Chuka - border location of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Serbia, connecting Kula /Bulgaria/ and Zaječar /Serbia/;
- BCP Bregovo - Bulgarian-Serbian border, connecting Bregovo /Bulgaria/ and Negotin /Serbia/;
- BCP Vidin - River Station - located in the town of Vidin, and serves the tourist vessels on the Danube.
- BCP Danube Bridge 2 /New Europe/ - connecting the town of Vidin with the Romanian town of Calafat.

The administrative district of Vidin includes 140 settlements and 11 municipalities - Vidin, Boyntsa, Bregovo, Belogradchik, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Novo Selo, Chuprene and Ruzhintsi /see Table 10/.

**Table 8: Administrative-territorial units included in the territorial scope of Vidin and Zaječar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District of Vidin - 11 municipalities</th>
<th>District of Zaječar - 4 municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities: Belogradchik, Boyntsa, Bregovo, Vidin, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Novo Selo, Ruzhintsi, Chuprene</td>
<td>Municipalities: Boljevac, Zaječar Knjaževac, Sokobanja</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program

Vidin is the biggest town in the cross-border region with a total number of population 48 071 inhabitants /in 2011/. This value is equal to 47,6% of the total population of Vidin district /101 018/ and 0,7% of the population of Bulgaria /7 364 570 in 2011/. The Vidin district has 1,4% of the population in the Republic of Bulgaria.

**Table 9: Number of inhabitants and population density in districts of Vidin and Zaječar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territorial Unit - level NUTS 3</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population Density /per/km²/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District of Vidin</td>
<td>101 018</td>
<td>1,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Zaječar*</td>
<td>119 967</td>
<td>1,7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* District of Zaječar corresponds to the units from level NUTS 3 /EUROSTAT/


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2 In Bulgaria the administrative district is Oblast, there are 28 districts.
3 The municipality /obshtina/ is the self-government administrative unit in Bulgaria, their total number is 264
4 Population Census in the Republic of Bulgaria 2011
The specific geographical position of Vidin region creates favorable conditions for cross-border cooperation with the Republic of Serbia and Romania. Six of the municipalities, within the Vidin region, are in contact with the Bulgarian-Serbian border - Bregovo, Banitsa, Kula, Makresh, Belogradchik and Chuprene. The primary basis for cooperation between Bulgarian and Serbian border municipalities is to promote economic and social cohesion, tourism sector development, environment protection, etc.

The district of Zaječar is located in the Eastern part of the Republic of Serbia /see Figures 5 and 6/. The territory includes four municipalities - Boljevac, Zaječar, Knjaževac and Sokobanja. The city of Zaječar is the district center. The territorial scope of the district encompasses 173 settlements /5 towns and 168 villages/.

The total number of inhabitants in the town of Zaječar is 43 860 /2011/ which is 36,6% of the population in Zaječar district /119 967/ and 0,6% of the total population of the Republic of Serbia /7186862 inhabitants, 2011/, /see Table 11/. The district has 119 967 inhabitants, 1,7% of Serbian population in 2011 /data from official Census/.

Figure 5: Geographical location of Zaječar region /left/
Figure 6: Administrative map of Republic of Serbia /right/

5 in Serbian - district is Okrug
The municipality of Zaječar has a border contact with the Republic of Bulgaria, district of Vidin. Both towns Vidin and Zaječar are twinned. The distance between the town of Vidin and Zaječar is around 59 km. Both cities are connected by two-way road.

However, there are no international train connections from the Eastern Serbia region to the neighboring countries. There is an expressed intention by the Public Company “Railroads of Serbia” to connect the railroad system of the Eastern Serbia with the railroad system in Bulgaria /Vidin/. The project is in the phase of thinking. The only one infrastructure project that has been moved ahead in the last five years is the project for new CBP between the Bulgarian village Salash /Belogradchik municipality/ and the Serbian village Novo Korito /Knjaževac Municipality/. Officially, the final project phase was launched in 2014 and the CBP should start to operate in 2015.

3.2 The districts of Vidin and Zaječar and Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program

The Bulgarian territory included in the CBC Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program is 20 525 km² or 18,5 % of the national territory /111 001,9 km²/. In turn, the district of Vidin occupies 3 033 km², which is 14,8% of CBC territory under the program.

The total territory of the Republic of Serbia is 88 361 km² and 21,4% /18 909 km²/ of them are included in the program’s scope. The territory of Zaječar district occupies an area of 3 623 km², which is 19,2% of CBC territory in Serbia. /See Table 10/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BG CBC area</th>
<th>Area /km²/</th>
<th>% of the total country / CBC territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District of Vidin</td>
<td>3 033</td>
<td>14,8% of CBC territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia CBC area</td>
<td>18 909</td>
<td>21,4% of Serbia’s territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Zaječar</td>
<td>3 623</td>
<td>19,2% of CBC territory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program

Vidin district /Bulgaria/ is a territorial unit level NUTS 3 /EUROSTAT⁶/. As regards to district of Zaječar as a territorial unit in Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program, it corresponds to NUTS 3 level.

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⁶ see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/
The following cross-border Euro-regions has been already established. They include the district territories of Vidin and Zaječar.
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Table 11: Euro-regions established in terms of activity favourable creation of favourable conditions for cross-border activities - on the territory of Northwest Bulgaria /Vidin region/ and Eastern Serbia /regions Zaječar and Bor/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Euro-region</th>
<th>Territorial scope / Territorial units included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Stara Planina”</td>
<td>• The region includes 11 municipalities from the region of West Stara Planina /Western Balkan Mountains/ on the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bulgarian municipalities: Belogradchik, Berkovitsa, Varshets, Georgi Damianovo, Godech, Chiprovtsi, Chuprene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serbian municipalities: Dimitrovgrad, Knjaževac, Pirot, Zaječar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Middle Danube - Iron Gates”</td>
<td>• In Bulgaria: the territory of Vidin district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In Serbia: regions Bor and Branichevo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In Romania: municipality of Mehedinti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program

The Euro-regions aim to exchange information and best practices. These regions do not correspond to any legislative or governmental institutions, they do not have any political power and their work is limited to the competencies of the local and regional authorities which constitute them. They are usually arranged in order to promote the common interests across the border and cooperate for the common benefit of the border populations.

The Euro region “Stara Planina” includes 11 cross-border municipalities within the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia. The second organization which includes cross-border regions between Bulgaria and Serbia is “Middle Danube - Iron Gates”. Its territorial scope is concentrated on the territory of Vidin district in Bulgaria /all the 11 Municipalities/, or region in Serbia and the municipality of Mehedinti in Romania. The areas of cooperation are concentrated in the sphere of economic and cultural development, tourism sector in the border-regions, environmental protection, etc.
3.3 Determination of geographical confines as regards the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program

The South East Europe Program Area includes 16 countries. For 14 countries, the eligible area is the whole territory of the country, namely Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Moldova. In case of 2 countries, only certain regions are eligible: in Italy these eligible regions are: Lombardia, Bolzano/Bozen, Trento, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Emilia Romagna, Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia Basilicata, and in Ukraine: Cjermovestka Oblast, Ivano-Frankiviska Oblast, Zakarpatska Oblast and Odessa Oblast.

Figure 8: Map Program East Europe Programme Area
Source: http://transdanube.eu/

The program’s slogan is “Jointly for our common future” and it was chosen by all the countries participating in the program during the programming period 2007-2013.

In the “Transdanube - Sustainable transport and Tourism along the Danube” 14 project partners /PP/ participates from the following 10 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia and Serbia. The Project Lead Partner is the Environment Agency Austria. The partner consortium is complemented by ten associated strategic partners /ASP/ and 25 observers and stakeholders. Two representatives participate from Bulgaria, these
are Regional Administration of Vidin Region /the target region of the study/ and Club Sustainable Development of Civil Society located in Sofia. Two participants are involved from Serbia, there are the following Danube Competence Center /in Belgrade/ and Regional Agency for development of the Eastern Serbia located in the town of Zaječar /target CBC regions/. The focus of the Transdanube project region in Serbia is situated in the Eastern part of the country. The area considered as the Eastern Serbia in the project consists of the following 10 municipalities: Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Majdanpek, Kladovo and Negotin that are located directly on Danube River, and Bor, Zaječar, Sokobanja, Boljevac and Knjaževac located in the Danube hinterland.

![Figure 9: Transdanube project partners geographical confines](http://transdanube.eu/)
4. CBC Bulgaria and Serbia - good practices

During the programming period 2007-2013, many projects in the cross-border region Bulgaria-Serbia were implemented, under the Bulgaria-Serbia IPA Cross-border Programme. These projects consisted of partnerships in a variety of development spheres: economic and social cohesion, tourism sector development, actions on environment protection, etc. On the base of the study object, we concentrate only on the cross-border projects implemented in the territory of the districts between Vidin and Zaječar. The ongoing discussion of these projects like a “good example” should be considered as Bulgaria-Serbia common achievement.

Some particularly important circumstances in the CBC region:

- 2007-2013, it was the first programming period in the Republic of Bulgaria after its EU membership. In this regard, we should consider the successfully implemented projects for the CBC as a “best practices”, accumulated experience in the field of cooperation between both countries;
- The implemented projects cover a variety of cooperation and partnership spheres at cross-border level.

The projects analyzed below are separated into two groups depending on the Priority Axes defined in the CBC Program. Projects are characterized by their focus/development sphere and supporting under the different Priority axis:

- Priority Axis 1: “Development of small-scale infrastructure”
- Priority Axis 2: “Enhancing capacity for joint planning, problem solving and development”

The CBC Program between Bulgaria and Serbia 2007-2013 included 3 Priority Axes, but in relation to the Priority Axis 3, “Technical assistance”, there is not available public information.

4.1 Projects under the Priority Axis 1: ”Development of small-scale infrastructure”

Priority Axis “Development of small-scale infrastructure” supports the implementation of projects focused on the following three priorities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 /three/ project priorities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Physical and information infrastructure: 3 projects /with status “completed”/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infrastructure concerning environmental issues: 2 projects /with status: “completed”/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance for project preparation: 1 project /with status: “completed”/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These three priorities are focused on the implementation of projects aimed at CBC in the following development areas: cultural heritage and events, sustainable tourism sector development, crime prevention, technical infrastructure, preparation of technical documentation /aimed to future CBC in the area of tourism sector development/.

4.1.1 Projects supported under the Priority “Physical and information infrastructure”

The project named as “Bridge over the mountain” was dedicated to the development of community’s cultural centers in the cross border area. It had a duration of one year and it was finished in April 2015. Another project – “Prevention of crime through improvement of capacities for crime scene investigation and analysis of biological and other traces” must improve the safety level within the CBC region. The project duration is by the end of April 2015.

The Municipality of Chuprene /Vidin district/ plays the role of lead partner in the project implementation aimed to develop a community of cultural centers within the CBC region. The total project value is over 388 thousand euros.

The project is focused on the following activities:

- Collecting data for the cultural heritage within the CBC region;
- Midterm Strategy elaboration;
- Reconstruction of the cultural and community centers located in Chuprene, Gorni Lom in Vidin district /Bulgaria/ and Pirot in Pirot district /Serbia/;
- Elaboration of Cultural event and held within the territories of the project partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: “Bridge over the mountain” - development of community cultural centers in the cross border</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
<td><strong>Project area: “Physical and information infrastructure”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Municipality of Chuprene /Vidin, Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 388 144,42 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project objective:</strong> to improve the level of CBC and creation of possibilities for improving people’s quality of life through putting of additional long-lasting value to already implemented projects and putting the beginning for the joint development of the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 22\textsuperscript{nd} April 2013 – 22\textsuperscript{nd} April 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project, called “Prevention of crime through improvement of capacities for crime scene investigation and analysis of biological and other traces” was a CBC project; it covered the territories of the cross-border districts located on the Bulgarian-Serbian border including the district of Vidin.
The project included the following activities:

- Two media presentations in Sofia and Nis /project beginning/;
- Organization of Tender procedures for equipment supply for the needs of crime scene units in the relevant project area - Police departments and forensic labs;
- Organization of workshops and seminars for the police officers, border Police Department, crime scene investigators and crime scene managers /two workshops will be held in Bulgaria and four in Serbia/.

The seminars were organized according to territorial principle /divided into North and South/. The seminars in the North were held on the territory of 3 northern Serbian districts /Bor, Zaječar and Nis/ with the participation of 45 trainees from Serbia and on the territory of 2 Bulgarian districts /Vidin and Montana/ with 30 trainees. The seminar in the South was organized in 3 Serbian districts /Vranje, Leskovac, Pirot/ and 3 Bulgarian /Sofia, Pernik and Kjustendil/. An interesting moment in the project was that the trainees in the project will play the role of trainers to the other staff of the border police directorates in future.

### Project name: Prevention of crime through improvement of capacities for crime scene investigation and analysis of biological and other traces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partners:** Ministry of Interior of the R. Serbia, Police Directorate, Criminalistics Police department, National Criminalistics - Technical Center, Unit in Nis /Nis, Serbia/ | **Project area:** “Physical and information infrastructure”  
**Budget:** 989 890,00 Euro  
**Project focus:** to improve the safety in the CBC region through supplying the equipment for the needs of crime scene units and organization of training workshops for the police officers.  
**Duration:** 21st January 2013 – 21st January 2015 |

The target CBC region has a significant potential for development of different types of tourism, and especially cultural and historical tourism based on the archaeological objects located within the region. In this regard, we should mention that one of the most serious problems in cross-border tourism development is the untapped potential of the region. We can say that this is one of the biggest gaps in the tourism sector /gap between the so-called “status quo” and the “desired development status”/.

On this basis, the overall analysis of the project below shows that the basic objective was to establish good status for the protection of archaeological heritage and sites and conditions for their tourist presentation through investment and promotion activities. The planned investments included the territory of municipalities located in the CBC region - Majdanpek /Bor district, Serbia/ and Dimovo /Vidin district, Bulgaria/. The activities in the Serbian municipalities were aimed to the investments in heating and ventilation system concerning the important Mesolithic archaeological site “Lepenski Vir”. The investments within Bulgarian territory were
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
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aimed at equipping the new Visitors Centre for Archaeology and Tourism in Dimovo municipality.

The key idea of the project is to transfer know-how from the famous tourist site like “Lepenski Vir” to the municipality of Dimovo. The Serbian archaeological site is characterized by good experience of visitor’s management which should be transferred and they should prepare the Bulgarian staff to work properly with visitors.

**Project name: Archaeological Heritage and Sites Closer to Tourist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Municipality Majdanpek /Bor, Serbia/ | **Project area:** “Physical and information infrastructure”  
**Budget:** 810 226,21 Euro  
**Project objective:** to encourage tourism sector development through good conditions creation of protection and tourist presentation of archaeological heritage and sites located in the target region.  
**Duration:** 1st November 2013 – 1st November 2014 |

**4.1.2 Projects under the Priority “Infrastructure concerning environmental issues”**

**Completed CBC projects**

There are two completed projects within the priority of “Infrastructure concerning environmental issues”. The common sustainable development idea at European level in transport and tourism sector has resulted in the implementation of a project named “Mount a bike - development of mountain bicycle routes in Western Balkans”. The project lead partner was the Agency for Regional Development and Business Centre Vidin in Bulgaria. The project cost was over 425 thousand euros. The main objective is to stimulate joint tourism development within the cross-border region with the following key moment - sustainable tourism mobility.

**Project Name: MOUNT A BIKE - development of mountain bicycle routes in Western Balkans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Agency for Regional Development and Business Centre Vidin /Bulgaria/  
**Project partner 2:** Regional Centre for Sustainable Development and Entrepreneurship Timok Zaječar /Serbia/ | **Project area:** “Infrastructure concerning environmental issues”  
**Budget:** 425 006,25 Euro  
**Project overall objective:** to contribute to the joint tourism development in the cross-border region |
The implemented activities promoted the mountain biking within the involved border regions, in order to create connections between the local representatives from tourism and transport sector, and to increase their common competitiveness. The following districts were included within the project Montana, Vidin and Zaječar. Moreover, the bicycle routes involved regions situated between Chiprovtsi /Montana district/, Belogradchik /Vidin district/ and Magura cave /Belogradchik municipality, Vidin district/ in Bulgaria, and Zaječar, Bolevats and Novo Korito in Serbia.

Subsequently, within Vidin district, there is an opportunity to rent a bike in the village of Stakevti /Belogradchik municipality/, Falkovets /Dimovo municipality/, town of Belogradchik, and Zaječar /Serbia/. The mountain routes are clearly marked and signboards/maps are placed. What is more, places for recreation and shelter are constructed.

During the project the following main activities were implemented: networking of trails for mountain biking /construction of bicycle paths, recreation areas, mapping, marking and maintaining the trails in good condition for riding - and buying bikes and related equipment - helmets and GPS equipment, tools and spare parts for maintenance of bicycles/, promotional tour organization; promotional materials developed, professional DVD movie captured, website elaboration, presentations advertising mountain biking, two tourist exhibitions in Bulgaria and Serbia, three workshops for development of mountain biking, contracting with
organizations providing rental and repair service, and/or organized training for mountain biking and bicycle repair.

The specific outcomes of the project are: 150 km mountain trails cleaned, 400 km routes marked as bicycle paths - a mountain bike signpost - 275 in Bulgaria and 100 in Serbia are marked routes, depending on their different levels of difficulty with green, blue and red colour signs, respectively, for light, medium and difficult routes placed 28 large plates in the important places in the region and a large map of the routes, purchased 60 aluminium mountain bikes, high-end, which are ready for use at different locations in the region - Chiprovtsi and Kopilovtsi in Montana district, Stakevtsi, Falkovets and Belogradchik in Vidin district and Zaječar in Serbia. All of them can be employed for no big spending for their maintenance. 20 helmets, other important bicycle equipment and GPS navigation were purchased in order to help the riders. Furthermore, 24 picnic areas were mounted /17 in Bulgaria and 7 in Serbia/ together with picnic tables, benches and fire places where cyclists can relax. Moreover, promotion of mountain biking in the Western Balkans was performed by brochures, maps, GPS map software, DVD movie disc and by booklet in English language of 20 pages. Professional movie in Bulgarian, Serbian and English language was produced with the aim to advertise cycling tourism in the region and the touristic fairs in Sofia, Bulgaria, ITB Berlin, Germany.

The grand opening event of the season for mountain biking in the Western Balkans was in May 2013, it was held on May 18 to 19 around Chiprovtsi and Belogradchik. The event included competitors from all over Europe.

Table 12: Mountain biking routes within Vidin territory and Eastern Serbia - project “Mount a bike”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>The territory of Bulgaria, Vidin region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Route: Chiprovtsi → Gorni Lom /Chuprene municipality/ or Prevala /Chiprovtsi municipality/ /Distance - 32,6 km, level - difficult/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Route: Gorni Lom /Chuprene municipality/ → Chuprene → Stakevtsi /Belogradchik municipality/ /Distance - 44,7 km, level - difficult/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Route: Falkovets /Dimovo municipality/ → Pleshivets /Rujintsi municipality/ /Distance - 15,2 km, level - easy/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Route: Pleshivets /Rujintsi municipality/ → Gyurgich /Distance - 9,1 km, level - medium/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Route: Belogradchik → Borovitsa /Belogradchik municipality/ → Falkovets /Dimovo municipality/ /Distance - 16,4 km, level - medium/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Route: Belogradchik → cave Lepenitsa /Belogradchik municipality/ /Distance - 16,4 km, level - medium/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of Vidin – Zaječar (Northwest Bulgaria-Eastern Serbia)

| **D** | Route: Belogradchik → hut Planinishta /Belogradchik municipality/ → Yanovets /Dimovo municipality/ → Falkovets /Dimovo municipality/  
| **Distance** - 8,5 km, level - difficult/ |
| **D** | Route: Falkovets /Dimovo municipality/ → hut Planinishta → Belogradchik  
| **Distance** - 8,5 km, level - difficult/ |
| **E** | Route: Borovitsa /Belogradchik municipality/ → Borov Stone /Belogradchik municipality/ → Borovitsa  
| **Distance** - 4,3 km, level - easy/ |
| **M** | Route: Falkovets /Dimovo municipality/ → Yanovets /Dimovo municipality/ → Falkovets  
| **Distance** - 4,2 km, level - medium/ |
| **M** | Route: Belogradchik → Way of time → Belogradchik  
| **Distance** - 18,7 km, level - medium/ |
| **D** | Route: Belogradchik → Salash /Belogradchik municipality/ → Prauzda /Belogradchik municipality/ → Belogradchik  
| **Distance** - 45,2 km, level - difficult/ |
| **M** | Route: Rabisha /Belogradchik municipality/ → Podgore /Makres municipality/ → Rakovitsa /Makres municipality/ → Rakovitsa monastery /Makres municipality/  
| **Distance** - 29,4 km, level - medium/ |
| **M** | Route: Belogradchik → Dabravka /Belogradchik municipality/ → Veshtitsa /Belogradchik municipality/ → Rabisha /Belogradchik municipality/  
| **Distance** - 22,0 km, level - medium/ |

**The territory of Eastern Serbia:**

| **M** | Route: Zajecar → Felix Romuliana /Gamzigrad/ → Zajecar  
| **Distance** - 25,5 km, level - medium/ |
| **D** | Route: Selacka Reka → Kadibogaz  
| **Distance** - 26,7 km, level - difficult/  
| Route: Boljevac - Zajecar - Novo Korito |

Source: http://www.mountabike.eu/

What is more, the existing bicycle rental possibilities, along the route, provide good opportunities for the future mountain bike development. It is important to connect the bicycle routes on both sides of the border between Bulgaria and Serbia in order to develop a mountain route.

The most important results arising from project implementation are the several and various possibilities of establishing sustainable cooperation between the regions of Vidin and Zaječar in the area of sustainable tourism mobility development. Consequently, a follow-up of the project should be followed in order to maintain the achieved results and to generate further domains of cooperation. In this regard, it should be emphasized that the Agency for Regional Development and Business Centre Vidin takes an active part in organizing and conducting the bicycle rallies within the Vidin region, as well as at cross-border level - in Zaječar. Good examples are the bike tours /with different durations and various stages/ that have been
conducted in the municipality of Belogradchik, as well as the promotional cycling tour along the route Felix Romuliana - Zaječar. Subsequently, these events have resulted in increasing people’s awareness of existing opportunities for sustainable tourism mobility development. The greatest potential for future development in this area is confirmed by the functioning tourist services which are closely related to the project implementation.

Moreover, a web site was developed during the project implementation, http://www.mountabike.eu/, and it gives actual and helpful information about the existing rent possibilities and information about accommodation facilities within the region of Vidin.

Dimovo Municipality /district of Vidin/ is a lead partner in the project - “Innovation and rehabilitation of water supply systems municipalities Dimovo and Majdanpek”. The project partner is the Majdanpek Municipality /district of Bor/.

The total value of the project was above 580 thousand Euros, with the aim to improve the technical infrastructure conditions. This is one of the most significant projects which were implemented under the CBC Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Innovation and rehabilitation of water supply systems, municipalities Dimovo and Majdanpek</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner: Municipality of Dimovo /Vidin, Bulgaria/** | Project area: “Infrastructure concerning environmental issues”  
Budget: 580 441,64 Euro  
Project focus: investment and modernization of technical infrastructure of water and plumbing in the municipalities of Dimovo and Majdanpek.  
Duration: 22nd April 2013 – 22nd April 2014 |

The project activities included elaboration of a joint planning document named, “Program for water management”, which covers the territory of both municipalities. The document’s main objective is to investigate the current state /the status quo/ of the water sector within the CBC region. Thus, the main aim of the project was to give a clear idea about the existing needs, protection and conservation of natural resources and improving the living conditions in the border region.

In order to achieve project sustainability, regular joint meetings and workshops were organized with the stakeholders from the target region - municipalities of Dimovo and Majdanpek.

### 4.1.3 Projects under the Priority “Assistance for project preparation”

The third priority of “Development of small-scale infrastructure” includes the part “Assistance for project preparation” which includes project which are dedicated to the development of tourism sector. “Technical documentation for miracle caves” is the project that was
implemented in 2012/2013, between the municipalities of Dimovo /lead partner/ and Majdanpek /Bor district, Serbia/.

### Project Name: Technical Documentation for Miracle Caves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Municipality of Dimovo /Vidin, Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Project area:</strong> “Assistance for project preparation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner 2:</strong> Municipality of Majdanpek /Serbia/</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 49 789,47 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project objective:</strong> elaboration of technical documentation for infrastructure of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>protected areas of caves Venec /Bulgaria/ and Rajko’s Cave /Serbia/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 18 months, successfully completed in July 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project result was the elaboration of technical documentation for the infrastructure of protected areas of the caves Venets /Dimovo, Bulgaria/ and Rajko’s Cave /Majdanpek, Serbia/. In the future, this documentation should be a base for their reconstruction and modernization as natural attraction in the region.

The Technical documentation for both caves, necessary for tourism investments in public infrastructure, was properly developed and a variety of promotional materials were prepared and distributed to the target groups. In addition, a partnership memorandum between both municipalities was signed with the prospects of potential future cooperation.

In other words, the project played an important role, either in the development of tourism sector within the cross-border region, or establishing a future partnership between the municipalities of Dimovo and Majdanpek in different development spheres.

### 4.2 Projects under the Priority Axis 2: ”Enhancing capacity for joint planning, problem solving and development”

This Priority Axis support the implementation of projects focused on the following three /3/ priorities:

#### 3 /three/ project priorities:

- Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels: **8 projects /status: “completed”*/
- Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources: **11 projects /status: “completed”*/
- People to people actions: **7 projects /status: “completed”*/

The projects’ main focus has taken into account the striving improvement of the existing links between institutional, business and educational structures, sustainable use of regional
resources, as well as “people to people” actions in their important role in social integration. The projects that were completed include the following main topics of cooperation: regional integration with social and economic effect, framework for networking between institutions and individuals, education development, tourism sector.

4.2.1 Projects under the Priority “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels”

Completed CBC projects

The number of the projects that have been financed under this Priority is 8 and the total value is 1 003 481, 91 Euro.

Striving for cooperation and partnership established in the sphere of social integration occupies an important place in the overall strategic framework in Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program. In this context, the project named “Regional integration with social effect” realized by partners from Bulgaria and Serbia took an important place in the achievement of specific objectives of the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name: Regional Integration with Social Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lead partner:</em> “Free Youth Centre” Vidin, /Bulgaria/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Project partner 2:</em> Association “Open Club” /Serbia/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project was focused on the following key moments: social cohesion contribution /commonly accepted objective at EU level/ and child protection /main project focus/. This objective was achieved by the implementation of the following activities, improving the capacity and potential for cooperation in the social sphere within the CBC region.

- *Joint database and website project publication* - this database is in the area of social services and providers in the target cross-border region. The database includes 152 records of providers and social services in the border area;
- *A network of social agents*, which is active in the target region /participation in project activities from more than 58 institutions and organizations/;
A report elaboration which is based on the research of 145 beneficiaries concerning the current situation in the social sphere in the whole border region;

Achievement of promotion and transparency / an exposition was presented in both countries.

One of the most important results that were achieved during the project is the secured sustainability of Euro-regional cooperation in the social sphere. This result was achieved through methodical center created for CBC in the social area and a joint consortium.

The Vidin district was represented by the Science and Mathematics Secondary School “Exarch Antim I” in the role of lead project partner - “Unity-Partnership for knowledge and good neighborly unity”.

The project’s main objective was achieved through the activities aimed at continuous building of training practices that integrate research, education, preservation, promotion of cultural and historical heritage and its sustainable use within the region.

| Project name: Unity-Partnership for knowledge and good neighborly unity |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| **Project partners**        | **Project description**     |
| **Lead partner:** Science and Mathematics Secondary School Exarch Antim I /Vidin, Bulgaria/ | Project area: “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels”  
Budget: 123 662,95 Euro  
Project objective: to overcome the problem with the lack of knowledge about the historical and cultural heritage of the CBC region.  
Duration: 22\textsuperscript{nd} April 2013 – 22\textsuperscript{nd} April 2014 |

In the area of economic cooperation at cross-border level, the project “Linking innovation with SME performance in Eastern Serbia and Northwest Bulgaria”, with a total value of 191 365 Euro had a particular importance. There were three partners involved within the project implementation, specifically two from Zaječar and one from Vidin district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name: Linking Innovation with SME Performance in Eastern Serbia and Northwest Bulgaria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Regional Centre for Sustainable Development and Entrepreneurship Timok Zaječar, Serbia  
**Project partner 2:** Regional Chamber of Economy Zaječar, Serbia | Project area: “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels”  
Budget: 191 356,21 Euro  
Project objective: increasing competitiveness of the SMEs in Eastern |

7 SME - Small and Medium Enterprises
The keywords in this project were “competitiveness” and “innovation” because these factors constitute a crucial role in the process of SME’s development. The project focus was on the increasing SME’s competitiveness in the cross-border region of Eastern Serbia and Northwest Bulgaria, as well as, increasing the cooperation between institutions in the region in order to improve services for SME sector in the field of innovation.

The following results were achieved during the project realization:

- 10 trainings on innovation and intellectual property rights /5 in Bulgaria and 5 in Serbia/ were successfully organized. More than 200 participants attended the training seminars;
- A field survey was conducted and innovative profiles for 300 SMEs were produced;
- A study on the innovative potential of SMEs in the region was developed;
- Developed innovative plans for 50 SMEs that participated in the surveys and interviews;
- Three press conferences were held and 3000 promotional leaflets were produced and distributed.

This project had a duration of 12 months and the project was successfully completed in July 2012.

The project has a future effects too. The Future performance of the 50 elaborated innovative plans for SMEs located in the border region, will have a significant positive effect by improving the overall competitiveness of the region and they will create conditions for contacts/undertaking joint activities with business representatives from both sides.

The project “Stara Planina - New Network” played an important role in striving to increase the existing connection between both countries at institutional level. The overall objective of the project focussed on the following aspects: to improve the region’s capacity to deal with key issues through joined resources and exchange of information and experience, as well as, to contribute to territorial integration which will provide a balanced and sustainable development across the border.

Three project partners participated in the project, i.e. Faculty for Management Zaječar and Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia /RARIS/ in Serbia and Regional Administration - Vidin in Bulgaria. At the end of 2013, three project partners concluded a Memorandum of
Partnership to maintain the “knowledge base” for planning, problem solving and development that was developed as a result from the project realization.

**Project name: Stara Planina - New Network /Knowledge base for planning, problem solving and development/**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Faculty for Management Zaječar</td>
<td>Project area: “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 151 828,40 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project objective:</strong> to enhance existing capacities by professionally selecting and providing relevant available information, creating the framework for networking between institutions and individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 21st January 2013 – 21st January 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Project implementation included the following administrative districts: Bor and Zaječar in Serbia and Vidin in Bulgaria, and four key areas of development was identified within the border region. These areas are the following infrastructure, agriculture, environment and tourism.

In August 2012, the project in educational sphere was successfully completed between two project partners - Regional Chamber of Economy Zaječar in Serbia /lead partner/ and Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bulgaria.

**Project name: Cross-Border Education Development Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Regional Chamber of Economy Zaječar /Serbia/</td>
<td>Project area: “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner 2:</strong> Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 33 248,51 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project main objective:</strong> to strengthen territorial connections between the Bulgarian-Serbian border region, to increase the competitiveness and sustainable development through interaction in education and business along the administrative borders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 12 months, successfully completed in August 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project focused on the creation of a system of vocational education of students and adults that should be more compatible with the needs of the local economy and which may eventually positively stimulate the future economic and regional development.
The project implementation included the following activities: two promotion conferences were organized /in Vidin and Zaječar/; a network of shareholders was established in the target region; one hundred local SMEs was contacted with a view to their participation in the project survey; and a forum was organized - “Bridging the gap between the supply and demand of the qualified workforce” /conducted in Serbia/.

The main object of the project was to reflect the key role of education within the issue of competitiveness of the cross-border region. There is also some expected future improvement emanating from the project, namely, understanding the correlation between vocational training on one side and the labor market needs on another side will have an overall positive impact on the development of the regions and their competitiveness on the market structure.

The next project „Tourism Investment, Development and Attraction Initiative” took into consideration the existing potential for tourism sector development within CBC region and the constraints and weaknesses for its utilization. During this term, the key moment of the project was the region’s support in the tourism development process by filling the existing investment gaps. The project and its activities supported and promoted the identified investment projects in the tourism sector.

The already existing 34 investment projects in tourism sector were identified and the current state of readiness for implementation was assessed. On the other hand, project participants were the key stakeholders at a municipal and regional level from both sides of the border which have an important role in tourism sector development. These stakeholders participated in the development of criteria for selection of tourism investment projects which were addressed and assisted through the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Tourism Investment, Development and Attraction Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia - RARIS /Zaječar, Serbia/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project focus:</strong> to help in filling the existing investment gaps in tourism sector development in CBC region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 21st January 2013 – 21st January 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 147 080,21 Euro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the applied criteria, the project strategy aimed to improve the development of 10 investment projects, 6 of which within Serbia and 4 in Bulgaria /see Table 13/.
Table 13: Investment projects for tourism sector development within CBC region defined in the project “Tourism Investment Development and Attraction Initiative”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory of implementation</th>
<th>Focus /tourism type development/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within Serbia</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 investment projects within the Sokobanja, Knjaževac and Zaječar</td>
<td>Greenfield projects related to spas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 investment projects in Negotin and Majdanpek</td>
<td>In the area of ethno-village tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 visitor center</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within Bulgaria /Vidin region/</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 investment projects within Belogradchik, Chuprene, Vidin and Novo selo</td>
<td>In the area of ethno-village tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/

“New Energy for Old Mountain” project was implemented in the districts of Vidin, Zaječar and Bor. The main objective of the project was achieved through the following activities implemented during the implementation period:

- 15 experts were selected and trained in the CBC region in the domain for building their institutional and technical capacities to perform energy audits, thermal calculations and energy improvements;
- 30 buildings were selected as a relevant sample building in the region and energy efficiency audit was done;
- Technical specialists were trained, energy audits and know-how were shared, thermal calculations and energy improvements were performed. Effective transfer was implemented between Bulgaria and Serbia.

Project name: New Energy for Old Mountain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** PC Directorate for Development, Urban Planning and Construction Knjaževac /Zaječar, Serbia/ | Project area: “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels”  
Budget: 142 602,50 Euro  
Project objective: to identify solutions to constraints and weaknesses in the CBC region through a pilot institution building intervention.  
Duration: 22nd April 2013 – 22nd April 2014 |

One of the realized projects under the Priority “Links and networking on institutional, business and educational levels” is named “Regional Innovation Strategy for Eastern Serbia and North-West Bulgaria Region” which was implemented by project partners from the regions of Vidin and Zaječar.
This project had an important role in striving for long-term CBC establishment between the regions. Development of this strategy was implemented and the results were based on the following analyses:

- Social Capital and Innovation Culture;
- Innovation Needs of Enterprises;
- Scientific and Research Potential of Region;
- Innovation Support System /R&D and business connection/.

Therefore, the strategic framework for future development of the cross-border regions is based on this status quo analysis. In this regard, the key word that was identified about the economic development was: “innovative specialization of the economy”. That means the possibilities for future CBC between both regions arise from the increased level of cooperation between institutions and the provision of better service to SME in the area of innovation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project name:</strong> Regional Innovation Strategy for Eastern Serbia and North-West Bulgaria Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Regional Center for Sustainable Development and Entrepreneurship “Timok” Zaječar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner:</strong> Agency for Regional Development and Business Center - Vidin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

One of the most important achievement results was the development of indicative lists of projects in the following four development priority areas: human resources and innovation culture, SMEs, Scientific and research institutions; Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Indicative list of projects in topic “Human resources and innovation culture”</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project title:</strong> “It’s not too late for knowledge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project general objective: to increase the employment of the people that left the formal education system at the college level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project value and duration: 200,000 Euro, 18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project title:</strong> “Regional development experts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project general objective: to improve the knowledge, skills and influence the mindset of the local community representatives in the fields that are key for managing of the Timok region development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project value and duration: 80,000 Euro, 18 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Indicative list of projects in topic “SMEs”

**Project title:** “Support for development of clusters in the region of Eastern Serbia and North-western Bulgaria”  
**Project general objective:** Increasing competitiveness within the SMEs sector in the region through support of cluster associations.  
**Project value and duration:** 150,000 Euro, 24 months

**Project title:** “Improvement of work of Business Incubator Centers in the region of Eastern Serbia and North-western Bulgaria”  
**Project general objective:** Improving support to the companies in the initial phase of development through improvement of work and the establishment of a regional network of Business Incubator Centers.  
**Project value and duration:** 200,000 Euro, 24 months

**Project title:** “Youth Entrepreneurship”  
**Project general objective:** Promotion of entrepreneurship as a model of solving the problem of unemployment with the youth.  
**Project value and duration:** 100,000 Euro, 12 months

**Project title:** “Startup with mentoring”  
**Project general objective:** Increase the level of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through a mentoring program by experienced entrepreneurs.  
**Project value and duration:** 200,000 Euro, 18 months

### Indicative list of projects in topic “Science and research institutions”

**Project title:** “Research and development info center”  
**Project general objective:** Increase the level of cooperation between R&D institutions and the SMEs in the region.  
**Project value and duration:** 180,000 Euro, 12 months

**Project title:** “IP Forum”  
**Project general objective:** Increased competitiveness of the SME sector through the increase of their knowledge in the field of intellectual property.  
**Project value and duration:** 120,000 Euro, 12 months

**Project title:** “R&D Mentors”  
**Project general objective:** Increase the level of awareness of SME about the need for cooperation with the R&D institutions.  
**Project value and duration:** 150,000 Euro, 18 months

### Indicative list of projects in topic “Education”

**Project title:** “Educational profile adjustment to the needs of the economy in the region of Eastern Serbia”  
**Project general objective:** To decrease the unemployment rate and to increase the productivity of the regional economy by adjusting the education system to the needs of the economy.  
**Project value and duration:** 200,000 Euro, 24 months

**Project title:** “Good leader for good schools”  
**Project general objective:** Capacity building for formal educational institution managers with regards to the new trends in school management, their development and competitiveness.  
**Project value and duration:** 200,000 Euro, 24 months
Future realization of these indicative projects, defined in the four priority topics, represents a really good opportunity for successful partnership cooperation in the area which is crucial for development, like education. These indicative projects, in the field of education, generate a good perspective, for successful and fruitful cooperation between the region of Vidin and the region of Eastern Serbia. The projects concentrated on key priorities and they will play a significant effect, e.g. improving CBC between different stakeholders /from institutional and business sector/, increasing common competitiveness of the region, as well as improving living conditions of inhabitants within the target CBC region.

4.2.2 Projects under the Priority “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources” (Completed CBC projects)

The Resource Centre located in Bor /Serbia/ was the Lead partner in the project, which focused on the elaboration of a Scientific Methodology Study and an additional Documentary Study concentrated on the most important environmental objects at local level that need protection and preservation. Pollution and the risk emanating from pollution were the main focus area. One of project activities was the development of Modern design of Awareness Campaign named “Preserve for us!”.

An interesting element during the project implementation was the idea that the young need to be empowered, subsequently, they could be the active players and they could perform a campaign for awareness /the idea corresponds with the words set out in the project title – “Youths teach Adults”/. One of the most important project aim was to achieve long-term results, i.e. the key word was “sustainability of the project” in the future. It is an important issue to be understood by the leading representatives from the business, public and civil sector, and to develop and support a Chart for mitigation of pollution in the area of Danube River located between the districts of Bor and Vidin.
The next project aimed to cultivate knowledge and sensitivity toward unique cultural heritage which can be found within the CBC region. The target group was the young people from the region Vidin - Zaječar. The defined object of the project was achieved through the creation of an interactive tourist multimedia product. This activity included a virtual geographical tourist map /in Bulgarian, Serbian and English language/, movie, tour guide and brochure.

The following activities were implemented during the project:

- **A common tourist product was developed** - this product for cross-border tourism development included three Roman Fortresses: Castra Martis /Kula municipality/, Gamzigrad - Romuliana /Zaječar municipality/ and Baba Vida /Vidin municipality/. The product was based on the Legend of the three sisters - daughters of the Danubian King - Vida, Kula and Gamza;

- **Touristic services were enriched** - representatives from the small business sector were involved in the project implementation through the organization of many project events such as workshops and press conferences on both sides of the border;

- **Cultural-historical tourism model was promoted** - this activity included a development of an attractive map and plates, elaboration of web-portal, promotional brochure with...
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map, TV & Radio clip, as well as publications in touristic catalogues, magazines, local and regional editions. The implemented activities were aimed to increase the region’s visibility in other parts of Bulgaria and Serbia too.

Figure 11: Map of the touristic route Vidin - Kula - Zaječar
Source: http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/

The lead partner in this project was Kula municipality /Vidin region, Bulgaria/. The project started in 2009 and it was completed in 2012. The new touristic route that was developed is named “The path of legends”.

In the present times, two years after successful implementation of the project, we can evaluate its development “in action”. The website which was developed during project includes different offers for tourist routes based on the idea for cross-border tourism development. These tourist packages cover the territory of Vidin region /fortresses Baba Vida and Castra Martis/ and Zaječar /Felix Romuliana Fortress/. The achieved results encourage further successful partnership development between the representatives of transport and tourism sectors from Vidin and Zaječar. Moreover, the project website includes a database about the existing accommodation facilities within Vidin region and Zaječar, this option allows tourists to combine their stay in the territory of both countries. In conclusion, we can say that the benefits of this project are expected to grow in the future. That means the project developed a list of tourist offers, it gathered tourist information and this information is available to the public, and a willingness of cooperation was explicitly demonstrated between the regions and the interested people. In other words, the long-term effects of the project will increase the
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awareness about the existing possibilities of different types of tourism within the CBC region and it will improve the regions’ “visibility on the map”.

The next project focused on the zones of growth within the districts of Vidin, Zaječar and Bor, it enhanced the competitiveness within the cross-border regions. The lead project partner was from Bulgaria - the Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry which has cooperated with the other project partner, namely Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia /RARIS/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Zones of Growth. Investment Promotion of Brown and Green Zones in the Vidin, Zaječar and Bor Regions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner: Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Bulgaria/</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner 2: Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia - RARIS /Serbia/</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project area:</strong> “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 149 774,79 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project overall objective:</strong> to enhance competitiveness of the Vidin, Zaječar and Bor regions through the valorisation of their economic assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 12 months, successfully completed in July 2012</td>
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</table>

The Project main objective corresponded to the strategic framework of the Bulgaria-Serbia IPA Cross-Border Program, which was concentrated on the need of cohesion between the cross-border regions /cohesion in different development spheres - territorial, social and economic/.

The project called “Beekeeping without borders” aimed to promote best practice in beekeeping and exchange of “know-how” practices in the area of biological beekeeping between the project partners. The lead project partner was the association located in the Vidin region - “Bulgaria in Europe” which has cooperated with the municipality of the Kladovo / district of Bor, Serbia/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Beekeeping Without Borders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> “Bulgaria in Europe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association /Vidin, Bulgaria/**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner 2:</strong> Municipality of Kladovo /Serbia/**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project area:</strong> “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 143 740,40 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project objective:</strong> to promote best beekeeping practices and exchange biological beekeeping know-how through implementation of the joint workshop for presentation of innovative beekeeping approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 12 months, successfully completed in July 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The project undertook the following main activities: implementation of joint workshops /participation of 24 beekeepers/, presentation of innovative beekeeping approaches, as well as, the creation of joint data base which included a list with beekeepers and producers of beekeeping inventory /included 200 representatives/.

The project was important because it attempted to increase public environmental awareness through the implementation of joint information and publicity campaign for nature protection, environmental friendly agricultural behavior and promotion of biological beekeeping products. This aspect was achieved through two beekeeping trade exhibitions that were held in Bulgaria and in Serbia with participation of 63 beekeepers, other related experts and one school campaign with participation of 175 children.

The project “Beekeeping without borders II” was a continuation of the project with the same name that was implemented in 2012. Implemented activities during the project realization were dedicated to the rational use of the regional resources in the domain of environmental agriculture, promotion of sustainable and organic beekeeping and diffusion of good beekeeping practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Beekeeping without borders II</th>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner: “Bulgaria in Europe”</strong></td>
<td><strong>Project area:</strong> “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association /Vidin, Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 94 659, 47 Euro</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Project objective:</strong> to support sustainable development of the CBC region through applying of environmental friendly agriculture, organic beekeeping and good beekeeping practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 22^{nd} April 2013 – 22^{nd} April 2014</td>
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</table>

“New information technologies and tourism products for cross border tourism development” was the title of the implemented project in 2013/2014. The main idea was to utilize the existing tourism potential within the CBC region and to perform a tourism sector development within the target region. In other words, the project collected, processed and translated a considerable amount of tourist information and this information was used in elaborating a software product during the project implementation.

The collected information was used for the elaboration of three thematic brochures. These brochures were distributed among the tourists by the local tourist centers, museums, galleries, hotels and restaurants. One of the project activities was the organization of three demo tours with the representatives of the tour operators and tourist agencies from the two neighboring countries. Thus, different stakeholders /tour operators and agents/ were acquainted with the
new tourist product and with the existing potential for different types of tourism development in the region involving the districts of Vidin, Zaječar and Bor.

### Project name: New information technologies and tourism products for cross border tourism development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner: Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry - VDCCI /Vidin, Bulgaria/** | Project area: “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”  
Budget: 177 946,95 Euro  
Project objective: to encourage tourism sector development in the CBC region through providing of new informational technologies and elaboration of tourism products at a cross-border level.  
Duration: 22nd April 2013 – 22nd April 2014 |

Good potential for tourism sector development within CBC region resulted in the implementation of the project increasing the common competitiveness of cross-border regions. The project was implemented under the title, “Network for Cross-border Co-operation between Bulgaria and Serbia in the Tourism Sector”, it was successfully realized in 2012 and it included four project partners - two from Bulgaria /representatives from the districts of Vratsa and Vidin/ and two from Serbia /representatives from the districts of Nis and Zaječar/.

### Project Name: Network for Cross-border Co-operation between Bulgaria and Serbia In the Tourist Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa - Berkovitsa Branch, Bulgaria  
Project partner 2: Agency for Regional Development and Business Centre Vidin, Bulgaria  
Project partner 3: Regional Chamber of Economy Nis, Serbia  
Project partner 4: Regional Chamber of Economy Zaječar, Serbia** | Project area: “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”  
Budget: 147 166,32 Euro  
Project overall objective: to support the CBC regional economic development and its competitiveness by realizing its potential in the tourism sector.  
Duration: 12 months, successfully completed in July 2012 |

The project supported the economic development within the regions through the following activities that were implemented:

- Elaboration of a web site, promoting the target region as a tourist destination; the database of the resources for tourism in the region; analysis of the potential of the region as a tourist destination;
- Cross-border business events organized /four “Open Info Days” were held/;
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- Two Pilot info, tours launched /so called “test drives”/- indicated in the tourist product presentation;
- A promotional film and a promotional clip produced - presenting the target region as a tourist destination /doubled in English, Bulgarian and Serbian languages/;
- Bilateral meetings and trainings of beneficiaries;
- 2800 promotional materials produced and distributed - promoting the target region as a tourist destination.

The implemented activities during the project implementation will have an important role in the process and state of future tourism sector development and establishment of common initiatives /between different stakeholders/ at cross-border level. The achieved results of the project should be the basis for development of a common cross-border tourist product which includes the territory of all project partners from Bulgaria and Serbia. This product should utilize the region’s tourist potential /available touristic resources/ and it should take into account the tourists’ needs. Furthermore, the future development of this common touristic product corresponds to the priority types of tourism development within the CBC region, and it will have a significant role in other cross-border initiatives between different stakeholders in the tourism sector.

Another project for CBC between Bulgaria and Serbia was “Selenium as an essential natural microelement for the human health protection”. This project was realized by Mining and Metallurgical Institute Bor in Serbia /lead partner/ and Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bulgaria.

| Project Name: Selenium as an Essential Natural Microelement for the Human Health Protection |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Project partners                | Project description              |
| Lead partner: Mining and Metallurgical Institute Bor /Serbia/ Project partner 2: Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry /Bulgaria/ | Project area: “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources” Budget: 138 622,20 Euro Project main objective: to examine chemical characterization of cultivable soil and grains /wheat and corn/ on the selenium content /natural microelement important for the health of people/ in the two cross-border regions - Bor and Vidin. Duration: 12 months, successfully completed in November 2012 |

The overall objective of the project was achieved through the following activities:

- Investigation of selenium content in the soil and grains in the districts of Bor and Vidin /all the received samples have been investigated/;
- A database was created for districts of Bor and Vidin /this database includes the obtained data about selenium content in soil and grain samples/;
• GPS identification and recorded coordinates of the places where the samples were taken. These data are used for the creating of a topographic map of the target region /electronic and hard copy/. The purpose was to gain a better visibility of the sampling place on the printed map, which was split in 9 partial maps of the target region;
• Report on diseases and the most common causes of mortality in target districts;
• Report created on available agricultural resources on both sides /in English language/.

The project named “Cleaning the villages and tributaries of the Danube from waste” was implemented on the territory of two cross-border municipalities. The lead partner municipality of Majdanpek /Bor district, Serbia/ and Dimovo /Vidin district, Bulgaria/. This project was another example for successful project implementation in the area of environmental protection within the cross-border region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name: Cleaning of Villages and Tributaries of the Danube from Waste</th>
<th>Project description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Municipality of Majdanpek /Serbia/</td>
<td>Project area: “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner 2:</strong> Municipality of Dimovo /Bulgaria/</td>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong> 414 327,37 Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partner 3:</strong> Public Communal Enterprise Donji Milanovac /Serbia/</td>
<td><strong>Project overall objective:</strong> sustainable protection of the Danube river in the areas of municipalities Majdanpek /Serbia/ and Dimovo /Vidin, Bulgaria/.</td>
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<td><strong>Duration:</strong> 12 months, successfully completed in November 2012</td>
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</table>

One of the key specific objectives was to keep the settlements /villages and towns/, located on the Danube River and its tributary banks, without waste. Another specific objective was to raise awareness about the environmental issues either through education in elementary schools or through the involvement of the local media and its power of dissemination.

Activities during the project included:

• Elaboration of database about illegal dump sites, household waste and other solid waste;
• Purchasing of investment, equipment - tipper truck and backhoe loader for both partners, municipalities of Majdanpek and Dimovo;
• Cleaning, rehabilitation and re-cultivation of illegal dumpsites;
• Supply of the soil /humus/ for re-cultivation and rehabilitation of the terrain;
• A supply of 200 containers for household waste /50 for glass, 50 for plastic and 100 for other household waste/. All of the containers have been placed in the villages in both municipalities;
Raising awareness among school children (7-14 years old) about the importance of environmental issues, hiring a lecturer and printing of T-shirts, caps, brochures and posters.

The total budget was 414 327 Euro. Its implementation continued for 12 months and it was successfully completed in November 2012.

The project”Veni, Vino, Vici” is a project of the CBC between Bulgaria and Serbia in the area of tourism sector development at a cross-border level. The focus area was the wine sector as an alternative type of tourism/wine tourism/ and tourism specific activities which are typical for the region. In this term, the project activities were concentrated on the cross-border networking and promotion activities. During the project implementation, the following results were achieved:

- A forum of wine producers in the CBC;
- A network was established between 50 wine producers in Vidin and Timok region and integration of cross-border wines in hotels, restaurants and specialized shops in the CBC region.

The activities aimed at improving the qualification of local wine producers, thus new knowledge was provided to improve their production and marketing capacity. Another important was the promotion of regional/local wines through the training of 50 staff employed in hotels, restaurants and shops.

What is more, the future wine tourism development within the CBC will be encouraged through a cross-border tourist road that has been established during the project implementation. This activity will have a positive effect on the future promotion of the wine cellars in these regions and will have an important role in the process of attracting tourist interest.

Other project activities included promotion of cross-border wine fair, which was held in Negotin, as well as the organization of promotional study tour for tour operators from Serbia and Bulgaria.

**Project name: Veni, Vino, Vici**

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<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner; Country Museum of Knjazevac /Zaječar, Serbia/** | Project area: “Sustainable development through efficient utilization of regional resources”  
**Budget:** 121 605,94 Euro  
**Project focus:** to encourage the future wine sector development as an alternative type of tourism within the CBC region.  
**Duration:** 4th November 2013 – 4th November 2014 |
The developed tourist route to the wine cellars in Vidin, Knjazevac and Negotin, called “Wine Road” led to all wineries in the region and it included a detailed map with the location of wine producers. In this regard, we can say that the activities implemented under the project had an important role in future joint development of the wine and tourism sectors in Vidin and Zaječar. One of the most important expected benefits of the project was the created opportunities for partnership relations between the representatives of restaurants, hotels and other businesses at a cross-border level. The common striving of Vidin and Zaječar in wine tourism development will play a crucial role for the increase of their competitiveness in the tourism sector and it will promote the CBC region as a territory which offers alternative types of tourism.

Taking into account the significant potential for development of different types of tourism within the CBC region, the following project was concentrated on the creation of cultural network events. The project focus was on development of document “Study of event tourism” dedicated to the territory of the districts of Vidin, Bor and Zaječar. The existing problems in the sector that were defined in this study will be the future base for training and technical assistance provision. The project key moment was to overcome the existing gaps in the cultural events sphere and utilization of the existing potential for development of cultural tourism at cross-border level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Cultural Events Network /Cross-border event’s problem solving and development/</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> House of Culture Knjazevac/Zaječar, Serbia/</td>
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4.2.3 Projects under the Priority “People to people actions”

The next cluster of implementing project includes those ones which fell into the category of “People to people actions”. This cluster includes seven implemented and completed projects.

Organic farming was the main object of the project with the title, “Organic Farming – a Challenge or Responsibility for Our Nature”. It concentrated on sustainability, improvement of the skills of the farmers and collection of good practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Organic Farming - a Challenge or Responsibility for Our Nature</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Regional Agribusiness Centre Vidin/Bulgaria/</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Project name: Organic Farming - a Challenge or Responsibility for Our Nature**

| Project partner 2: Agro-project Timok, Zaječar /Serbia/ | Project objective: to show the producers why and how they could start work as organic farmers, giving them information about the requirements and examples of good practices in the field.  
**Duration:** 12 months, successfully completed in October 2012 |
| Project partner 3: Alliance for Regional and Civil Initiatives /Bulgaria/ |

The project implementation was associated with four outdoor seminars that were held within the territory of the following municipalities located in the district of Vidin: Novo Selo, Bregovo, Kula and Belogradchik, where the current state of affairs, concerning organic farming, in Serbia was presented.

Elaboration of a special manual for organic farming was one of the project activities; it explained how agricultural producers can change their production to organic one. An important issue was the creation of a database which includes all the agricultural producers in the districts of Vidin and Zaječar in order to help the farmers in their cross-border cooperation in their future activities.

A result from the project realization was the establishment of the new Euro Agra Club called “Good Neighborhood” which will annually collect farmers from both sides of the border. The Agra club activities are dedicated to exchange information and best practices between farmers in the cross-border regions in the area of organic farming.

“**United in the Struggle against Drugs**” was a project at cross-border level, implemented by two project partners from Vidin and Zaječar.

**Project name: United in the Struggle Against Drugs**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
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</table>
| **Lead partner:** “East-West” Association /Vidin, Bulgaria/  
**Project partner 2:** NGO “Children’s Joy” /Zaječar, Serbia/ | **Project area:** “People to people actions”  
**Budget:** 93 248,42 Euro  
**Project general objective:** to contribute to the limitation of the abuses with narcotic substances and the unfavorable health and social consequences for the young generation from the Bulgarian-Serbian cross-border region.  
**Duration:** 12 months, successfully completed in July 2012 |

The project implementation included different activities aimed to achieve the following results: two surveys were conducted about the drug abuse /at schools in Vidin and Zaječar, among the students from the 8th till 12th grade/; 12 reports were prepared about the opportunities for drug-abuse prevention in the cross-border region; 18 events were organized with the topic of prevention /lectures, conferences, and consultations/; 20 information products about
prevention were prepared and distributed in the cross-border region; an extensive publicity and media campaign were organized.

The “Free Youth Centre” from Vidin region was the lead partner in the implementation of projects supported under the Priority “People to people actions”, defined in the strategic framework of the Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program 2007-2013. The title of the project was “Bulgarian-Serbian Innovative Teaching Network”. During the project realization, the following activities were implemented which represented “methodically connected steps”:

- Educational systems research /legislative basis, available practices, common problems, challenges/;
- Attraction and motivation for participation;
- Information and communication tools creation;
- Network creation /horizontal structure of educational professionals/;
- An experience shared through thematic meetings;
- Interactive website;
- Education of a joint pool of experts aimed to development of resources for CBC;
- Strategic document adoption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name: Bulgarian-Serbian Innovative Teaching Network</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lead partner:</strong> Free Youth Centre /Vidin, Bulgaria/</td>
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Association „East West” in Vidin /Bulgaria/ was a lead partner in the implementation of the next project “Youth acting united”, which was carried out within the Priority “People to people actions”. The project activities were aimed to motivate the young people in their role as a target group to actively participate in sport activities. An important project activity was the organization of Youth Festival for a mass sport which included different cultural initiatives aimed to attract the young.

The main objective of the project was the promotion of sport development. The shared natural resources, as the Danube and the Timok River, and sports facilities play an important role in the process of national and international competitions in different sports organization.

One of the project activities was a massive promotional campaign that was carried out in the process of beneficiaries and target groups motivation to participate in project activities and to promote the project results. One of the project key issues was the opportunity for sports and
cultural cooperation between the young people from both sides of the border as a result from the project implementation.

The future CBC development in this domain may eventually involve also Romania as a partner on the next project stages.

**Project name: Youth acts united**

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<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** “EAST WEST” Association /Vidin, Bulgaria/ | **Project area:** “People to people actions”  
**Budget:** 97 910,02 Euro  
**Project focus:** to encourage the sport development among the young people within the CBC region.  
**Duration:** 1st November 2013 – 1st November 2014 |

The project “Overcoming the limitations of the border through friendly, neighborly relations” was implemented with the participation of the municipalities of Vidin /Bulgaria/ and Knjajevac /district of Zaječar/. Its main focus corresponds to the gaps in the neighborly relations between the both countries as regards the existing similarities in economic, social and cultural area of cooperation. In this regard, the project was aimed at overcoming the negative impact of the distance between the CBC regions in the areas of partnership which were mentioned.

The project activities were concentrated on the convergence between the target regions and another nation, market and culture. The main achievement of the project is the opportunity for a new form of cultural cooperation between the project partners from Bulgarian and Serbian.

This project was characterized by the striving for its sustainability. The activities implemented during the project realization will play a future role as a base in the process of establishment of long-term relations and conditions for cooperation in the cultural area of development.

**Project name: Overcoming the limitations of the border through friendly neighborly relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Foundation “Phoenix - 21 century” /Vidin, Bulgaria/ | **Project area:** “People to people actions”  
**Budget:** 61 445,63 Euro  
**Project objective:** to support and intensification of intercultural dialogue and cross-border cultural cooperation based on a thorough understanding between the neighboring countries Bulgaria and Serbia  
**Duration:** 1st November 2013 – 1st November 2014 |

In the area of social cohesion, a next project was implemented. The title of this project was “The Bridge of Friendship and Health of Functionally Disabled Children” which was
implemented by three project partners /two from Serbia and one from Bulgaria/. The project’s main objective was dedicated to cooperation between the two schools and the Sport Federation of Majdanpek in order to engage students, teachers, trainers, parents and children with functional disabilities in cultural and sports activities.

### Project name: The Bridge of Friendship and Health of Functionally Disabled Children

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** Elementary school “Velimir Markicevic” /Serbia/  
**Project partner 2:** High school “Hristo Botev” /Vidin, Bulgaria/  
**Project partner 3:** Sport Federation of Municipality of Majdanpek /Serbia/ | Project area: “People to people actions”  
Budget: 93 667,37 Euro  
Project objective: to ensure that people on both sides of the border become closer and build lasting friendships through joint activities.  
**Duration:** 12 months, successfully completed in November 2012 |

The environment protection issues were reflected in the focus of the next project - “Click - Climate Change Kick-off” which was connected with negative climate change impacts within the territory of Zaječar and Vidin. The key moment in the project was to give information about the vulnerability of the region in the face of climate change impacts, to reflect the level of preparedness of the local civil society, business sector and public authorities in addressing climate change and raising their knowledge and capacities.

### Project name: “CLICK” - Climate Change Kick-off

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<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Project description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Lead partner:** The Timok Club /Zaječar, Serbia/ | Project area: “People to people actions”  
**Budget:** 94 155,61 Euro  
**Project activities:** mapping of the current state in the CBC region and producing the first “situation map”; awareness raising campaign and capacity building, program development; “guidelines/recommendations development in response to climate change impacts on local level”.  
**Duration:** 21st January 2013 – 21st January 2014 |

Activities implemented during the project realization represent a good basis for future cooperation between the relevant stakeholders from Vidin and Zaječar regions in the area of climate change issues at local level.
5. Presentation and analysis of selected projects in their role as “good examples” in CBC establishments between Bulgaria and Serbia

In this part of the current case study, two successful and completed projects are presented and analyzed, and their important role in the long-term CBC establishment between the Vidin district and Eastern Serbia is reflected. These two projects are the following: “Transdanube - Sustainable Transport and Tourism along the Danube”, implemented under the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program; another one is “Stara Planina - New Network” and it was implemented with the financial support of the Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program for the period 2007-2013.

Both projects are characterized by their good opportunities for future organization of cross-border cooperation between the countries/regions. These existing possibilities for cross-border cooperation can be found in the area of sustainable transport and tourism sector development /“Transdanube” projects/ and/or in the area of territorial integration, sustainable and balanced development of cross-border level - “Stara Planina” project.

We consider that a deeper analysis of both projects is needed in order to fully understand their context and impact over the Cross border cooperation.

5.1 “”TRANSDANUBE” project - achieved results and existing opportunities for future cross-border initiatives

The project activities implemented by the Bulgarian project partner - Regional Administration of Vidin region will be analyzed. The main focus is on those specific activities that are relevant to the CBC development with the Republic of Serbia.

Based on the project common vision, the partners developed or updated Regional action plans /ACT 4.1 from WP 4 Sustainable mobility offers + demonstration/ for sustainable mobility development and implementation. These action plans will play a role of the guideline for action implementation in the project and beyond. The action plans will be based on the results of so-called SoA analysis /elaborated in the ACT 3.2 State of the Art - Sustainable mobility in tourism, which is a part of WP 3 Transport and Tourism System Analysis/.

The regional mobility action plans will be the framework for the development of specific sustainable transport offers /ACT 4.2 Sustainable transport offers as a part of the mentioned WP 4/.
Four topic objectives of the TRANSDANUBE project, which are directly related to the CBC development

The Transdanube project identified four specific topic objectives and the whole project was built around these objectives. These are the following: sustainable mobility offers; sustainable tourism products; information and marketing; financing options, organizational and legal framework. In the next part, all the objectives will be elaborated and investigated.

The transport system plays a crucial role in the implementation principles of sustainable mobility in tourism. Its main contribution is the provision of user-friendly, high quality offers, containing environmentally-friendly means of transport, mainly involving railway, bus and water transport.

The first topic is called as “Sustainable mobility offers’. Within this topic, the objectives are defined; the minimum standards are set which should be achieved up to 2020 and indicators identified in order to monitor the progress in achieving the defined objective. The measurement instruments and possibilities /information sources/ are also determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the objective</th>
<th>• The cross-border connections and transport opportunities, improving between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania through sustainable means of transport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum standards to be achieved in 2020</td>
<td>• Tourists should have at least one public transport opportunity for cross-border travel between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, and that should be inconsistent with the tourism demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of indicators to monitor the progress in achieving the defined objectives /including the measurement instruments/</td>
<td>• Share of the cross-border tourist travels by sustainable cross-border mobility offers - at least 25% from all travels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Measurement instruments: information will be collected using field survey, data will be provided by the relevant Regional Statistical Offices of the National Statistical Institutes, data will be collected on the number of the tickets sold by transport operators.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WP 4 Sustainable mobility offers and demonstration - Strategy development and Regional action plan Vidin region, http://transdanube.eu/downloads/studies-und-papers

The defined objective corresponds to the first widely accepted objective by the partners for the common vision for sustainable mobility in tourism, specifically, improving the accessibility of the regions along the Danube River through offers for sustainable mobility.
Within the Eastern Serbian region /the region included in the Transdanube project/, the necessity of increasing awareness of sustainable mobility is regarded as one of the factors of success for its development. This objective should be realized with the support of municipalities, regional agencies and the Government activities. In this regard, as a key issue should consider the need for overcoming the problems associated with the financial support and legal issues.

On the other side, CBC with the surrounding regions in Romania and Bulgaria should be increased. The cross-border cooperation has to be resulted in joint projects and joined tourism packages based on sustainable mobility vision.

As regards the second topic, “Sustainable tourism products”, it should be emphasized that the tourist system plays an important role in sustainable mobility in tourism. It can be seen as a regional concept of major importance concerning objectives whose achievement depends on various stakeholders.

Related to the improvement of cross-border cooperation, the following objective was defined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In topic “Sustainable tourism products /packages, etc./”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of the objective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum standards to be achieved in 2020</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Definition of indicators to monitor the progress in achieving the defined objectives /including the measurement instruments/** | • Share of tourists which purchase services from the elaborated package offers for sustainable tourism - at least 25%.  
  • Measurement instruments: field survey, information from the local representatives from the tourism sector, data from the relevant Regional Statistical Offices, data from the companies providing cross-border tourism packages. |

*Source: WP 4 Sustainable mobility offers and demonstration - Strategy development and Regional action plan Vidin region, http://transdanube.eu/downloads/studies-und-papers*

The tourist demand is the top project objective, related measures and implementation activity. This is the way to generate further tourist demand and to develop individual offers, which include high comfort and quality. Other basic direction is to increase the customers’ sensibility to the offered services and packages. The measurement of the sensibility might be entrusted to the nongovernmental sector and other stakeholders. In the communication process, it is necessary to ensure that trips feedback information are received and reflected in order to
harmonize the offers with the tourist demand. Moreover, there is a high need to demonstrate the ecologically sustainable alternatives of tourism.

Moreover, implementation of the principles for sustainable mobility in tourism conceptually depends by the accessible of information, mainly information about public transport services, including at cross-border level. Access to detailed and useful information will profoundly improve the quality of tourist services.

Subsequently, the next topic deals with the question of information and marketing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In topic “Information and marketing”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of the objective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum standards to be achieved in 2020</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Definition of indicators to monitor the progress in achieving the defined objectives /including the measurement instruments/** | • The tourism supply should include at least one cross-border sustainable mobility offer.  
• Measurement instruments: field survey, information from local stakeholders in the tourism sector, data from the relevant Regional Statistical Offices, number of tourists that purchase cross-border tourism packages services. |

*Source: WP 4 Sustainable mobility offers and demonstration - Strategy development and Regional action plan Vidin region, http://transdanube.eu/downloads/studies-und-papers*

Financing options, organizational and legal framework play a crucial place in tourism and its sustainable mobility. In the area of this topic, the following objective at cross-border level was defined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In topic “Financing options, organizational and legal framework”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of the objective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum standards to be achieved in 2020</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As regards this topic, we should mention that the region of Eastern Serbia developed plans at different territorial level /regional and local/, prepared in the last 2-3 years. These plans are characterized by the increasing focus on CBC projects with Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria and on transnational projects too. One of the weaknesses of these plans is the lack of sustainable mobility opportunities and there are no planned initiatives to stimulate tourists to use public transport even at cross-border level.

On the basis of defined objectives and the existing situation in the area of CBC, the following “gap analysis”, which compares the gaps between the defined objectives and current situation, was prepared.

### The Status Quo

#### In topic “Sustainable mobility offers”

- **Low level of cooperation between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania as regards the joint sustainable mobility offers supplying “to” and “from” tourist destinations within the border regions.**
- **Improvement of cross-border connections and transport opportunities between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania through sustainable means of transport.**

### The Status Quo

#### In topic “Sustainable tourism products /packages, etc./”

- **Weak links between public transport policies and touristic travels at cross-border level. Insufficient connection between travels in the district of Vidin and in the border regions of Serbia and Romania.**
- **Improving cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania in the area of tourist packages, and development of cross-border region for cyclists.**
The Status Quo | Objective
---|---
**In topic “Information and marketing”**
Lack of effective information systems that promote the package tourism services at a cross-border level. | The gap between the status quo and the desired state of cooperation | Creating information systems that advertise cross-border destinations and tourism packages.

The Status Quo | Objective
---|---
**In topic “Financing options, organizational and legal framework”**
Untapped potential for joint activities at cross-border level. Insufficient opportunities for tourists to visit Serbia and Romania by purchasing a package service which concerns a destination in Vidin district. | The gap between the status quo and the desired state of cooperation | Elaboration of sustainable mobility projects funded by the Territorial Cooperation Programs between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, the Operational Programs in Bulgaria, and the Program for the Rural areas.

**CBC related measures**

An important part of the regional action plan is the so-called “Catalogue of development measures”. The catalogue of development measures the principles of sustainable mobility in tourism. This catalogue identifies a list of measures which are needed for the achievement of objectives.

Implementation of the defined objectives has to be closely linked to the cross-sectional approach /between the transport and tourism sectors/. At the present times, the principle of cooperation is often lacking or the extent of its application is inadequate.

Relating to the subject of this study, only those measures are analyzed which are directly related to the CBC development between Bulgaria /Vidin district/ and Eastern Serbia.

**In topic “Sustainable mobility offers”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of measure</th>
<th>Touristic offers for cross-border sustainable transport in tourism between Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touristic offers for cross-border sustainable transport in tourism between Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia.</strong> The measure consists of tourist packages which are in full consent to the tourism demand. In accordance with the Transdanube project, the following bus routes are considered as a reliable transport solution:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touristic offers for cross-border sustainable transport in tourism between Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia.</strong> The measure consists of tourist packages which are in full consent to the tourism demand. In accordance with the Transdanube project, the following bus routes are considered as a reliable transport solution:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vidin → Kalafat → Turnu Severin /Romania/ and back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vidin → Zaječar → Bor /Eastern Serbia/ and back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### In topic “Sustainable tourism products /packages, etc./”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of measure</th>
<th>Implementation of this measure includes procedures for granting of licenses for the transport companies from Vidin region in order to ensure cross-border travel.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of measure</td>
<td>Connect bicycle paths developed under the project “Mount a bike” on both sides of the border between Bulgaria and Serbia, and carry out feasibility study to connect bicycle route EuroVelo 6 with the existing mountain routes. The measure includes cross-border tourism packages that offer the possibility for mountain cycling within the Vidin region and Eastern Serbia. Two border checkpoint function in the Vidin (connection with the Republic of Serbia) - “Vrashka Chuka” which connects Kula and Zaječar /Serbia/ and “Bregovo” which connects Bregovo with the Serbian City of Negotin. Activities of the measure should provide more possibilities for renting a bike on both sides of the border. The measure carries out a feasibility study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of measure</td>
<td>Elaboration of cross-border tourist offers for weekend, tourism between Vidin and Zaječar /Serbia/, and web based cross-border public transportation information system creation. The measure consists in cross-border tourist packages for weekend, tourism, taking into account the tourist needs. The access to the actual information about the public bus transport between Vidin and Zaječar will be implemented through a web based information system. The measure also includes active marketing of the CBC regions. The development potential of wine tourism is a successful marketing solution. Depending on the tourism demand, the bus line could be regularly or on demand. The tourist service quality will be increased through the provided opportunity for renting bikes between Vidin and Zaječar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In topic “Information and marketing”

| Description of measure | Marketing strategy elaboration for cross-border destinations development, based on the sustainable mobility. Cross-border tourist offers development of sustainable public transport, which will have a positive effect on the sustainable mobility in tourism development. Moreover, it will have an indirect positive effect on the other economic sectors. |

In topic “Financing options, organizational and legal framework”

| Description of measure | The annual provision of national and cross-border transport and tourism forums promoting the integration of sustainable mobility in the tourism sector. The measure realization includes cooperative civil and institutional forums at local, regional, national and cross-border level, involving a wide range of local stakeholders. These forums are an integral part of the sustainable mobility principles in the region. |

Source: WP 4 Sustainable mobility offers and demonstration - Strategy development and Regional action plan Vidin region, http://transdanube.eu/downloads/studies-und-papers

Evaluation of development measures

The process of evaluation of development measures /total 5 in the area of CBC development/ has a crucial role in their successful future implementation. The evaluation process includes the following steps:

- The estimated impact of the measure and contributed to the overall objective for sustainable transport in tourism development /incl. Tangible outputs/;
- First reliability check /cost estimation and financing options, realization horizon/.

In topic “Sustainable mobility offers”

| The estimated impact of the measure and contributed to the overall objective | Touristic offers elaboration for cross-border sustainable transport in tourism demand for cross-border travels, between Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia. The measure realization will increase the added value of tourism within the Vidin region and the border areas within |
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Case Study of Vidin – Zaječar (Northwest Bulgaria-Eastern Serbia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tangible outputs:</th>
<th>the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Romania, and it will increase their common competitiveness;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania will be improved;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The transport accessibility to the main tourist directions at a cross-border level will be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tangible outputs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increasing revenue from the transport and tourism sector in the region - rate of increase 10% on an annual basis for the current level;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increasing number of tourists from the neighboring countries – the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Serbia - rate of increase 10% on annual basis for the current level;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of realized cross-border projects for the tourism sector development - rate of increase 10% on annual basis from the current level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First realizability check /cost estimation and financing options, realization horizon/</th>
<th>Investment costs 50 000,00 Levs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The measure can be realized through financing provided by the municipal budgets /target subsidy/, co-financing under the Cross Border Cooperation Programs, public-private partnership /PPP/ and/or by private investments;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The measure realization is possible in the short-term: within the lifetime of the Transdanube project /2014/.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In topic “Sustainable tourism products /packages, etc./”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The estimated impact of the measure and contributed to the overall objective</th>
<th>Connect bicycle paths developed under the project “Mount a bike” on both sides of the border between Bulgaria and Serbia, and carry out feasibility study to connect bicycle route EuroVelo 6 with existing mountain routes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The measure realization will stimulate the shift to environmentally friendly means of tourist mobility;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of measurable activities will contribute to the cross-border region for its cyclical development /the principle of cooperation - widely accepted by the partners/;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The added value of tourism within the border regions of the three countries will increase and their common competitiveness will rise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tangible outputs:**

- Increasing number of tourists using sustainable means of transport instead of their private car - rate of increase 10% on annual basis from the current level;
- Increasing revenue from the tourism sector in the region - rate of increase 10% on an annual basis for the current level;
- Increasing number of tourists that have visited tourist sites in the region - rate of increase 15% on annual basis from the current level;
- Increasing number of tourists from the neighboring countries – the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Serbia - rate of increase 10% on annual basis for the current level;
- Developed promotional materials - at least 1 for each type of tourism product/package elaborated.

**First reliability check /cost estimation and financing options, realization horizon/**

- Investment and operation cost 80 000,00 Levs
- The measure can be realized through financing provided by the municipality budgets /target subsidy/, by co-financing under the Cross Border Cooperation Programs, the combined efforts of business and public sector /PPP/, and/or private investments;
- The measure realization is possible in midterm: within three years after the end of the Transdanube project /2015-2017/.

**Elaboration of cross-border tourist offers for weekend, tourism between Vidin and Zaječar /Serbia/, and web based cross-border public transportation information system.**

- The measure realization will improve the transport accessibility to the main tourist directions at cross-border level;
- The tourist awareness and sensibility about the benefits from the sustainable mobility will increase;
- The cross-border offers will increase the added value of tourism within the Vidin region.

**Tangible outputs:**

- Increasing revenue from the transport and tourism sector in the region - rate of increase 10% on an annual basis for the current level;
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| First reliability check /cost estimation and financing options, realization horizon/ | • Increasing number of tourists that have visited tourist sites in the region - rate of increase 15% on annual basis from the current level;  
• Increasing number of tourists from the neighboring countries – the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Serbia - rate of increase 10% on annual basis for the current level. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment costs</strong></td>
<td>40 000,00 levs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The measure can be realized through financing provided by the municipality budgets /target subsidy/, under the Cross Border Cooperation Programs, by joint activities of business and public sector /PPP/, private investments;</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The measure realization is possible in the short-term: within the lifetime of the Transdanube project /2014/.” |

### In topic “Information and marketing”

**Marketing strategy elaboration for cross-border destinations development, based on the sustainable mobility.**

- Implementation will raise awareness of tourists about the benefits of sustainable mobility at cross-border level;  
- Tourism development in border regions of the three countries will be improved which will increase the added value of the tourism sector;  
- The common marketing strategy will improve cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania.

**Tangible outputs:**

- An increasing number of tourists from the neighboring countries – the Republic of Romania and the Republic of Serbia - rate of increase 15% on annual basis from the current level;  
- Number of realized cross-border projects for tourism development - rate of increase 10% on annual basis for the current level;  
- Increasing revenue from the tourism sector in the region - rate of increase 10% on an annual basis for the current level;  
- Developed promotional materials - at least 1 type of each cross-border destination.
### First reliability check /cost estimation and financing options, realization horizon/

- Investment costs are estimated at 30 000,00 Levs;  
- The measure can be realized through financing provided by the municipality budgets /target subsidy/, public-private partnership /PPP/, by co-financing under the Operational Programs where this activities implementation is set;  
- The measure realization is possible in midterm: within three years after the end of the Transdanube project /2015-2017/.  

### In topic “Financing options, organizational and legal framework”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The estimated impact of the measure and contributed to the overall objective</th>
<th>The annual provision of national and cross-border transport and tourism forums promoting the integration of sustainable mobility in the tourism sector.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - The measure orientation will increase the added value of the tourism sector in the region;  
- The measure implementation will raise awareness and knowledge about sustainable mobility, and it will encourage its implementation as a concept in the region;  
- Annual provision of these forums will stimulate environmentally friendly mobility systems in the tourism sector.  |

**Tangible outputs:**

- Increasing revenue from the tourism sector in the region - rate of increase 10% on an annual basis for the current level;  
- Increasing investments in the tourism sector - rate of increase 10% on annual basis from the current level;  
- Increasing the number of tourists that has visited tourist sites in the region - rate of increase 15% on annual basis from the current level;  
- Implemented annual tourist forums and meetings between stakeholders in the Vidin region, developed mechanisms for coordination between them /e.g. Establishment of Municipal Council of Tourism in the municipalities of the Vidin region and establishment of an effective model for their coordination with the Regional Advisory Council for Tourism;
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- Develops up to 3 new channels of communication and advertising of tourist sites and the Vidin region as a tourist destination;
- Developed promotional materials encouraging sustainable mobility in tourism.

First reliability check /cost estimation and financing options, realization horizon/

- Investment costs of forums are estimated at 50 000,00 Levs per year.
- The measure can be realized through financing provided by the municipality budgets /target subsidy/, by the combined effort of business and public sector /PPP/, private investments;
- The measure realization is possible in the short term: within the lifetime of the Transdanube project 2014/.

Prioritization of measures

The defined measures are characterized by different levels of prioritization, which depend on their importance for CBC development and partnership establishment. 5 measures in the Transdanube project were prioritized in the following way:

| Measure in topic “Sustainable mobility offers” | Touristic offers elaboration for cross-border sustainable transport in tourism demand for cross-border travels, between Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia High priority |
| Measures in topic “Sustainable tourism products/packages, etc.” | Connect bicycle paths developed under the project “Mount a bike” on both sides of the border between Bulgaria and Serbia, and carry out feasibility study to connect bicycle route EuroVelo 6 with existing mountain routes High priority |
| Elaboration of cross-border tourist offers for weekend, tourism between Vidin and Zaječar /Serbia/, and web based cross-border public transportation information system High priority |
| Measure in topic “Information and marketing” | Marketing strategy elaboration for cross-border destinations development, based on the sustainable mobility High priority |
| Measure in topic “Financing options, organizational and legal framework” | The annual provision of national and cross-border transport and tourism forums promoting the integration of sustainable mobility in the tourism sector High priority |
The tourism sector is a vital for the economic development of each region. That means tourism can be realized through the development of small and medium sized enterprises which positively influence economic diversification of Vidin. The tourism industry has the ability to change the appearance of a region and the living standard.

Tourism is considered as priority area of economic development in the Vidin district. The main prerequisite for the successful development of tourism in the region is a realistic assessment of the factors that are relevant to tourism. Particularly significant is the location of the region. Vidin borders with two European countries - Romania and Serbia, which determines its favorable accessibility, and subsequently important European routes pass through its territory. The area is an entry-exit gate of the Republic of Bulgaria in Europe and worldwide. Beneficial is the fact that the area is bordered by a river that runs through Bulgaria, the Danube, and it provides opportunities for effective cooperation with other countries in Eastern, Central and Western Europe. It offers great opportunities for tourism development and supply routes for European tourists.

Other essential prerequisites can be divided by tangible, intangible, information, human and financial resources. In this direction are essential:

- The presence of natural and anthropogenic tangible and intangible resources - caves, waterfalls, natural and rocky areas and sites, flora and fauna, cultural and historical monuments and sites, local culture, and other tourist attractions, cultural events, reason for visiting the region;
- Funds for housing and accommodation as catering and entertainment, located in the region;
- Means of transport services, transportation options, transfers, rental vehicles, etc. that provide accessibility to the sites in the area;
- Availability of commercial sites, other stores and projects, providing opportunities for tourism and recreation to the tourists /conference and sports facilities, etc./. They are often provided with accommodation;
- Information on tourist sites, transport and sightseeing;
- Programs and strategies for tourism and transport sector development in Vidin, developed at European, national, regional and local level;
- Availability of resources - manpower, including the transport and tourism, and other activities;
- Availability and capacity to provide the financial resources for development and mobility in Vidin.

Vidin has the potential for the development of cultural, historical, religious, Eco and cultural tourism. Besides, water, adventure tourism and other attractive events are also offered. The main tourist centers can be found in Vidin and Belogradchik. They offer cultural, historical and
natural attractions in the area, what is more, the majority of the funds for shelter accommodation, catering and entertainment can also be found there. There are many possibilities for transportation between these cities. Vidin border is a tourist center, located directly on the Danube River, subsequently, the city allows for movement along the Danube and the organization of international tourist routes with countries that have access to the river - Romania, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany.

This project action includes elaboration of 20 soft mobility offers for the following different types of tourism – cultural, historical, natural cognitive and/or religious. According to the objective for CBC development in the tourism sector, sustainable mobility offers were developed in this action. Transport offers, including the territory of our target region - district of Vidin and Eastern Serbia are two in number. One of them is in the area of cultural and historical tourism within the territory of the municipalities of Vidin, Kula and Zaječar - the so called tourist route „... On the road of legends” which includes the visit of the three fortresses “Baba Vida” /Vidin/ and “Kastra Martis” /Kula/ in Bulgaria and “Felix Romuliana” /archaeological site Gamzigrad/ in Serbia.

The famous Fortress “Felix Romuliana” is an archaeological site, spa resort and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Serbia, located south of the Danube River, near the city of Zaječar. It is the location of the ancient Roman complex of palaces and temples Felix Romuliana, built by Emperor Galerius. The main area covers 10 acres /40,000 m²/.

The other one transport offer for sustainable mobility in tourism at cross-border level is in the area of natural and cognitive tourism and includes the territory of the municipalities of Vidin, Novo Selo and Negotin.

5.2 The project “Stara Planina” – results and opportunities for future cross-border initiatives

The project named “Stara Planina - New Network” was realized under the financial support of the CBC Program between Bulgaria and Serbia 2007-2013. It was an important project, thus a deeper analysis should be performed which reflects the future possibilities in terms of establishment and development of successful partnerships in the region. This project is based on a database elaboration which is grounded on four key areas of development within the border region: infrastructure, agriculture, environment and tourism.
The End-user knowledge base consists of 3 sub-databases which concern:

**Planning and development documents at local and regional level:**
This sub-database consists of the following documents related to the CBC region - Municipal Plans, Local Environmental Protection Plans, Municipal Spatial Plans, Action Plans, Sector Studies, Master Plans, etc.

**Profiles of experts registered in the cross-border region:**
This sub-database takes into account the problem with the “visibility” in regards to the experts in different development spheres working in the region. The basic problem is the following: within the target region, there are many regional experts, but the existing lack of available information about them /engagement, expertise, work experience, etc./ results in hiring experts “foreign” to the relevant region.

In order to overcome this problem, the sub-database offers an updated list of the available experts and their expertise is identified in four specific areas /infrastructure, agriculture, environment and tourism/.
The elaborated knowledge base /list of experts/ is available online through a specially designed website, and any experts who wish can participate in other activities of the project, which will enable better networking and partnerships in four key development areas.

To be accepted as part of this database, the experts should meet the following requirements:

- To have an appropriate education - a special list is available that contains relevant professions /classification of experts/;
- To have at least three years’ work experience;
- To have at least 3 participations in the preparation of planning documents and research studies or project implementation in the past 10 years.

The elaborated database with experts in the four key development areas is distinguished by its importance, resulting from the following circumstance: *each expert from CBC region who is interested and who meets the stated requirements may be included at any one time to this database.*

- *Regarding to experts in Eastern Serbia*: filling a special form of autobiography and its spending on email address smartstart@fmz.edu.rs /representatives of RARIS - Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia/.

Completion of this form of CV will be the basis for the involvement of experts in the database, as well as, in other project activities, including exchange of experience with colleagues from Bulgaria, study tours, etc.

- *Regarding to experts in Vidin region*: every expert who wishes to participate and meets the requirements should contact the Regional Administration - Vidin for more information /email address: http://en.vidin.government.bg/.

**Research studies:**

The need to create a sub-database with research studies is associated with the lack of research papers and studies concerning the region. Over the last decade, numerous research and studies, concerning different sectors and areas of development, were done, but they are available only in the places of their issuing - mostly in Sofia and Belgrade. In this regard, one of the project activities was the collection of a substantial part of these research studies and their provision in the Regional database. This action was very important in order to make these research studies available for the public.

Moreover, a website was developed and it contains all the database /information concerning the three sub-databases/ in connection with the implementation of the project. The website address is http://www.raris.org/bazaznanja/, and it is available in three languages - English, Bulgarian and Serbian.
Figure 14: Exemplary options for filtering the information needed for the project, available at web address http://www.raris.org/bazaznanja/

Source: http://www.raris.org/bazaznanja/
6. Organisational and institutional structure, operation

Despite of the EU membership, common cross-border organizational and institutional structure or any other legal form has not been created yet. This is the basic reason why the case study does not include data for specific organization dedicated to cross-border cooperation, which are outside the system of the IPA Programs and projects.

The structures that exist in the CBC area can be divided into the following two groups: public administrations and NGOs.

The following structures, at local and at regional level, that have a role in the process of CBC development operate in the Vidin region:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First group for Bulgaria</th>
<th>Public administrations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local Municipal administrations /11 municipalities in Vidin district/: Vidin, Belogradchik, Kula, Dimovo, Gramada, Bregovo, Chuprene, Makresh, Rujintsi, Novo Selo, Boinitsa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following structures play a crucial role in CBC establishment and development in Eastern Serbia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First group for Serbia</th>
<th>Public administrations:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local Municipal administrations /8 municipalities: Zaječar, Knjaževac, Boljevac, Sokobanja, Bor, Negotin, Majdanpek and Kladovo/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia has a significant role in the realization of projects related to CBC Bulgaria-Serbia. At this point of view, the table below presents the main key moments in RARIS functioning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia /RARIS/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission</strong>: Creating, supporting and encouraging regional development and creation of a stimulating business environment in Eastern Serbia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main activities</strong>: systematic development of technical expertise, entrepreneurship, partnership between various governmental and nongovernmental actors, and infrastructure at the community level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia /RARIS/

The role of the organizational unit: improving the capacity and capabilities of the following target groups:

- Local authorities;
- Institutions and public utility companies founded by local authorities and other institutions and organizations under Local authority's responsibility;
- Business support institutions /Regional Chamber of Commerce, Regional Agency for SME, etc./;
- Companies, Local Business Association /General Associations, Sectors association, Clusters, Cooperatives/ and business in general;
- Civil Society - NGO, Community Based Organization, Youth organizations, etc.

Organizational structure:

- Founders: Municipalities of: Majdanpek, Kladovo, Boljevac, Knjaževac, Negotin and Sokobanja; City of Zaječar; Regional Chamber of Commerce Zaječar; AD Vodogradnja /Zaječar/; AD Road Company, Zaječar; NGO Timok club, Knjaževac; Faculty of management Zaječar.
- The Assembly elects the RARIS Council and appoints the RARIS Director. The RARIS Council coordinates and harmonizes the program and developmental interests of its founders.
- Local authorities have the leading role in the decision making process since they are the main contributors to RARIS.

Location: head office located at Zaječar, address: Trg Oslobodjenja 1 19000

Leader: Vladan Jeremić /Director/

Institutional form: Limited Liability Company /accredited by the National Agency for Regional Development, decision from May 4th 2011.

On the other hand, in the organizational structures that operates in Bulgaria, Vidin region includes the following units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second group in Bulgaria - Universities, NGO</th>
<th>Agency for Regional Development and Business Center - Vidin /ARDBC/, <a href="http://www.bcvidin.org/">http://www.bcvidin.org/</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulgarian Industrial Association Vidin, <a href="http://www.bia-bg.com/member/168">http://www.bia-bg.com/member/168</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association “Regional partnerships for sustainable development - Vidin”, <a href="http://www.rpsd.ngobg.info/">http://www.rpsd.ngobg.info/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, <a href="http://www.vdcci.bg/">http://www.vdcci.bg/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This group includes many organizations in the non-governmental sector, which have an important role in the process for CBC establishment and development between both countries. In Vidin district, many nongovernmental organizations are registered, aimed at encouraging and stimulating variety of development areas at different territorial levels: at local level /within Vidin region/ and on cross-border level /both sides of the borders/. Current and detailed information about each of these organizations is available at the mentioned web addresses, although, the Vidin chamber of Commerce and Industry is worth to be presented in longer form.

**Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry as part of the Danube Chambers of Commerce Association /DCCA*/

The geographical position of Vidin region determines its involvement in the Danube Chambers of Commerce Association /DCCA/. The other two members from Bulgaria are Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa and Ruse Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry /http: //www.bcci.bg/ and the 28 Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry /one of which is Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry/ are united in the Unified System of Bulgarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry which has about 53 000 members - traders, companies, associations, etc.

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8 More information about DCCA is available on the following website, http://www.danubechambers.eu/
Active participation of the Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the implementation of CBC projects between the regions of Vidin and Zaječar, demonstrates its important role in the cross-border issue and cooperation.

**Vidin Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

**Main activities:** Supports its members to increase their opportunities in international markets, promote European and international integration of the Vidin region.

**The role of the organizational unit:** the Chamber interacts with state bodies of local self-government, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and other regional chambers of commerce, as well as with foreign and international bodies and organizations with which the Chamber maintains partnerships.

The Chamber plays an important role in the process of CBC development between Vidin region and Eastern Serbia. Its activity is confirmed by its partners from the Republic of Serbia: Regional Chamber of Commerce - Zaječar, Regional Chamber of Commerce - Nis, Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Leskovac, and RARIS.

**Organizational structure** - management Bodies are: The General Assembly, the Management Board and The Chairman.

**Location:** Vidin 3700, Tsar Alexander II Str. 19-21

**Leader:** Krasimir Kirilov /Chairman/

**Institutional form:** Legal non-profit entity
The second group with organizational units within the region of Eastern Serbia /with a focus on the Zaječar territory/ and ability for cross-border cooperation are is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second group for Serbia - Universities, NGO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty of Management in Zaječar, <a href="http://www.fmz.edu.rs/index_eng.html">http://www.fmz.edu.rs/index_eng.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PC Directorate for Development, Urban Planning and Construction Knjaževac /Zaječar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resource Centre Bor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional Chamber of Commerce Nis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mining and Metallurgical Institute Bor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public Communal Enterprise Donji Milanovac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Country Museum of Knjaževac /Zaječar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• House of Culture Knjaževac /Zaječar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agro-project Timok, Zaječar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NGO “Children’s Joy” /Zaječar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sport Federation of Municipality of Majdanpek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Timok Club /Zaječar/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Association “Open Club” , <a href="http://www.oknis.org.rs/en/contact/">http://www.oknis.org.rs/en/contact/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these organizations exist from a long period of time, many years before the start of the initiatives for CBC in the contemporary sense. They focus their attention to CBC as an opportunity for their own development and for achievement of CBC objectives and priorities. Anyway, there are no common organizations which are able to build/facilitate the special kind of CBC in the region. All of them work in the CBC area in the principle “project call by project call” which makes the results of the CBC unstable.

On the other hand, there is only one organization that can be considered as specific type of organization dedicated to the CBC, namely “The Joint Technical Secretariat” working with Bulgaria-Serbia IPA Cross Border Program. The main office of the JTS is in Sofia and office branch in Nis /outside of the case study territory/ http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/page.php?c=29&d=156.

To conclude, there (territory of the case study investigation) does not exist any specific institution/organization which is dedicated to the CBC, to its development which consists of
members from both countries and operate for the common CBC development. All the organizations who participate in CBC activity work on their own responsibilities, management and budget.

7. Composition of the working organ

At the very moment, it is obvious that there does not exist any dedicated organ to CBC and its activity. It could be very positive if the region might establish an EGTC /European Group for Territorial cooperation/, which can be explicitly dedicated to CBC initiatives.

8. Main activity areas/profile

The main activities of the EGTC could be the following domains:

- Cross-border co-operation programs along internal EU borders.
- Transnational co-operation programs, larger areas of co-operation Danube and Mediterranean regions.
- The interregional co-operation program (INTERREG IVC) and 3 networking programs (Urbact II, Interact II and ESPON) cover all 27 Member States of the EU. They provide a framework for exchanging experience between regional and local bodies in different countries.

9. Management, budget (incomes/expenses)

All the organizations mentioned above in the case study have their own management and budget.
10. **SWOT - analysis**

Within the present study the SWOT analysis is carried out in order to evaluate the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the CBC between the district of Vidin and Eastern Serbia in different areas of development, economic, social and territorial cohesion.

We should mention that the SWOT analysis profoundly reflects the acquired information from the interviews conducted with those who were involved within the CBC. That means the SWOT is a succinct enumeration about the character and orientation of the cross-border cooperation between the districts of Vidin and Zaječar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interior features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTIONS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Successfully realized many projects for CBC between the district of Vidin and Eastern Serbia in the area of different development spheres;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Successfully established partnerships at a cross-border level in the area of economic cooperation, environmental protection, technical documentation for public significance projects, regional integration with social effect, technical infrastructure, cross-border education development, organic farming, etc.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Untapped potential for CBC development and partnerships established between the two neighboring regions of Vidin and Eastern Serbia;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of sufficient financial resources for project financing - 85% of the funding is in the form of grants from the EU funds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of Vidin – Zaječar (Northwest Bulgaria-Eastern Serbia)

### Interior features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE Strengths</th>
<th>NEGATIVE Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR:</strong></td>
<td><strong>IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategic cross Geo-economic position - regions of the Danube;</td>
<td>• Insufficient provision of services related to transportation, travel and road safety at cross-border level /to the Republic of Serbia/;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Availability of capacity /length and density/ of the transport system beyond the volumes of the current freight and passenger traffic;</td>
<td>• The road infrastructure in urban and non-urban areas are not consistent with the green method of transportation /cycling/ - valid in the CBC regions within the two countries;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presence of priority national projects for development of the transport system in the region;</td>
<td>• Insufficient links between the opportunities for cross-border transportation between Vidin and Eastern Serbia /road information/ and tourist calendar in the CBC region;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developed maintenance and control systems for traffic of international importance;</td>
<td>• No information web portals at cross-border level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing sales revenue from international traffic;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The development of bicycle routes as part of EuroVelo 6 passing through the territory of Serbia and Bulgaria /Vidin region/.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN THE TOURISM SECTOR:</strong></td>
<td><strong>IN THE TOURISM SECTOR:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rich intangible and tangible heritage within the CBC region;</td>
<td>• No cross-border packages between Bulgaria and Serbia;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Availability of good accommodation base in both target cities Vidin in Bulgaria and Zaječar in Serbia;</td>
<td>• Insufficient supply of services connected with tourist experiences and animations within CBC region;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willingness to develop tourism sector as a priority in the CBC area;</td>
<td>• Lack of links between the tourist calendar and routes of the region, on one side, and the international tourist agencies, on the other;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing a system for publicizing and promoting tourist destinations at cross-border level;</td>
<td>• Undrawn potential of cultural and historical tourism within the CBC region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing sales revenue from tourism and the number of people employed in tourism within the target CBC region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appearance

### POSTIVE Opportunities

**IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTIONS:**
- Strengthening of partnerships at cross-border level that were established in 2007-2013 between the district of Vidin and the region of Eastern Serbia in the current programming period 2014-2020.

**IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR:**
- Possibility to rehabilitate railroads within Eastern Serbia and to connect them to the Bulgaria - district of Vidin;
- Potential for future development of bicycle routes part of EuroVelo 6 within the target regions;
- Opportunities for growth of the road traffic between Bulgaria /district of Vidin/ and Eastern Serbia;
- Opportunities for diversification of services arising from the travel and passenger service at a cross-border level.

### NEGATIVE Threats

**IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTIONS:**
- Risk of temporary and unsustainable over the time effect of CBC projects realized between the two countries;
- Insufficient ability to finance public significance projects in the period 2014-2020.

**IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR:**
- Insufficient financial resources for development and reconstruction of the transport modes in the CBC region;
- Fragmentation in investment projects and priorities in the two countries;
- Insufficient increase in cross-border travel of a different type /tourism, business, cargo/;
## Appearance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSTIVE Opportunities</th>
<th>NEGATIVE Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN THE TOURISM SECTOR:</strong></td>
<td><strong>IN THE TOURISM SECTOR:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to develop diverse tourism marketing at a cross-border level;</td>
<td>• Insufficient funds to develop cross-border tourism infrastructure and tourist destinations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to increase travels with tourist orientation at cross-border level;</td>
<td>• Lack of a unified approach to the priorities of the tourism product at cross-border level;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities for diversification of tourism services and tourist animations at cross-border level as a combination of different types of tourism /cultural and historical, religious, nature tourism/;</td>
<td>• Insufficient increase in travel at cross-border level;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities for increased revenues from tourism and the number of people employed in the tourism sector within the CBC region.</td>
<td>• The tourism system is not organized, lacks a functional, operational relationship /synergy/ between tourism services in the CBC region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

The analysis of future plans and goals of the CBC between the district of Vidin and the region of Eastern Serbia should be carried out in terms of the financing opportunities that will be provided within the current programming period 2014-2020. In this regard, we should mention the new Bulgaria - Serbia IPA Cross-border program for the period 2014-20209, as the main source of financing projects for CBC development.

On the other side, the specific geographic location of Bulgaria /bordered by the Danube River at north/ determines its inclusion in the geographic scope of the Danube Transnational Program 2014-2020 - a new ETC10 program.

Danube Transnational Program 2014-2020 is a part of the legislative package for the Cohesion Policy for the current funding period. In the period 2014-2020, the present area of the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program covers three transnational progresses’ - Danube Transnational Program, South East Gateway /renamed later on Adriatic-Ionian/ and Balkan-Mediterranean.

The areas of CBC topics, defined as priorities in the Danube Program, include many traditional transnational development spheres: innovation, transport, environment, etc. These development areas will be supported under the following four priority axes that were defined in the program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority axis 1</th>
<th>Innovative and socially responsible Danube region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority axis 2</td>
<td>Environment and culture responsible Danube region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority axis 3</td>
<td>Better connected and energy responsible Danube region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority axis 4</td>
<td>Well-governed Danube region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.southeast-europe.net/

In relation to the territorial scope of this study, we should analyze the possibilities of CBC development, which will arise from the Danube Program action within the target regions including the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia.

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9 The final draft of the Bulgaria - Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 - 2020 was submitted to the European Commission for approval on 19th of September 2014.

10 ETC - European Territorial Cooperation
In respect of Bulgaria, we should mention that in the Territorial Development Concept of Bulgaria for the period 2013-2025 the following strategic objectives were defined:

- Territorial cohesion;
- European integration, competitiveness and innovation;
- Environmental protection.

In the context of the integration of the European area, projects regarding the connection to the trans-European transport and energy networks /TEN/, the cross-border ecological corridors and protected area creation appear to be viable.

The Danube as a potential space for the exploitation of the transnational development potential is already included in the vision of the spatial plan of Serbia. According to the document, the cross-border and transnational cooperation with the neighboring regions will get a particular emphasis in the future. Considering the expansion of ecological networks and protected areas, the planning material dedicates a great role to the Danube and its tributaries. As regards the striving for CBC development between Serbia and the neighboring regions, we should mention that the strategic objectives for the interconnection of the Danube region and the environmental protection are characterized by their transnational focus.

In regard to opportunities for CBC development, we should mention the EU Strategy for the Danube Region which was adopted in 2011. This Strategy has the same territorial scope as the Danube Transnational Program /also known as the new Danube Program/. However, the fact should be emphasized that the EU Strategy and the Danube Program are two different instruments developed for similar aims but acting on different levels and principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danube Transnational Program</th>
<th>EU Strategy for the Danube Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed for similar aims, but acting on different levels and principles</td>
<td>Macro-regional strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their matching territory and objectives provide great opportunities for cooperation between the two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program will contribute to the Strategy’s thematic goals by implementing relevant cooperation projects, and it might also support the institutional cooperation of stakeholders and institutions of the Danube Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.southeast-europe.net/
The Danube region strategy covers the following 4 pillars and 11 priority areas:

![Figure 15: Pillars and priority areas defined in the EU Strategy for the Danube region /EUSDR/](source: http://www.danube-region.eu/)

Each one priority area from the 11 priority areas is managed by 2 Priority Area Coordinators /PACs/. With regard to the roles of Bulgaria and Serbia should be noted that:

- Priority Area “To improve mobility and intermodality - rail, road and air” is coordinated by Slovenia and **Serbia**;
- Priority Area “To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts” is coordinated by **Bulgaria** and Romania;
- Priority Area “To develop the Knowledge Society /research, education and ICT/” is coordinated by Slovakia and **Serbia**;
- Priority Area “To work together to tackle security and organized crime” is coordinated by Germany and **Bulgaria**.

The new Bulgaria - Serbia IPA CBC Program for the period 2014-2020 aims to contribute to the objectives defined in the Strategy “Europa 2020” for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The CBC Program also interacts with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region through an integrated approach addressing common territorial challenge. On this base, the following strategic framework was defined in the CBC Program between Bulgaria and Serbia:
Table 15: BuProgramSerbia IPA CBC Programme 2014-2020 strategic framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision for the border region development:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Well-preserved regional resources - people, land, and heritage - as a guarantee for cross-border identity and sustainable development of the border region”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Overall objective:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>’To stimulate the balanced and sustainable development of the Bulgaria-Serbia border region integrated in the European space - achieved through smart economic growth, environmental change adaptation and learning culture enhancement”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Thematic priority areas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Encouraging the tourism and cultural and natural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Investing in youth, education and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Protecting the environment and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bulgaria - Serbia IPA CBC Program 2014-2020

The strategic framework of the new CBC Program takes into account the need for increasing cross-border network, interactions and connections in different development areas: social, economic, environmental within the CBC region in the period to 2020.

The three thematic priority areas defined in the program framework will provide opportunities for CBC development and partnership established between the two countries in the sphere of tourism sector in its role as a priority sector within the CBC region; social integration - focusing on the need for investments in youth, education and skills; and actions in the area of environmental protection - taking into account the climate change challenge.

As a result of the foregoing, we can conclude that the current programming period 2014-2020 will provide good opportunities for CBC development and partnership established between the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia /including the target regions of this study - district of Vidin and Eastern Serbia/. In this regard, we believe that the future efforts in terms of CBC between the two countries should be aimed at the utilization of the existing good potential for cooperation in different development areas: economic, social, environmental protection.
12. **Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation**

The cooperation is quite specific because both territories face common problems. Both territories are underdeveloped, suffer depopulation, lack of basic infrastructure, low incomes and narrow business opportunities. The projects have already understood these difficulties and they have tried to take over the internal potential at maximum extent. However, some negative processes are still in progress, consequently, the challenges remain. The internal potential is very limited and it must be “open” for markets and flows outside the CBC region. The region needs an effective and applied smart specialization strategy, which can transform the underdevelopment into a smooth growth.

Several key projects that should be implemented under the establishment of an EGTC:

**Bulgaria:**

- Recovery of Vidin airport for cargo/trips/education;
- Sustainable way for usage of the high mineralized thermal waters in Vidin - Slanotran - Koshava;
- Construction of intermodal transport, terminal – Vidin industrial area;
- Renewable energy production - solar, biomass, wind;
- Construction of ski area “Midzhur” Chuprene Municipality.

**Serbia:**

- Founding of a Regional Collection and Distribution Centre;
- Program for development and capacity building of the interested entities in agriculture;
- Developing a study on the potentials of energy production from renewable sources in the Timok region;
- Green energy production - Improving the capacity of municipalities of the region in order to increase the production and use of energy derived from renewable resources;
- Support for investments focused on tourism development.
13. Summary

The implementation of the projects under the CBC program represents a really good opportunity for successful partnership cooperation between the region of Vidin and Eastern Serbia. These projects often concentrate on key priorities covering both regions, and they will play a significant CBC effect, either institutional or in the business sector. The cooperation increases the common competitiveness of the region, as well as, the living standards.

The CBC region has developed common tourist packages covering the territory of Vidin region /fortresses Baba Vida and Castra Martis/ and Zaječar /Felix Romuliana Fortress/. The results which were achieved, encourage further successful partnership development between the representatives from transport and tourism sectors from Vidin and Zaječar. What is more, an awareness is developed that there are substantial possibilities for practicing different types of tourism within the CBC region. That means the future wine tourism development within the CBC will be encouraged through a cross-border tourist road that has been established during the project implementation. This activity will have a positive effect on the future promotion of the wine cellars in these regions and will have an important role in the process of attracting tourist.

Tourism is considered to be a priority area of economic development in the district of Vidin. The main prerequisite for the successful development of tourism in the region is a realistic assessment of the factors that are relevant to tourism. Vidin is bordered by two European countries - Romania and Serbia, which determines the favorable accessibility, thus important European routes pass through its territory. The area is an entry-exit gate of the Republic of Bulgaria in Europe and worldwide.

On the other side, CBC with the surrounding regions in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria should be increased and intensified, it has to result in joint projects, with joined tourism packages based on sustainable mobility vision. At the very moment it is obvious that there does not exist any dedicated organ to CBC. Subsequently, establishment of an EGTC /European Group for Territorial cooperation/ which can be dedicated to CBC initiatives may bring positive development in cross-border cooperation.
14. Bibliography


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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
Cross-border interactions between the cities of Pécs and Osijek

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1. Introduction

Cities often play a significant role in local and regional cross-border cooperation initiatives, and this is particularly the case when at least one side of the border is dominated by a large city, an unambiguous and overwhelming political and/or economic centre. Such cities are usually characterised by a relatively high concentration of companies, administrative functions, and tertiary sector facilities, also serving as nodes in transport systems. This financial and functional power makes these cities attractive for commuters and investors among others, even in cross-border terms, and enables them to back institutionalised cross-border initiatives with an appropriate financial and institutional background. In line with this, the urban development of these central places is of decisive importance in cross-border interactions.

In the formerly socialist Central and Eastern Europe, towns and cities benefited from a privileged status throughout the second half of the 20th century as opposed to rural settlements. The centralising logic of the communist system and the consideration of urban lifestyle as superior to others have led to an unproportioned reinforcement of cities. Despite all attempts from the early 1990s to lay the ground for a more balanced development of the settlement system, this past heritage has a powerful influence on territorial processes still in our days.

The interactions at the Hungary-Croatia border are also largely limited to urban centres, namely to the city of Pécs on the Hungarian side and, to a lesser extent, on the city of Osijek on the Croatian side. These two centres, although none of them situated in the very proximity of the borderline, have been committed to overcome borders through the implementation of a series of joint projects in an attempt to tackle the negative consequences of their unfavourable geographic location within their own countries. It is the restless work of about four decades that culminated in the establishment of the Pannon EGTC in 2010 to create an institutionalised framework for the common work of the cities of Pécs and Osijek, formerly based mainly on bilateral agreements, and to extend the benefits of cross-border relations to the broader area on both sides. Due to the recent EU-accession of Croatia in July 2013 the EGTC has not yet been able to fulfil its initial role, actors throughout the region are looking forward to benefit from this new legal form as soon as law harmonisation in Croatia is implemented.

In this case study we intend to introduce what traditions and experiences cross-border cooperation can build on in the near future on the Hungary-Croatia border, and to what sort of intervention is expected from an efficient EGTC when local characteristics are at stake.

As mentioned above, cross-border interaction across the Hungary-Croatia border has until now been little institutionalized. Official relations on the local and regional levels were mainly
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developed under town-twinning agreements, while more organized forms of intensive cooperation, namely European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) only appeared in recent years, and since Croatia has not yet harmonised all its legal code to community standards, this kind of cooperation has not caught up considerably yet. It is therefore logical to raise the question why choosing this border section for a detailed investigation was relevant. For what reason can we consider such a border area as an exemplary case in the lack of institutionalised structures?

In the following we shall see that institutionalised framework is not an imperative precondition for the implementation of common projects.

When searching for a case study area, we tried to define the aspects of selecting successful cross-border cooperation initiatives. In five questions we sum up our criteria to which affirmative answers were needed to accept the collaboration as suitable. These questions are:

- Has the collaboration resulted in the meaningful intensification of cross-border relations?
- Did some kind of local identity appear in the area of the cross-border cooperation?
- Did they manage to exploit development funds for the cross-border cooperation?
- Are the objectives adequate in relation to the socio-economic situation in the border region?
- Did the cross-border cooperation affect the development of the region?

The cooperation of the cities of Pécs and Osijek has been found fully appropriate from all these aspects. The cooperation looks back at a long historic tradition as this partnership was first officially declared through the signing of a town twinning agreement in 1973. This agreement can only be considered as a loose framework with largely general goals; the agreement is widely seen as the very beginning of the common work.

In order to gain a deeper insight into the process and outcomes of the (at least) four decade long history of the cooperation, we made efforts to gather information in multiple ways. At first, a detailed online search was performed through the use of some keywords to have a broad view on the online commentaries and issues of cross-border relevance in any fields of the economy and social life from the wider Hungary-Croatia border region. This sort of information gathering enabled us to have an overall review on the most important outcomes of the common work of the two cities.

A more advanced level of the evaluation of on-line resources was achieved through taking into consideration those databases which include projects implemented under certain planning periods. Websites such as that of the Hungary–Croatia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013 (http://www.hu-hr-IPA.com) or even, to a minor extent, that of the Urban Development Public Company of Pécs (http://www.pvfzrt.hu) offers access to a wide range of information on ongoing and past projects. Through these descriptions it becomes
more transparent which sectors and fields were more or less involved in cross-border activities.

The deepest analyses were based on structured interviews, conducted with the executive officers of the most important actors in cross-border terms, such as the City of Pécs, the University of Pécs, the County of Baranya and the Urban Development Public Company of Pécs. The outcomes of the interviews are invaluable and indispensable to reveal all the important facts and motives of the cooperation, and to place current actions as well as ideas for the future into a historical and regional context.
2. The geographical confines of the cross-border cooperation

Though our case study concentrates on the cooperation of two cities, it would obviously be a mistake to ignore their hinterlands that are largely dependent on these urban centres and therefore also affected by the outcomes of interactions.

The core of the larger area of the cooperation is largely identical to the historical Baranya/Baranja region, a more or less flat plain between the Danube and Drava rivers. However, the hinterland of the two cities is much larger than this as even the cities themselves are located at the very edge of this plain area (Osijek is practically outside as it sits at the southern bank of the River Drava). It is more appropriate to identify the counties of Baranya and Osijek-Baranja, seated in Pécs and Osijek respectively, as the areas where the spillover effects of the cooperation of the cities is most effective.

Moreover, the unambiguous role of the two urban centres is not limited to the borders of these counties but extends far beyond them. Osijek, with its population of about 110,000 inhabitants, is the fourth largest city of Croatia and the largest city as well as the economic
and cultural centre of the historical eastern Croatian region of Slavonia. The city hosts one of the seven public universities in Croatia, consisting of 11 faculties, 5 university departments, and an Academy of Arts, covering the study fields of natural sciences, technical sciences, biomedicine and medicine, biotechnical sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts. With around 20 000 students, the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek is the third largest higher education institution in the country.

The significance of Pécs on the Hungarian borderside is even higher. Besides functioning as a county seat, the city is also the centre of the Southern Transdanubia region, one of the seven NUTS 2 regions that covers one-sixth of Hungary’s territory, with a population of around one million people. The city itself hosts about 150 000 inhabitants and is an outstanding economic, cultural and administrative centre of the wider area of south-western Hungary. The University of Pécs, with approximately 24 000 students is the fifth largest university in Hungary, and definitely the major one in the whole region.¹ The institution is built up by ten faculties, which offer around 300 different study programmes in a wide range of study fields, including law, medicine, humanities, economics, arts, as well as technical and natural sciences, among others. The attractiveness of the university is no more confined to the internal side of the state borders but foreign students also have a growing significance, as the university hosts currently at least 2 500 students from abroad. Moreover, the international reputation of the city has seen a shift recently beyond the academic sector, mainly due to a series of valuable investments, implemented under the European Capital of Culture 2010 events.

The above described outstanding role of the two cities is paired with the relative weakness of the larger areas around. This a basic characteristic of the settlement networks of Soutwestern Hungary and Eastern Croatia. These lands are mostly rural areas, with few urban centres. In Slavonia, the second city after Osijek is Slavonski Brod (60 000), lying on the very southern edge of the region, which is followed by the much smaller municipalities of Vinkovci (35 000), Vukovar (28 000), Đakovo (28 000), as well as also more distant Požega (26 000), and Virovitica (21 000). Other urban centres do not exceed 15 000 inhabitants. Average municipalities have between 2 000 and 5 000 inhabitants, but none of them below 1 000.

¹ http://pte.hu/tenyek_adatok/statisztikak
In contrast to this the Hungarian side is much more polarised. The weight of the city of Pécs within the settlement network is more overwhelming, than that of Osijek in Slavonia. Based on the number of inhabitants Pécs (approximately 150 000) is more than twice as large as the second city Kaposvár (65 000) and almost five times greater than the third Szekszárd (33 000). Other municipalities counting more than 15 000 inhabitants are Siófok (25 000), Komló (24 000), Dombóvár (19 000), Paks (19 000), and Mohács (18 000). At the same time, the significance of the entities from the very bottom of the settlement hierarchy also refer to a more imbalanced settlement system than in Slavonia. According to the census of 2011, 497 of the 799 municipalities (or 62%) of the whole region has a residential population of less than one thousand people, and this share of small size settlements was even more significant in Baranya county, the closer hinterland of Pécs, where 258 out of 301 settlements (86%) had no more than one thousand inhabitants. All this points to the decisive role of Pécs as an ultimate centre of the wider area.
All in all, we can say that the borderland area of historical Baranya/Baranja region is organised around two important urban centres on the two sides of the border. However, the overwhelming weight of Pécs suggests that there might appear some asymmetries concerning economic and social interactions in cross-border terms, in favour of the Hungarian side.
3. The development of the cross-border cooperation

As already mentioned, cross-border cooperation in the Baranya/Baranja region as well as along the entire section of the Hungary-Croatia border has only begun to constitute institutionalized forms in the course of the last few years. The Pannon EGTC, founded in 2010, is considered as the very first such cooperation initiative which has the capacity to provide a strong institutional background, an overall development strategy and an appropriate legal embeddedness that are essential for an efficient joint work. Though the initiative itself is still fairly young, its activities are based upon a several decade long experience of common work, an invaluable heritage from the past and also a particular form of capital from which the current cooperation can largely benefit. In this chapter we are tracing a brief overview on the roots and past development of cross-border economic and social ties and interactions between the cities of Pécs and Osijek, which have contributed to the joint planning and project implementation of the last years, targeting the overcoming of the state border.

The two cities have always had active ties between each other in the historical past as they were connected by trade routes since the Roman period and they became seats of the adjacent counties of Baranya/Baranja and Virovitica/Verőce from the Middle Ages onwards. Having lived mostly under the same regimes and jurisdictions throughout their history (Roman Empire, Kingdom of Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Habsburg Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire), they tended to share a similar fate. Although the emergence of the state border after the end of the First World War put an end to this situation, interactions between the two sides of the border have not ceased entirely but saw a revival at last, even if in a different way than before.

Officially, the first documented cooperation initiative dates back to 1973 when a town twinning agreement between the two cities was signed. Basically, this partnership arrangement created a loose framework in a wide range of fields, such as the reinforcement of civil society activities and local democracy together with the support of minority culture and rights, although very few definite interventions were indicated within the document itself. At first, emphasis in general laid in most cases on symbolic actions and events, such as delegation, folk dance group and choir visits, art exhibitions as well as international fairs. These expenditures were mostly financed by the budgets of the two urban municipalities. Eventually, with the worsening of the financial conditions of the municipalities by the 1980s and 1990s, actions in these cooperation fields saw a remarkable decrease.

With the outbreak of the Croatian War of Independence in the beginning of the 1990s, the Yugoslavian/Croatian side of the border found itself in a worrisome situation. The territory of Slavonia was heavily involved in the battles, and the settlements of the area, including the city of Osijek, were largely ruined by the middle of the decade. During these times former
conventional cooperation ties ceased to exist, although there was no lack in cross-border interaction at all. Humanitarian actions became most prevalent during the years of the war, in which the City of Pécs played an important role, for which the city was awarded UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize in 1998. The accommodation of war refugees, the supply of scarce goods and the assistance in post-war recovery from the part of the city also contributed to the strengthening of interregional cohesion as well as to the reinforcement of some kind of a common identity binding together the riverbanks of the Drava.

After the end of the war, one could see a shift in the intensity of economic interactions that was not at all independent on the growing wealth and on the increasing interest of Hungarian companies to enter the emerging Croatian market. In 1996, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Pécs opened a sub-office for trade development in Osijek. This was an important step toward the subsequent establishment of the Hungarian-Croatian Chamber of Industry and Commerce which operated between 1997 and 2002. Though this common institution dissolved after a few years, due to the unfavourable economic environment and administrative burdens, the chambers of the border areas are still active actors in the promotion of cross-border economic ties, which is marked by the Pécs Expo and Osijek Expo, organised every year, which serve as invaluable occasions for the entrepreneurs of the wider area to find new partners and to launch new partnerships.

In 1997, it was the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Pécs and Baranya that elaborated the first interregional development programme for the cross-border region, aiming to designate the role of Pécs as an important hub at the intersection of the Carpathian Basin and the Balkans. This concept was underpinned by the definition of Pan-European transport corridors in Helsinki in the course of the same year as two of the ten major corridors were supposed to cross the area. Beside the historical waterway of the Danube (corridor VII.) the corridors V. Branch C (Ploče - Sarajevo - Osijek – Budapest) and X. (Salzburg - Ljubljana - Zagreb - Beograd - Thessaloniki) were planned to be upgraded, which would result in a better connectedness and a wider range of opportunities for the region. As a result, the cities of Pécs (HU), Osijek (HR), Tuzla (BiH) and Novi Sad (RS), together with their hinterlands, have been foreseen to perform a gate function for Europe from the point of view of the Balkans.

The conceptualised idea of the gate role provided a joint identity for the larger area and served as a basis for the foundation of the Duna-Dráva-Száva Euroregional Cooperation in 1998. The Euroregion included the Hungarian counties of Baranya, Somogy and partly Tolna together with other local and regional actors from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The initiative aimed at the harmonisation of economic development programs in the region, such as the establishment of technology parks, entrepreneurial zones, research centres and transport infrastructure, among others, to attract potential investors. Though the

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organization itself still exists, its activity has considerably relapsed during the last few years. The relative inefficiency of the euroregion is widely seen as the result of the lack of own competences as state-level decision making remains largely centralized.³

Figure 4: The position of the cross-border area in the wider European space

The three-year research project titled ‘The relationship between regional development and cross-border co-operation in the area of the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion’, conducted between 2003 and 2005, provides us with a more sophisticated insight on the situation of cross-border cooperation on the Hungary-Croatia border at the time of the EU accession of Hungary.⁴ The programme investigated and examined the border area of the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion from the perspective of spatial development potentials, needs, and demands in the context of the available and the future EU co-financed spatial development programmes. The key result of the research is the identification and analysis of the project based co-operations, which serve as concrete spatial development actions in these lagging micro-regions. During the three years, the results and deficiencies of the PHARE Programme, the Pre-Accession Funds, and the Interreg Community Initiative were analysed, and the

⁴ http://nyilvanos.otka-palyazat.hu/index.php?menuid=930&num=43280&keyword=euror%C3%A9gi%E2%80%93%E2%80%93fogad%C3%A9s
implementation of the first National Development Plan also underwent a critical evaluation. At the same time, the authors also contributed with an elaboration of the second NDP and provided significant inputs to the content of this document. The research identified that from the perspectives of geography, economics, as well as spatial planning, the hitherto applied spatial development policy and instrument-system was not sufficient and efficient for the accurate and prompt handling of the problems of the borderland areas, and their measures were not able to meet the needs of socio-economic development on the different sides of the border. It has also been proved that there were several sectors and areas that could had been developed in a more effective manner, but the potential remained underused or unexploited due to the lack of resources and the deficiencies of the spatial development policy.

For a more complex image it is also worth to note that EU support was not available for Croatia until 2003. The Hungarian-Croatian cross-border co-operation officially started in 2002, when local actors along the border initiated the creation of the Hungary-Croatia Pilot Small Projects Fund within the framework of the Hungarian National PHARE Programme. The Fund was then launched in the following year. The main objective of these so-called INTERREG PHARE Programmes was to support the cooperation of non-profit bodies across the border to prepare potential candidates for future INTERREG funding opportunities. However, the Pilot Small Projects Fund only allowed for co-operation-type projects with funding only on the Hungarian side. No surprise then that the cooperation, based on such limited financial resources and having an institutional background suffered from the lack of competences (as mentioned above) achieved only a low efficiency. Nevertheless, the decade-long period since the end of the research project saw significant changes in the field of development policy. In the period of 2004-2006, the cross-border co-operation between Hungary and Croatia formed a trilateral co-operation conducted with Slovenia in the Neighbourhood Programme which meant a significant development as it incorporated external (CARDS/PHARE for Croatia) and internal (ERDF) EU financial sources in the same Programme. A major step forward for the Croatian partner organizations was that in this case the funds were opened to them as well, making them project participants in their own right.

5 http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/en/overview
4. Cross-border cooperation today

In terms of the above described evolution one can see that by today the role of the European Union became highly prominent in cross-border activities. Beside financial support, the EU has also had a great impact on the institutional system of the Member States and pushed them towards a more intensive cooperation in the field territorial development, among others. The establishment of the system of Regional Development Agencies in Hungary and Croatia as part of the preparation for the EU accession has also proved to be an important step toward a more integrative and inclusive planning of urban and rural areas, and these institutions have played an important role in the cross-border cooperation activities as well.

The most important financial instrument throughout the last years was the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, approved by the European Commission on 13th March 2008. The Programme allocated 52 433 025 € of Community funding for the programme area that consisted of the counties Zala, Somogy, and Baranya on the Hungarian side and Međimurje, Koprivnica-Križevci, Virovitica-Podravina, and Osijek-Baranja on the Croatian side. In addition to these border counties four other Croatian counties, namely Varaždin, Bjelovar-Bilogora, Požega-Slavonia, and Vukovar-Srijem, were enabled to participate in the Programme as so-called ‘adjacent regions’ and could use the maximum of 20% of the amount of the EU contribution available. Hence, the programme area covered in total 31 028 km².
The Programme offered a wide range of opportunities for potential beneficiaries in the frame of two priorities: Sustainable Environment and Tourism as well as Co-operative Economy Intercommunity Human Resource Development. 60% of the total budget was allocated to the first one and 30% to the second one, whilst the rest was foreseen to serve technical assistance. Various activities could be eligible for financing, such as infrastructure developments serving the protection of nature and natural values; elaboration of joint programmes, studies, strategies for the improvement of environmental protection; construction and designation of new cycling routes; development of tourism attractions and of related infrastructural facilities; creating and promoting pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people; development of infrastructural and equipment capacities in the field of research; preparation of joint feasibility studies, development of common curricula and of joint training facilities; people to people activities like organising festivals, performances, theatrical tours, concerts, exhibitions, art workshops, charity events, cross-border amateur sport championships and tournaments, and activities to reduce the language barrier.

The Programme had a non-profit character and thus it was open to non-profit organisations only, such as county and local governments and their institutions, county or regional
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development/management organisations, development agencies, non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs), water and environmental management authorities, management organisations of national parks and environmental protection areas, public road management authorities, tourist boards, universities, colleges and their non-profit organisations, educational and teaching organisations and their non-profit organisations, and labour centres.6

Three Calls for Proposals of the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 were launched from 2009 to 2012, followed by the relevant Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) decisions on the lists of projects to be supported. The lists comprised 140 projects with 24 million euros allocated to Hungarian and 23 million to Croatian partners. In all three calls, the counties of Baranya in Hungary and Osijek-Baranja in Croatia would receive the highest amounts in absolute numbers. However, on a per capita basis compared to the total population, the weight of these two counties is not as much outstanding.

Table 1: EU contribution per county within the framework of the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>EU contribution 1. call (€)</th>
<th>EU contribution 2. call (€)</th>
<th>EU contribution 3. call (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zala</td>
<td>285 154</td>
<td>3 784</td>
<td>858 463,9</td>
<td>1 810 030,9</td>
<td>2 834 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somogy</td>
<td>315 850</td>
<td>6 036</td>
<td>65 095,5</td>
<td>915 844,8</td>
<td>755 837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baranya</td>
<td>388 907</td>
<td>4 430</td>
<td>3 440 454,8</td>
<td>4 438 813,3</td>
<td>6 959 592,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Međimurje</td>
<td>113 804</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>2 389 599,6</td>
<td>1 760 608,6</td>
<td>581 996,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koprivnica-Križevci</td>
<td>115 584</td>
<td>1 748</td>
<td>567 013,5</td>
<td>417 518,6</td>
<td>1 773 823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virovitica-Podravina</td>
<td>84 836</td>
<td>2 024</td>
<td>306 264,7</td>
<td>705 987</td>
<td>1 557 968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osijek-Baranja</td>
<td>305 032</td>
<td>4 155</td>
<td>2 608 938,8</td>
<td>3 838 926,9</td>
<td>6 140 764,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EU contribution per capita

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>EU contribution per capita 1. call (€)</th>
<th>EU contribution per capita 2. call (€)</th>
<th>EU contribution per capita 3. call (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zala</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>3,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somogy</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>0,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baranya</td>
<td>8,8</td>
<td>11,4</td>
<td>17,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Međimurje</td>
<td>21,0</td>
<td>15,5</td>
<td>5,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4,9</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>15,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virovitica-Podravina</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>18,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osijek-Baranja</td>
<td>8,6</td>
<td>12,6</td>
<td>20,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of data: Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013: Rivers Connecting Cross-border Region towards Croatian Accession to the European Union 7

By all means, the programme provided an invaluable contribution to the deepening and further development of already existing partnerships together with laying the ground for new networks. Since its EU accession on 1st July 2013, Croatia has been able to benefit from the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes with the full Member States status. Apart from some specific rules and procedures related to the former IPA, the majority of experiences of the 2007 – 2013 Programme are relevant to its successor programme, the

Hungary-Croatia Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020, and, with respect to its objectives and content, it will hopefully show strong continuity with its predecessor.

Another important issue related to the integration of Croatia within the European community is law harmonisation, which is supposed to enable a more inclusive and efficient alignment of national development policies to contribute to the integrated regional planning of the border region, among others. Law harmonisation is in fact still an ongoing process in Croatia, the completion of which is a highly awaited moment from a wide range of actors and fields. Cross-border cooperation is no exception in this respect as institutional cooperation is likely to be among the greatest beneficiaries of a more consistent legal framework of the neighbouring states.

Institutional forms of cross-border cooperation have shown an apparent evolution in recent years. The establishment of the new legal form EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation), introduced by the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on 5th July 2006, was widely seen as a revolutionary solution for a basic problem of institutionalised regional and local cross-border cooperation initiatives, namely the lack of competences and legal embeddedness. As local and regional level initiatives largely depend on their successes in applying for funding for the purposes of joint project planning and implementation, a stable institutional background is of crucial importance. The form of EGTC appears to be able to fulfil the need for this indispensable stability. The efficiency and stability is even higher as EGTC membership embraces a more or less permanent network of partners on both sides of the border that work together on some specific fields on a regular basis. It comes as no surprise that with the increasing number of EGTCs throughout Europe and certainly in Hungary, the City of Pécs decided to establish an EGTC to strengthen Hungarian-Croatian ties. Although the already mentioned Pannon EGTC only has few experiences with Hungarian-Croatian cooperation (mainly due to the fact that the adoption of the EGTC regulation has not been carried out in Croatia yet), a large number of potential partners have already expressed their interest toward this initiative.

As a brief summary for the history of cross-border interaction on the Hungary-Croatia border one can see that economic and social ties over the border showed a more or less straightforward and continuous evolution throughout the recent decades. Though the nature of the interactions as well as the main topics of cooperation seemed to have varied on a large scale, we can appreciate this as a distinct kind of flexibility that meant that actions were always in accordance with the actual needs. Such historical and past experiences may serve as a rather ideal basis for present cooperation that is supposed to result in a successful and efficient common work across the border.
5. The principal actors of cross-border cooperation in Baranya/Baranja

As noted in the previous chapter, interactions and common work connecting the two sides of the border were only rarely based on cross-border institutional structures. They were rather the outcome of the occasional or even long-term partnership of public and private bodies on the both sides of the border with identical or at least similar capacities, competences and activities. As a result, cross-border cooperation activities show a great variety as for their principal fields of cooperation and the relevant actors in the Pécs-Osijek relations. It is mainly public institutions and bodies that have the most important role, although the private sphere has also become more and more interested in cross-border interactions.

In the following we intend to present a range of actors that have been active during the last decades in the development of important and flourishing partnerships, which are supposed to have brought some invaluable and enriching outcomes. Besides briefly presenting the achievements of the joint work of these actors in line with their interests to take part in such partnerships, we also wish to focus at the technical conditions such as the staff involved in the management of joint projects. Though the list of the actors is complex it should not be considered as comprehensive.

5.1 The Municipality of Pécs

Since the very beginning of the formal cooperation, namely the signing of the town-twinning agreement in 1973, the Municipality of Pécs has played a key role in the activities of the region with cross-border relevance. In this respect the main body from the part of the city hall is the Office for External Relations. From 2006 the office is the official contact point of the city’s external relations and its main daily activity consists mostly of protocol issues. Earlier, the Committee on External Affairs was the main body in this field, operating with five associates. More recently, the structure underwent a rationalization that resulted in a smaller but more efficient working organ. The office has now two full-time associates who deal with decision support, the prior preparation of actual tasks for debate as well as the implementation of the decisions, together with the management of the day-to-day business. Decisions concerning external relations are usually made by the Cabinet of the Mayor, although questions of larger significance must by discussed and supported by the municipal council.

Concerning the financial background, a separate amount from the municipality budget is dedicated to external relations on a yearly basis, which is then distributed between the partnership actions of the city. Though Croatian ties enjoy neither an own budget nor a
regular and fixed amount, the majority of this dedicated budget usually goes to supporting Croatian relations.

Due to the relative scarcity of financial resources, the city can only actively support a limited number of events and projects. Therefore, they tend to focus mainly on initiatives that tend to involve a large number of participants, such as public sport events, cultural festivals and partnership meetings. Beside this, the office is an important node in the information exchange between other actors, such as minority self-governments, educational institutions (the University or the Miroslav Krleža Croatian School among others), cultural institutions (e.g. Croatian Theatre of Pécs), and other economic and social actors. Moreover, the office is keen to provide technical assistance to entrepreneurs and organisations who wish to develop new connections across the border.

All in all, it is largely manifest that the formerly decisive role of the city saw a decrease in recent years. This withdrawal is, on the one hand, the result of decreasing financial means that do not enable the city anymore to spend significant amounts on such expenses. On the other hand, along with the widening scale of opportunities the city does not consider itself necessarily as the accurate body for cross-border relations. As we shall see, recent changes such as EU accession created favourable conditions for public, non-profit and private bodies, which enabled them to be involved intensively in regional cooperation, and this resulted in new ways of common work.

5.2 The Urban Development Company of the City

The Urban Development Company of the City of Pécs (PVF Zrt) was established in October 2010. The Company is the legal successor of the organization that was the responsible body for the Pécs-2010 European Capital of Culture investment projects, together with other development projects of the city.

Nowadays the Company, in full ownership of the Municipality of the City of Pécs, is charged with the management of development projects concerning the city and its wider area, financed by the European Union, the Hungarian government, or the city itself. Projects include the development of transport infrastructure (mainly intermodal and cycling), energy systems, or even public utilities, together with other related investments. The Company is also responsible for the promotion of entrepreneurship in and around the city.\(^8\)

As of December 2014, the company has a staff of 16 employees, composed of architects, urban designers, marketing professionals and economists, and its activity is based on an annual budget of around 1 million €. However, the scale of the company’s performance is better reflected by the fact, that approximately 300 million euros of EU funding have been

\(^8\) http://www.centralmarkets.eu/index.php/partnership/pecs-urban-development-cplc-hu
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invoked by the company and its predecessor organizations since 2006. The efficiency of the company is largely based on an advantageous institutional and personal continuity on the one hand and on the direct connections to all other companies of the Municipality and a daily connection to the Mayor’s office and other stakeholders on the other hand.

As the seat of the region and the most significant city of the larger area, including the Croatian side, the urban development of the city does not stop at the state borders. Therefore the Company is regularly involved in projects with cross-border relevance. A recent project was the ‘Development of Pécs - Osijek - Antunovac - Ivanovac biking route’, implemented in cooperation with the Municipality of Antunovac (HR), the Association for nature and environment protection Green Osijek (HR) and the Geoscience Regional Development Research Institute Nonprofit Ltd. (HU). The project supported the development and construction of a shorter (capillary) bicycle route on the Croatian side which connects the villages of Ivanovac and Antunovac with the existing bicycle route in the Town of Osijek. Several bicycle routes running from Pécs to the Croatian border have also been upgraded. However, in general terms, cross-border cooperation projects managed by the Company consist overwhelmingly (about 80%) of soft infrastructure investments, whereas in the case of urban development projects hard infrastructure is rather dominant.

5.3 The Baranya County Municipality

Not only Pécs municipality, but also the Baranya County Municipality plays an important role in cross-border institutional relations. For a long time, the County Municipality has been active in the field of regional development, and this was also true in cross-border terms. Beside acting as a member of the monitoring committee and being engaged in the prearrangement of the operational programmes, the County also appeared as an applicant for calls or as project participant. Moreover, the County was involved in the establishment of the Pannon EGTC from the very beginning, having been playing an important role in the coordination of the consultative, legal, and administrative tasks laying the ground for the grouping.

The tasks of county municipalities in Hungary were almost entirely limited to the maintenance of public institutions. However, with the 1st of January 2012 they became part of the institutional network of regional planning. As a result of the structural reform, counties became charged with a series of new tasks in the fields of regional development as well as in urban and rural planning, together with the related coordination duties. Counties also took over the management of Regional Development Agencies, principal mid-level intermediate bodies of regional planning and development beforehand. These agencies had already developed their own networks and partnerships thus with the incorporation of the agencies

9 http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/en/funded-project/121
within the institutional structure of the counties these ties have unambiguously contributed to the strengthening position and growing interest of the county level in cross-border cooperation projects.

In the case of Baranya County, the management of such external (predominantly Croatian) relations belongs currently to a staff consisting of about ten employees, who work on a daily basis on regional planning issues. An additional associate at the Department of Legal Affairs is also involved as contact person in international relations.

Traditionally, the County has had a fruitful cooperation with the Croatian counties (županije) of Osijek-Baranja, Virovitica-Podravina, and the more distant Zadar. No surprise that the most intensive cooperation takes place with the neighbouring Croatian county of Osijek-Baranja, which is evident through more or less regular meetings such as joint workshops in the fields of police and judicial cooperation, catastrophe prevention, flood control and environmental protection. The common work in these fields have already proved as successful and resulted in the implementation of a range of common projects in the fields of the exploitation of geothermal energy and the complex rehabilitation of the Drava Valley, among others. However, factors such as the poor cross-border physical infrastructure (e.g. lack of bridges, motorway, border stations) has a serious barrier effect and exceeds the competences of the county level. Nevertheless, the full integration of Croatia into the Schengen Area is widely awaited and considered as an opportunity for the further rapprochement of the border areas.

5.4 The Miroslav Krleža Croatian School

The Miroslav Krleža Croatian School has an important role in the fields of cultural and educational cooperation. Managed by the National Self-Government for Minority Croats in Hungary, the school is a complex facility providing a comprehensive study program from kindergarten to secondary school level in Croatian language, being one of the only two such institutions in Hungary. Moreover, the school benefits from a firm cooperation with the Institute of Slavic Studies at the University of Pécs in which the school hosts teacher trainees on their teaching practice and a significant number of these students then join the staff.10

The school has already been a multiple actor of cross-border project activities, mainly in the field of educational and cultural cooperation. The school acted as a lead partner in two cross-border projects in the course of the last few years. The project called Cooperation Network of Secondary Schools targeted to enlarge the existing cooperation network of the region’s secondary schools and to raise the efficiency of the joint work in specific fields such as language teaching, informatics and electronics, trade and catering as well as artistic education. Along with the Miroslav Krleža Croatian School eight institutions were involved in

10 http://www.krleza.sulinet.hu/iskolismetet-.html
the project, four from Pécs and four from Osijek. Another important project was the “Miroslav Krleža” Croatian-Hungarian Educational Centre complex development project, with a total budget of 1 650 000 euros, 1 300 000 of which financed from PHARE support. The project itself was based on a twinning of the Miroslav Krleža Croatian School and the Hungarian Educational and Cultural Centre in Osijek, with the overall objectives to reach an increased cohesion within the Hungarian-Croatian cross-border region, and to prepare the border region for the challenges of the knowledge-based society by developing human resources. More specific purposes were to spread knowledge of the culture and traditions of the neighbouring nationalities (Hungarian, Croatian) in the region, especially among the young generation of the cross-border region for a common European life, on the one hand, and to improve the transfer of professional know-how between the Hungarian and Croatian educational institutions in the border region, on the other hand. In this respect the participants implemented a series of common investments and activities, such as the elaboration of an action plan aiming to define the actions leading to an increased knowledge of Hungarian and Croatian culture and traditions and to increase professional exchange among students of the educational institutions of the border region; the tendering of twinning and works-procurement parts of the project (including the quality assurance of tender dossier); and last but not least the construction and inauguration of the dormitory, assembly hall, and new education rooms of the Miroslav Krleža Croatian-Hungarian Educational Centre, pursuant to the already available construction plan and permits, including procurement of equipment.11

The projects are usually managed by the staff of the Miroslav Krleža School.

5.5 The University of Pécs

The University of Pécs is likely the most important actor in the field of education in cross-border terms. As mentioned earlier the University is the largest higher educational institution in the region with around 24 000 students from which the rate of foreign students is above 10%, and their number has shown a continuous and dynamic increase in recent years. Nevertheless, Croatian students make up only a relatively low proportion of this multinational community. In contrast to this slight share, a series of cross-border ties on project level have already been forged by the university with Croatian partners. Focusing only on the recent past one can see that within the framework of the 2007-2013 Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme, the University of Pécs has successfully participated in 19 different projects, with a total value of approximately 5,77 million €, moreover, in 15 of these projects the University acted as lead partner (total value: 4,2 million €). All but three of the 19 projects

were implemented in cooperation with the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, the major higher educational institution on the Croatian side of the region. The projects covered a wide range of activities and interventions such as general health condition surveying, energy efficiency training and analysis, research infrastructure development, geothermal resource assessment, common educational programmes and editions, networking, integration of cross-border resources, monument conservation as well as joint struggle against the negative effects of brain-drain, among others.\textsuperscript{12, 13} These same projects also succeeded to involve a large number of public and private bodies as well as enterprises, therefore it is clear that the University of Pécs is one of the major hubs for cross-border interactions, and not only within the region but far beyond.

The signing of framework agreements has always been a mainstream way to develop inter-university relations. However, nowadays these agreements are increasingly confined to definite aims and objectives, as universities have limited opportunities on their own. Launching a joint project is hardly possible without taking commitments, mainly in financial terms, to which universities usually need governmental or municipal guarantees. This is also the case for the University of Pécs, which means that the management of any projects must go through all the official channels of the university’s hierarchical structure. Basically, there is no own institutional background within the organizational structure of the university for the project follow-up, but it is carried out through the cooperation of different entities. The research institutes usually manage research cooperation projects themselves in case of projects with a budget of no more than 200 million HUF (approximately 667 000 €). Above this limit, projects are subordinated automatically to the Rector's Office. The Tenders Directorate at the Rector's Office is the principal coordination unit for all tenders. The staff is responsible for the planning and the prearrangement of the projects. They work in firm cooperation with the Finance Directorate at the Directorate-General for Economic Affairs. The Finance Directorate then enters into the work process at the implementation phase, and their subsequent tasks focus predominantly on legal and financial questions along with the management of public procurement procedures. The project management team at the Tenders Directorate consists of about 13-15 project managers and assistants, coming from different fields of expertise, mainly from law (innovation law, knowledge transfer, etc.) but also from medicine, whilst the Finance Directorate is basically made up of economists. This latter team has a crew of about 8-10 members, though their duties are not restricted at all to the management of tenders but they also deal with daily administrative work. The working language in international projects is always English, except for some cooperation activities in the fields of humanities, related to Croatian culture and literature. However, administrative tasks are always performed in English.

\textsuperscript{12} \url{http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/uploads/editors/HU-HR%20IPA%20CBC%20Projects%20booklet%202013.pdf}

\textsuperscript{13} \url{http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/uploads/editors/2014_12_12_final_screen_huhr_brochure.pdf}
Along with the City of Pécs and Baranya County, the University has also been involved in the foundation of the Pannon EGTC and is an active member of the EGTC’s organisational framework. However, until EGTC regulation is not adopted in Croatia, the University cannot benefit from the advantages offered by the grouping.

5.6 The August Šenoa Croatian Club

The August Šenoa Croatian Club, located in the city centre of Pécs, has also been one of the most important institutions for the Croatians in Hungary since its foundation in 1982. The main responsibilities of the club consists of organizing cultural events for the numerous Croatian community living in and around Pécs, as well as the support and coordination of Croatian ethnic cultural, traditional, artistic and academic life in the region, with a focus on Pécs and Baranya County.

In accordance with the motto of the Hungary-Croatia IPA CBC program ‘A cross-border region where rivers connect, not divide’ the club has also been involved in more cross-border projects, such as the Networking the Multimedia Cultural Center in Support of Cross-Border Cooperation in the framework of which the club collaborated with the Franjo Marković Library from Križevci, a small Croatian town about 160 kilometres from Pécs. The two cities in the border area have had a well-established co-operation for many years which the project built upon to reinforce the cultural exchange between the two communities. The project was planned to facilitate the exchange of bilingual informational materials in the cross-border area and promote the publication of scientific, literary and artistic works and other editions, organization of concerts, theatrical performances and other exhibitions and events, together with their authors. The main activity of the project focused on the establishment of a Multimedia Centre with back-up activities including setting up a cultural cluster, translation of literary works from both cultures and the organisation of several cultural events including exhibitions, music and literary evenings, among others. The project lasted from December 2011 until the mid-year of 2013 and had a total budget of about 109 202 €.

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Of course, this above presented list of actors involved in cross-border interactions is not comprehensive at all. Here we only wanted to point at the multitude of those institutions that are interested in the removal of physical and administrative barriers to be able to carry out common projects with their partners as well as to benefit from a region with highly intensive economic and social ties.

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15 http://www.hu-hr-IPA.com/en/funded-project/102
16 http://senoa.hu/hu/dokumentum/15/a-folyok-osszekotnek
Certainly, as this multitude shows, along with the introduction of the specific cross-border activities of the public and private bodies, different actors have different interests and opportunities both in institutional and in financial terms. Whereas some public bodies, such as the counties in Hungary have increasing capacities and competences, others like the Urban Development Company of the City of Pécs have limited autonomy concerning cross-border activities as the company is able to take part in only a limited scope of projects. On the other hand, this same company seem to have a dreamlike financial background, compared even to other public (or publicly owned) bodies, and this is certainly the case when considering the opportunities of non-profit organisations and SMEs.

However, in spite of all the differences the actors of cross-border activities often tend to struggle with fairly identical difficulties. One of the basic issues is that none of these organisations deal with border related projects on a full-time basis but such tasks mean rather additional activities for the staff members beside their daily activities. As mentioned before, interactions across borders became largely project-based throughout the last two decades. Therefore, work demand is highly variable with activities that hardly enable these bodies to hire any full-time workforce charged exclusively with the management of cross-border projects. On the other hand, the strong fluctuation in the amount of incoming work may occasionally result in shortages in workforce and capacity, hindering participation in further projects. On a long-term basis this characteristic feature pose a major challenge.
6. The future of cross-border cooperation in Baranya/Baranja

Looking at the past traditions and experiences of cross-border cooperation together with the large number of implemented projects and high intensity of joint work characterising recent transborder interactions, one can suppose that such activities are likely having a bright future in the Baranya/Baranja region. Even if this will be the case, many challenges are still ahead that will hopefully be tackled in the upcoming years.

As mentioned at several points in the text, the recently established Pannon EGTC is widely seen as the most significant instrument of institutionalised cross-border cooperation for the future. The EGTC was established on 31 August, 2010 and after a preliminary planning phase of one and a half year it was registered by the Budapest Metropolitan Court on 28th March 2012. Initially, the EGTC intended to involve partners from Croatia and Slovenia, but Croatian members were not allowed to enter before the EU accession of their country on 1st July 2013 because the EGTC regulation was not adopted by the Croatian domestic legislation. As a result, the EGTC is yet half-done and territorially unbalanced. The seat is located in Pécs and the membership is largely concentrated around the city. Moreover, the only two non-municipal members, the Duna-Dráva National Park and the University of Pécs are both seated in Pécs. In contrast, the most important Slovenian member municipality, Lendava is located about 200 kilometres west of Pécs, thus an intensive daily cooperation is hardly possible. The future entry of the city of Osijek along with that of a large number of other municipalities from Croatia will likely make the EGTC better-balanced in territorial terms and Osijek can relieve Pécs through taking over some responsibilities.

17 http://www.pvfzrt.hu/userfiles/dokumentumok/pannonegtc_kiadvany_A5.pdf
Figure 6: Members of the Pannon EGTC

Beside institutional framework, financial background is another important factor behind successful cooperation programmes. From this point of view the INTERREG/ETC Fund of the European Union is of major importance. The successor of the 2007 – 2013 Hungary – Croatia IPA CBC Programme, the Hungary-Croatia Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 was officially submitted to the European Commission on 24 March 2015, after the respective approvals in Hungary and in the Republic of Croatia. The new programme does not intend to contribute to large-scale interventions but to support selected cooperative strategic actions and pilot projects in priority fields, such as enhancing economic cooperation, poor accessibility or the business environment; enhancement and preservation of environmental and natural assets or preventing the risk of loss related to them; fostering the lack of networks among local and regional administrations and improvement of communication between educational and training institutions and key actors of local economy.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\) [Link to the document](http://www.huhr-cbc.com/uploads/editors/HUHR%20CP_submitted%20to%20Eur_Comm,%202015.pdf)
The total amount of funding available in the framework of the Cooperation Programme is € 67 264 637, with € 60 824 406 of ERDF allocation. This budget is allocated to five priority axes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Rate of the total budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA 1: Economic Development – Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs</td>
<td>€ 9 960 300</td>
<td>17.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 2: Sustainable Use of Natural and Cultural Assets – Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency</td>
<td>€ 27 203 413</td>
<td>47.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 3: Cooperation – Enhancing Institutional Capacity and an Efficient Public Administration</td>
<td>€ 8 576 241</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 4: Education – Investing in Education, Training, including Vocational Training for Skills and Lifelong Learning by Developing Education and Training Infrastructure</td>
<td>€ 5 717 494</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 5: Technical Assistance</td>
<td>€ 5 717 494</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These above presented priority axes are foreseen to be part of a comprehensive strategy identifying the appropriate course of action, which focuses strongly on the enhancement of economic competitiveness of SMEs, in that way boosting the economic development of depressed rural areas.

Seemingly, the Croatia-Hungary cross-border cooperation is largely confined to the relations between the two cities. However, it would be advantageous for the future if cross-border cooperation was less centralized and more inclusive, both for its territorial and thematic scope. Unfortunately, actors of smaller scale such as local municipalities, SMEs and minor NGOs are generally challenged by the scarcity of financial resources which significantly worsen their position when aiming at involving project partners from a different country. The majority of EU funds is based on ex-post financing, which means that participants are dependent on their own resources to be able to launch the joint work, and any difficulty occurring in the course of the project may have a negative effect on their financial situation. Generally speaking about the situation of small-scale actors we can suggest that the more valuable the project is the less affordable such risks are. Obviously, one can always find ambitious actors taking the risk of aspiring projects, but many initiators are forced to reconsider their ideas and must end up in opting for rather modest goals. Of course in a short term each project, certainly if implemented in the framework of a cross-border cooperation, is valuable on its own but long-term development goals are not necessarily served by the number of projects but rather by their added value and the synergies it offers for other economic and social actors and sectors.

Indeed, the scarcity in financial resources and more generally the weakness of entrepreneurialism are problems that go beyond cross-border interaction and are
significantly widespread throughout the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, the solution to these same problems is also not necessarily a task likely to be handled by cross-border cooperation and be solved on the regional scale. Nevertheless, both institutional bodies and financial tools created for the assistance of cross-border cooperation should take such difficulties into account and should plan their interventions in a spirit of openness with respect to the overcoming of these obstacles.
7. Summary

Through the investigation of the ties between the cities of Pécs and Osijek we have seen that the meaningfulness of cross-border cooperation is far more complex than what one could normally expect nowadays, in a time of upturn in cross-border regionalisation and institutionalisation. While in many cases actions at and over the borders often tend to be limited to symbolic acts and cross-border cooperation is considered as a pure marketing instrument in the pursuit of investors and funding, the Croatia-Hungary border is an outstanding example for a border area that has succeeded to develop a long-lasting tradition of inter-state, interregional, and interethnic cooperation.

The cross-border region, unlike other more notable regions such as the Ister-Granum on the Hungary-Slovakia border, has not yet created its own institutional framework and capacities for the management of interregional projects and the stimulation of interactions across the borders, a wide range of actors have already been involved in cross-border tasks. Project management activities are undertaken by the actors themselves and some of them, such as the universities of Pécs and Osijek, the two city municipalities or even the public bodies for regional and urban development have already managed to implement a series of projects based on their own. In the absence of a stable euroregional background hardly anyone deals with cross-border projects and activities on a full-time basis, which is on the one hand largely unfavourable but on the other hand this also means that managing cross-border projects makes up an integral part of the daily work of a remarkable number of associates throughout the area.

Some asymmetries are manifested in accordance with the differences in economic, social, and political weight between the two sides of the border. No surprise that due to its greater domestic hinterland, its more advantageous location and richness, Pécs has always had a dominant role in the wider region, and has been an important central place even for the inhabitants of the south bank of the Drava. With the emergence of the borders in the 20th century this attractiveness showed a decrease but did not cease to take effect. No surprise therefore that the city claimed a leading role in cross-border interactions throughout the last couple of decades. For a rather complete image it is also important to note that having suffered a lot under warfare the city of Osijek and the Croatian side have shown a significant convergence in the course of the recent years; thus cooperation shows nowadays a rather balanced image.

It is also important that unlike in the case of the Hungary-Slovakia or Hungary-Romania borders, the interactions at the Croatia-Hungary border do not mostly take place between ethnic Hungarians living on the both sides of the border but between ethnic Hungarians and ethnic Croats, with the active involvement of the Croat minority in Hungary and the
Hungarian minority in Croatia as well. In contrast, in spite of the entry of Croatia into the European Union in 2013, the country is not yet a member of the Schengen Area, therefore we cannot speak about the free movement of the area’s population over the border. However, the significance of the border as a physical obstacle is not meaningful from the point of view of local actors at all, as they have always considered the other side as a familiar place often making part of their mental map.

Regarding the already implemented projects and the existing cooperation networks along with the widening institutional and financial opportunities cross-border ties are likely to play an even more important role at least in the near future in the Baranya/Baranja region. The new tools and opportunities are supposed to enable a more intensive joint work. More accessible and targeted support may contribute to the increasing synergy of the investment in both physical and human infrastructure whilst the most promising institutional body, the Pannon EGTC, is planned to involve the widest possible range of local and regional actors in cross-border interaction. All in all, such an aspiring and inclusive environment based on a several decade long tradition of both institutionalised and spontaneous cooperation is indeed a best practice example representing how the removal of borders as barriers should unfold.
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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
The Euroregion Šumava – Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel

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Milan Jeřábek
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1. Introduction

This case study was elaborated in the framework of the project „Crossing the Borders: Geographic and Structural Characteristics of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Danube Region“, a project led by CESCI (Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives). The case study was elaborated between July and November 2014 by a team of three authors: Milan Jeřábek, Jaroslav Dokoupil and Hynek Böhm. We chose to analyze the state of affairs of cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region through the case of the Euroregion Šumava – Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel.

The reason for selecting this Euroregion was its geographical location at the Czech-Austrian-Bavarian borders – countries/lands belonging to the Danube Region Strategy. Moreover, the cooperation has been institutionalised under a euroregional heading. Further, the attractiveness of this Euroregion was also underlined by the fact that a sort of competitor operating at regional level, European Region Danube–Vltava, was established recently.

The Euroregion called Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel lies on a linguistic border between the Czech- and German-speaking populations; on a limit between the Slavic and Germanic language groups. It lies on the border of countries that were ideologically and politically on opposite sides during the Second World War and also in the post-war period of the late 20th century, especially during the Cold War period. The Euroregion is located on the border between the former socialist countries of Europe on one side, and Western European democracies on the other side. Before opening the borders, there were practically no social, economic, or even simply human contacts here. Therefore, the 1990s were filled with huge expectations. The "hunger" for cross-border cooperation was reflected in a number of diverse contacts and projects that were trying to establish standard neighbourly relations not affected by the past.

With the establishment of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel, there was a renewal of traditional cultural and economic cohesion carried out by establishing new contacts, mutual meetings and friendship with foreign neighbours, while considering the purpose of the gradual elimination of negative stereotypes of the recent past. As the Czech Republic entered the European Union, this effort naturally expanded and deepened. A further impulse then came later with the inclusion of the Czech Republic in the Schengen area.

The role of the Euroregion consists of coordinating cross-border and regional cooperation, and defending the views and interests of the member municipalities and cities as representatives of public administration, respectively territorial governments. The organisation also tries to keep close cooperation among all three parts (Czech, Bavarian, Austrian) in the sense of a single cross-border unit conditioned by common regional features, including an appropriate territorial identity. This is undoubtedly a significant contribution to alleviate various disparities (those conditioned in both endogenous and exogenous ways) as well as to promote Šumava
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The Euroregion Šumava – Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel

(Bohemian Forest) in the regional competition. Last but not least, the Euroregion in general (and here in particular) represents an instrument for European integration at the regional level. However, we considered this level as more important than national or transnational ones, since this is the level where seams of history are removed and mutual coalescence is established - in accordance with the Charter of European Border Regions.

The relatively recent 20-year anniversary of the Euroregion may be considered as a good opportunity to review how leaders on the political scene of the participating states expressed their opinions, among other things. The provincial governor of Upper Austria, Mr. Josef Pühringer, highlighted three goals for a common Europe: breaking boundaries, bringing people together, and becoming stronger with united powers. He also reminded us to one of the EU’s principles, namely subsidiarity, where initiatives in the form of projects do not come from higher positions but are instead created by the citizens of a region. The former Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Karel Schwarzenberg (possessing Austrian citizenship, too) understood that no more dividing lines exist, where presence and especially future of this "treasure" lies in common hands. Mrs. Beate Merk, Bavarian State Minister for European Affairs, accentuated the civil and communal dimensions of Europe, based on personal contacts, friendship and joint projects. Mr. Walter Deffaa, head of the General Directorate of European Commission for Regional Policy, also expressed his opinion by focusing on regional and local initiatives and experiences that can become inspirational for application in other European (cross-border) regions, despite the considerable diversity of the area. Mr. Karl-Heinz Lambertz, chairman of the Association of European Border Regions, AEBR, brought his opinion on behalf of this association: "Every further overcoming of boundaries is constantly bringing challenges which can only be solved in a joint basis. Border regions - such as the Trilateral Euregio - represent the borderland of Europe. And everyone knows that the whole work is only as strong as the borderlines are."

Activities in the Euroregion are undoubtedly rather influenced by higher levels of politics than by local (administrative) ones. There is a Bavarian-Czech working group in place that meets every 12-18 months since 1990. In 2012 there was the 20th meeting in Furth im Wald, where the members noted that the contacts and cooperation are working in many areas of economy, politics, society, and church, which was considered as impossible around 20 years ago. There is only a language barrier between the Czechs and Germans (and Austrians), which is considered as a new obstacle. "However, language is a key factor for everything," says Mrs. Brigitta Brunner, Government President of Upper Palatinate region.

If we monitor the model area in a broader context, we can see it as part of the transformation from the Iron Curtain to the Green Belt. The Iron Curtain represented both a political as well as a physical barrier; it was an inaccessible territory for people. However, the Iron Curtain was favourable for nature (so-called Secondary Succession). It has first been considered as the belt of life in Germany and later elsewhere, becoming the subject of institutional protection. It includes 22 European countries, having the total length of 8 500 km. The Czech border (with
Germany/Bavaria and Austria) covers about 800 km, while the substantial part lies in Šumava (Bohemian Forest, Böhmerwald or Bayerischer Wald in German).

The main goal of this paper is to analyse the current cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion. This analysis will be introduced through a historical exposé, before making the readers familiar with the governance structures of this cooperation entity. Afterwards the role of European funds in this Czech-Austrian-Bavarian cross-border cooperation will be examined. The relations between Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel and the newly created European Region Danube–Vltava/Moldau will also be analysed.

The predominant working method of the study is desk-research, which mainly includes work with internet sources on the Euroregion and on European grant programmes (mainly INTERREG programmes). We will also work with the results of previous recent research projects on the territory in question. This will be complemented by more qualitative research methods – mostly interviews with stakeholders responsible for the CBC in the concerned territory.
2. Development of cross-border cooperation

The Czech-Bavarian-Austrian border went through three different regimes and functions of the border during the last 25 years. To be specific, it moved from the function of a barrier (before 1990), through the function of contact (1990-2004) and it gradually reached a practical liquidation of the border, namely the introduction of the “Schengen regime” in the Czech Republic (and other nine “new” EU Member States), which happened in December 2007. This is the main aspect for the functioning of possible cross-border cooperation initiatives. It was not possible to see any formal cross-border cooperation before 1990; the border was closed hermetically (so-called "Iron Curtain"); any activities could only be carried out under a strict control in order to protect the territory against the neighbouring enemies. After 1990 (fall of the "Iron Curtain"), there was a rapid development in cross-border activities with a view to understand the neighbours, their life and culture, but also seeking for profits of different economic backgrounds. Hence, cross-border relations were facing a different character in the early nineties. It is also the time when the first cross-border joint activities were formed, including special-purpose associations and institutions of municipalities, that were the basis for future Euroregions. It is a time when we can talk about the emergence cross-border cooperation and the joint cross-border planning of activities, often based on civil, private or public relations.

One indicator of openness for the Czech borderland is the nature and intensity of cross-border relations. The Czech-Bavarian-Austrian border region was part of the territory at the external borderline of the European Union toward the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Political changes in this part of Europe enabled the creation of a new environment for cross-border relations in its border regions with EU countries. Although cross-border relations showed a number of differences in individual regions bordering EU countries, it is still possible to characterize them with some common default characteristics, defined by their previous development: absence of political reasons for cross-border cooperation before 1990, sensitivity for the issues of cooperation in the context of historical experiences; significant economic imbalance; considerable diversity of legal and administrative structures; migration flows through borderland regions; cultural and linguistic diversity.

An important impulse for developing cross-border cooperation was provided when the initiative of PHARE CBC/CREDO at the institutional level was launched. Since 1994, this program has been contributing mainly to the construction or reconstruction of infrastructure networks; it introduced the Fund of Small Projects as an instrument assisting in the process of creating cooperation networks between local and regional authorities and organizations, including contacts between individuals. In a short time the process of the renewal of transportation infrastructure in the Czech border area was launched, which was caused by an increase in the importance of the Czech-Bavarian-Austrian border region as a transit area as well as an enormous growth of road traffic density. CBC/CREDO PHARE programme also prepared potential applicants for projects from EU Structural funds in the pre-accession period.
2.1 The development of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel

The relevant events in brief were:

- 1989 – fall of the Iron Curtain, end of the barrier function of the borders between Czechoslovakia and Austria as well as Bavaria,
- 1993 – establishment of Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn,
- 1995 – the EU enlargement – accession of Austria (together with Finland and Sweden),
- 1997 – abolition of border control between Austria and Germany (Schengen Agreement)
- 2000 – start of the INTERREG III A (2000-2006) programme,
- 2002 – introduction of the EURO in Austria and Germany,
- 2004 – EU enlargement, accession of the Czech Republic,
- 2007-2013 – new generation of Objective 3 programmes,
- 2007 – abolition of border control between Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic; extension of the Schengen Area; the restrictions on the free movement of workforce towards the new countries remained nevertheless in force until 2011; launching Objective 3 programmes – European Territorial Cooperation,
- 2012 – founding European Region Danube–Vltava/Moldau,
- 2013 – 20th anniversary of the Euroregion.

The Czech accession to the European Union (2004) and subsequently to the Schengen area (2007) brought essential changes for the development of cross-border cooperation. After joining the European Union, the Czech-Bavarian border region comes to the position of a central region between Prague agglomeration (respectively those of Pilsen) and Munich (respectively those of Nuremberg and Regensburg). Even though it is a rural area, its possible regional development can be derived from the transition nature of the area. This is the case of building objects of the tertiary sector, focusing on transport, trade and other services, while in relation to the preservation of the unique character of natural and cultural heritage for development of different forms of tourism. Its location along one of the main Central European roads in connection with the above-mentioned economic development should also help to improve the socio-economic factors and the use of natural factors. Resulting from the removal of borders and the essential changes in the significance of positional relationships, a new hierarchy of relations is under creation in the region; there is a development in the strengthening of functional regions as well as in the efficient use of local potential. We can talk about an integrative function of borders after the adoption of the Schengen Agreement in the Czech Republic. The transiting feature of the region in contrast with the above-mentioned
positive development can however give rise to a new type of periphery - e.g. inner periphery in relation to the possible strengthening of a bridge effect between the central regions.

Other aspects depend on the nature of the area in question. The peripheral position of the Czech part of the Czech-Bavarian-Austrian border region is caused, among others, by its remoteness from major population centres. As reported by Hampl (2000), the differentiation of the Czech borderland is characterized by a relatively high congruence of aspects related to its typological evaluation. Individual aspects may include the existence of strong regional centres, including higher intensity of population, industrialization and urbanization. Hampl defines five regions of the functional type; those corresponding with departmental competence of the centres of inter-regional rank as well as the centres of new regions: the regions of Karlovy Vary and Liberec as complex and closed units in relational and relative ways, identical to new regions. In three cases - the regions of Ústí, Ostrava, and Zlín - the variations have only little significance compared to new regions, respectively "natural" inter-regions.

The remaining parts of the borderlands (including the Czech-Bavarian-Austrian borderland) resemble to peripheral zones with inclination to inland centres. Most districts of the borderland areas have a significantly low level of population density; therefore some elements of homogeneity can easily be found there.

This characteristic feature of the territory implies that stakeholders involved in cross-border cooperation have been facing a rather difficult starting position. We can say that the main instrument in their hands is the INTERREG programme. The work with that programme is in more details described in Chapter 6.
3. Geographical characteristics of the area

The Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is located in Central Europe, on the border between the Czech Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany (Bavaria) and Austria (Upper Austria). On the Czech side, the Euroregion is part of the Southwest Cohesion Region (districts Domažlice, Klatovy, Prachatice, Český Krumlov, Strakonice). In Bavaria, it contains the German administrative regions Oberpfalz and Niederbayern (districts Cham, Deggendorf, Freyung-Grafenau, Passau, Regen and Rottal-Inn). In Austria, the territory of this Euroregion is part of the state of Upper Austria, more specifically that of the Mühlviertel (political districts Perg, Freistadt, Rohrbach and Urfahr-Umgebung). In the northwest the Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel Euroregion borders the Egrensis Euroregion, and in the southeast the Silva Nortica Euroregion. The Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel Euroregion lies on the linguistic border between the Czech and German-speaking population.

The main physical-geographical element of the entire Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel Euroregion is a mountain range called Šumava in the Czech part, Bayerischer Wald in the German part, and Böhmerwald in the Austrian part. The highest parts of the mountains reach over 1,400 m (Großer Arber/Velký Javor – 1,456 m), the elevations around 1,000 m above sea level typically display flat surfaces, called Šumava plains, and the higher elevations of the Šumava show the outcome of the effects of glacial activity (cirques, moraines). Towards the northwest, the Šumava and Bayerischer Wald border the lower Všeruby Highlands/Cham-Further Senke and a part of the Český les/Oberpflänzer Wald mountains with their foothills. There are hills and uplands on both sides of the Šumava foothills. In the German and Austrian parts, the terrain slopes down to the Danube valley. The beginning of the very extensive Alpine foothills can be found to the south of the Danube.

The territory of the Euroregion is located in the temperate climatic area with significant climatic differences. The cold and harsh climate of the Šumava has the average annual temperature in the upper parts around zero and in the foothills around 5-6°C, with increasing temperatures towards the interior. The upper parts also display a very high level of average annual precipitation, reaching values up to 1,400 mm per year. The precipitation amount is significantly fewer at the lower areas of the Euroregion.

A number of major rivers rise in the mountain ranges of the Euroregion. The main European watershed between the North Sea and the Black Sea drainage areas runs through this area. The Vltava River, rising as Teplá Vltava and Studená Vltava, and the Otava River, emerging at the confluence of the Šumava rivers Vydra and Křemelná, flow towards Bohemia. Major watercourses also include Radbuza and Úhlava. In the German part, there are a number of watercourses belonging to the Black Sea drainage area. Some of them rise in the Czech part of the Šumava, e.g. Regen, Flanitz, Riedlsbach, Sägwasser, Grenzbach on the border, as well as
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Michelbach, continuing as Grosse Mühl in Austria. The most important water artery of the Šumava Euroregion is the Danube River.

Natural water surfaces include glacial lakes – Černé jezero (Schwarzer See), Čertovo jezero (Teufels-See), Laka (Lakkasee), Prášilské jezero (Stubenbacher See), and Plešné jezero (Plöckensteinsee); the Bayerischer Wald part contains glacial lakes Großer Arbersee (Velké Javorské jezero), Kleiner Arbersee (Malé Javorské jezero) and Rachelsee (Roklanské jezero). The most significant artificial body of water is the Lipno water reservoir, which serves many purposes (in particular water management, energy and recreation) and is the largest lake in the Czech Republic (4 870 ha). The water reservoirs Nýrsko on the Úhlava, in the Klatovy region, and Římov on the Malše, on the border of Český Krumlov and České Budějovice, serve as sources of drinking water. In the southern part of the Šumava, in the Boletice military district, we can find a major body of water called Olšina. The well-known dams in the Bavarian border region include Frauenau and Stausee (water sports).

Apart from the rare inanimate nature, rare wildlife can also be found in the mountain ranges of the Šumava/Bayerischer Wald/Böhmischer Wald and Český les/Oberpflänzer Wald, paradoxically also thanks to the former “Iron Curtain”, which restricted human activities in the border region. This helped to preserve the original local natural communities. Pine forests at higher elevations and spruce-beech-fir forests and fir-beech forests at lower elevations represented the original vegetation. Due to human activities, the original mixed forests were significantly transformed into spruce monocultures, which have caused the current problems, such as the bark beetle outbreak in the Šumava or substantial windbreaks and windfalls in stormy weather. On the plateaus, a number of peat bogs with typical peat-bog plants can be found, e.g. Modravské slatě (Weitfällerfilze) at Modrava or Chalupská slatě (Großer Königsfilz) at Borová Lada. There are many rare and protected species of birds, mammals and other animals in the forested areas of the mountain range.

Mineral resources, previously mined in the area, include glass sands, gold, peat, iron ore, graphite in the Český Krumlov and feldspar, currently mined in the Domažlice region, and deposits of limestone, quarried in the Sušice region. Gold was panned on the Otava River and on some other streams, and its deposits can also be found near the Kašperské Mountains (Bergreichenstein). Another important natural resource is the significant amount of wood.

Due to the great natural wealth, conservation plays an important role in the Euroregion. It is organized both on the international and national levels (Šumava – UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Šumava National Park and Šumava Protected Landscape Area, Český les Protected Landscape Area, a number of nature reserves, Kochánov Natural Park). In Bavaria, the Šumava National Park is connected to the Bayerischer Wald National Park and, in the northern part, to the Oberer Bayerischer Wald Natural Park.

The Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel Euroregion comprises an extensive territory. More than 1.3 million people inhabit its districts, with the German part being the most
populated, and the Austrian part the least populated areas. Foreigners living in the districts of the Euroregion are represented to varying degrees. The highest proportions (over 10%) can be found in the Bavarian city districts of Stadt Passau and Stadt Straubing. In other districts, the proportion of foreigners is considerably lower, ranging from 2% to 5%. They are citizens of the neighbouring countries, as well as Slovaks, Ukrainians, Russians, and Vietnamese.

The population density in these districts varies. The lowest values are shown by the Czech districts of Prachatice and Český Krumlov (fewer than 40 inhabitants per km²), the highest ones are in contrast in the Bavarian city districts of Passau and Straubing. According to the data for districts, population distribution is rather uneven. Population density increases in all three parts of the Euroregion towards the interior, which is more significant in the Czech part. Density is higher especially in cities that are natural centres of economic and social life and of services in their vicinity. This phenomenon is especially evident in the Bavarian and Austrian parts of the Euroregion. The population is also concentrated along the main arteries. Population density is generally higher in the German and Austrian parts of the Euroregion than in the Czech part. This is especially due to the post-war events of the last century. The Czech border region lost a substantial part of the population after the displacement of ethnic Germans, and this German population ultimately settled on the other side of the border. In the Czech border areas, the pre-war numbers of the population and thus the corresponding density have not been reached yet.

The demographic situation in the Šumava Euroregion is also different in various parts from the perspective of population dynamics. This can be seen if we focus on the natural change, mechanical change or total change. The worst situation in the natural population change has long been observed in the German part of the Euroregion, with Bavarian districts showing a natural population decline. In the Austrian and Czech parts of the Euroregion, the situation has somewhat improved, and there have been both natural increases and natural decreases in recent years.

The migration increase/decrease (net migration) is a demographic indicator of the mechanical movement of the population. In the Czech part of the Euroregion, the districts of Český Krumlov, Prachatice and Klatovy have displayed negative net migration in recent years, with only Domažlice as a whole exhibiting a slight increase in migration. The German part of the Euroregion typically displays municipalities with positive and negative net migration, and its differences between municipalities were sometimes very significant, but usually lower than in the Czech and Austrian parts of the Euroregion. The data for the Austrian part of the Euroregion indicates high negative net migration in the municipalities located not only in the immediate vicinity of the border, but generally throughout the Austrian part of the Euroregion. An exception is the Linz region with positive net migration in many municipalities.

The total increase shows changes in the population in a certain area for a certain period of time. Recently, in comparison with the Bavarian and Austrian parts, the situation has been
significantly more positive in terms of total population increase in the Czech part of the Euroregion. This situation depends on many factors, the most important being economy, transport and population structure. Comparing the situation in all three parts of the Euroregion, it can be clearly said that the greatest problems concerning the overall population change are on the German side of the border.

Important characteristics of the population potential also include information about its age structure (age index as a basic indicator of the population aging process). The highest values of ageing index are reached in the Bavarian part of the Euroregion. This means that, in terms of the age structure, inhabitants aged 65 years or older are significantly more numerous than inhabitants up to 14 years of age. This fact is a consequence of multiple contributing factors. Especially for the younger generation, the Bavarian-Czech border region is not attractive. The Austrian part of the Euroregion has in contrast a rather balanced age structure without extreme values. There are significant differences in the Czech part, with the highest proportion of children displayed by some developing municipalities in attractive locations in the South Bohemian Šumava (the area around Lipno) and some municipalities located directly on the border in the Šumava National Park. Conversely, high age index values, i.e. aging population, is displayed by municipalities in the parts belonging to the Pilsen region, with an increasing trend from the state border towards the interior, e.g. the Sušice region.

In relation to the historical development of the Euroregional territory, the economic basis of the Euroregion has had a complex development. After the fall of the “Iron Curtain” a dynamic process of structural changes began, in particular in the Czech part of the Euroregion, in an effort to build on the economic and social potential from the period before the Second World War. In general, it can be said that the economic base of the area in question is highly heterogeneous. While there are economically strong city regions located mainly along the axis of the Danube (e.g. Regensburg, Straubing, Passau), the northern and eastern parts of the Euroregion are below the average values of the EU based on its economic performance. This inequality has been caused, of course, by the different historical development of the distinct state territories, as well as by the location and physical geographical endowments. Despite the aforementioned differences in economic performance, remarkable economic growth has been observed throughout the Euroregion, especially in the Czech part.

The economic situation of the Euroregion is obviously closely connected with the local demographic situation. Particularly the German and Austrian parts display both natural population decline and negative migration rate, as the young generation have left for more densely populated areas of Germany offering more job opportunities. The aging population generation, as well as the industry shaped by structural changes, are a reflection of the historical development of the area.

The economic structure of the Euroregion is primarily determined by small and medium-sized enterprises. They are, particularly in the Austrian and German parts of the Euroregion,
accompanied by a dense network of support structures such as technology and innovation centres that facilitate the development of innovative businesses. Based on the specificity of their focus, some of these small and medium-sized enterprises have penetrated global markets with high export rates of their products. There are relatively few multinational firms based in the Euroregion.

The traditional economic sectors of the Euroregion are agriculture and forestry, both naturally resulting from the character of the local landscape (organic farming). While the German part of the territory reduced the share of the primary sector in GDP, it has increased in the Czech part. A higher proportion of people employed in agriculture and forestry is also displayed by the Mühlviertel region in Austria.

Industry in the Euroregion has a relatively lower concentration. However, it is also possible to find districts with a significant share of industry (e.g. in the Straubing-Bogen district). Traditional industries throughout the Euroregion include glass production and the aforementioned woodworking industry. At present, the Czech-B Bavarian border region displays a revival of industrial production, for example, plastics industry. Other promising sectors include engineering (automotive industry). The biggest structural change in the industry occurred in the Czech part of the territory: thanks to foreign investors, the production of components for the automotive industry began to develop, especially the manufacturing of plastics as well as metal processing.

The tertiary sector is also unevenly distributed and it has different meanings in different parts of the area in question. While in the Czech part of the Euroregion the tertiary sector is mainly represented in the form of trade, transport, catering and tourism, in the Bavarian districts and in the area around Linz financial, rental, and business services are more significant. One of the strengths of the Euroregion is the existence of economic networks and clusters that are active across borders and that provide opportunities for future development. They emerge mostly in relation to universities and research centres (e.g. the German part has universities in Passau and Deggendorf and a scientific centre in Straubing). The Bavarian Rottal valley and Bad Füssing also offer medical tourism with treatment options, as well as wellness (Bad Brinbach). Recently, as an attraction, there have been excursions to large industrial enterprises in the region (breweries, industrial plants).

With respect to the unemployment rate, higher values are especially displayed by the Czech part of the Euroregion. In some cases, it has had even twice as high unemployment rates compared to German or Austrian districts. Higher unemployment affects mainly peripheral, agriculturally oriented districts in the border area. These districts also face the outflow of mainly young qualified people leaving for major population centres.

In their daily lives, inhabitants and visitors of the Euroregion need different networks. The technical infrastructure includes transport networks and equipment used for the distribution of electricity, gas, water, the collection and treatment of wastewater, and the like. Basic
services exist in all municipalities of the Euroregion, although at different levels. The quality of services largely depends on the belonging to a particular state. Furthermore, the provision of networks and the operation of the necessary facilities (sewage treatment plants, substations, gas pressure stations, etc.) depend on the size of the municipalities and their position within the mountain range.

With respect to transport, a major road of the Šumava Euroregion is the German motorway A3 (E54), running from Bavaria to Austria (in the Euroregion between Regensburg and Passau). Major road routes of the Euroregion are connected not only to A3, but also to three other motorways that run relatively close to the Euroregion. These are the north-south German motorway A93, the east-west Czech motorway D5 (A6, E50), and the Austrian motorway E60 from Linz to St. Pölten.

There are no motorways in the Czech part of the Euroregion. Major access roads include class 1 roads leading from Pilsen to the Bavarian town Furt im Wald (26), Zwiesel (E52, 27), class 1 roads connecting Strakonice, Víperk, and Freyung (4), and the road connecting České Budějovice, Kaplice and Freistadt (E55). These are connected to the German and Austrian principal road network.

Within the Euroregion, the Czech railway network is connected to the Bavarian lines in Česká Kubice and Železná Ruda, and to the Austrian network in Horní Dvořiště. In addition, there are several regional routes in the Czech part of the Euroregion that are of great importance for the local population.

The quality of road and railway transport and accessibility are dependent on the position of a specific area/municipality within the Euroregion. Main road and railway lines are fairly accessible in general. Conversely, the quality of road and railway networks, as well as travel opportunities, especially on the Czech side of the border, decreases with higher elevations. In some places, there is a very poor network of local roads (class 2 and 3), whilst accessibility by public transport has been reduced due to financial reasons, and regional railway lines might also be affected.

In general, particularly the area of the Šumava/Bayerischer Wald/Böhmerwald mountain range in the north-south direction, i.e. from the Czech Republic to Bavaria and Austria, is less permeable for road and railway transport, the reason being a mountain barrier. Furthermore, very valuable landscape features and ecosystems that are currently among the most strictly protected areas (e.g. included in the first zone of national parks) have survived along the state border. The factors mentioned above even prevent the simple crossing of the border on foot, although there are no formal barriers to cross at any place after the Schengen Agreement is in effect.

An important waterway in the Bavarian and Austrian parts of the Šumava Euroregion is the Danube River, used for the river transport of passengers (including cruises) and goods. Other
rivers are only used for recreational tourism in some places. In 2012, regular steamboat transport within the Lipno dam was resumed.

Public facilities are used by the local population and also for the needs of tourism, which is very significant for the Euroregion, because it combines both natural and cultural-historical endowments with numerous necessary facilities. There are no spa locations in the territory of the Czech part of the Euroregion, although there are a number of sites with wellness services. The Bavarian part of the Euroregion offers popular spas in Bad Kötzing and Bad Füssing and the climatic spa Bodenmais; in the Austrian part, the spa town of Bad Leonfelden is the most significant one. There are however problems with the infrastructure, whilst the popularity of the region coupled with the significant concentration of visitors in the most attractive centres are contrary to the rules of nature conservation.

In addition to the natural attractions described above, the area in question has also got many cultural-historical sights. Their popularity helps many of these places to develop tourism facilities (primarily for catering and accommodation). Apart from Český Krumlov, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Czech part offers national cultural monuments, e.g. the Horšovský Týn castle complex, Vimperk, the ruins of the Rabí castle, the Švihov castle and the Rožmberk castle, the ruins of the Velhartice castle, the Český Krumlov castle, Zlatá koruna and Vyšší Brod monasteries, the birthplace of Jan Hus in Husinec, St. Nicholas Church in Čečovice in the Domažlice region, and the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Kájov in the Český Krumlov region. Urban conservation sites include Domažlice, Horšovský Týn and Prachatice. Folk architecture can be found for example in the municipalities of Stachy, Dobré at Stožec and in other Šumava villages. Unique technical monuments include the remains of a horse-drawn railway that connected different parts of the territory of the Euroregion in the last century (completed in 1832). It was mainly used to transport salt from the Austrian Salzkammergut and other raw materials from Linz to the Czech lands. At one point it also transported passengers. In the past, it was Europe’s longest railway line. Other significant technical monuments include navigation canals (e.g. the Schwarzenberg canal and the Vchynice-Tetov canal), remains of mining tunnels, old bridges and lookout towers.

The Austrian part of the Euroregion contains numerous castles (Wienberg, Dornach, Eschelberg, Marschbach, Pibersteinm, Rannariedl, Wildberg) and chateaux (Brunnwald, Neuhaus an der Donau, Sprinzenstein), and historic towns such as Freistadt.

The Bavarian part of the Euroregion attracts visitors with ancient historical towns and their sights. We can mention, for example, Regensburg, one of the residence towns of the Frankish kings with the remains of Roman buildings, Passau and Cham, one of the oldest towns in the border region. In its vicinity we can find Chammunster, a monastery from the ninth century. Displays of folk architecture are protected in open-air museums, for example in Bärnau or in Thurmansbang-Tittling. Popular places include the climatic spa Zwiessel, and castles and
chateaux such as Buchnau, Egg, Englurg, Neuenbuchberg, Friedrichsburg, Falkenberg, Falkenstein, Parsberg, Thierlstein, Waldau, and Wildenau.

The Euroregion also offers more special infrastructure facilities of museum type (e.g. Passau, Furth i. W., Sušice, Kašperské Hory, as well as glassworks and glass museums, e.g. in Bodenmais and Frauenau), zoological and botanical gardens, game parks and places of similar type (Furth i. W., Straubing), leisure parks (e.g. Neukirchen b. H.), and the oldest German folk performances “Slaying the Dragon” (“Der Drachenstich”) in Furth i. W.
4. Organisational and institutional structures, activities

4.1 The emergence of the institution as a single cross-border unit

The Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is a trilateral platform that was – after several subsequent initiation meetings in 1991-1992 – constituted in 1993, respectively 1994. It was established as a cooperation of three independent legal entities in the Czech, Bavarian, and Austrian parts, each having its own legal status. This initial constellation has remained unchanged until present. The Czech subject called Euregion Šumava, South-western Bohemia has an office in Běšiny (district Klatovy); the Bavarian part of the Euroregion – Bayerischer Wald-Unterer Inn – is seated in the municipality of Freyung (district Freyung-Grafenau); and the Upper-Austrian part – Mühlviertel – is managed by the Regional Management Mühlviertel that resides in Freistadt municipality in the eponymous district.

The Euroregion was established in 1994 as a third euroregion with the participation of Czech subjects. Currently it covers, jointly with another twelve euroregions (see Picture 1), the entire length of the state border. It was able to strengthen – together with similar groupings from other border areas –its position through already established or newly constituting institutional structures and governance networks (regions, districts, areas with municipalities with extended authority etc.). This situation is rather complicated as the cooperation is trilateral.

The Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is one of the four examples of trilateral Euroregions with Czech participation, which obviously makes communication, coordination, and realization difficult. The Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel does not even comply with any formalised administrative division used in the participating states. For example on the Bavarian side it is not corresponding with the natural entity of Šumava/Bayerischer Wald. The Czech part of this Euroregion belongs to the territory of Pilsen region and South-Bohemia region, both having their own structures at the NUTS3 level while also jointly constituting NUTS2 Region Southwest.

It is necessary to point out that euroregions in general and their acceptance by public administration (state, self-government) has been evolving gradually. At least in the Czech Republic we must underline that euroregions were established before the current public administration structure based on 14 self-administrative regions was established in 2000. These newly established regions sometimes considered euroregions as competitors. It took a while to achieve at least partial mutual understanding, to draw the demarcating lines, and to set joint cooperation agendas between both types of institutions or structures. This division line respects the basic mission of both types of bodies: while the euroregions’ main task is the promotion of cross-border cooperation, regions as higher territorial administrative units account for the comprehensive development of the particular territory.
Germany and Austria are federal states and there is a higher need for cooperation at the national level. The Free State of Bavaria represents a NUTS1 unit while Upper-Austria as a NUTS2 region is at a lower level of the statistical administrative-territorial hierarchy. There are also rather minor and more or less terminological differences in organising lower administrative units in Germany and Austria: in case of Bavaria there are government regions (Regierungsbezirke), including Oberpfalz (Upper Palatinate) and Niederbayern (Lower Bavaria); these are further divided into districts (Landkreise). In Austria we can find regions (areas) such as Mühlviertel, which are co-constituted by several political districts (politishe Kreise).

4.2 Spatial definition and membership in the Euroregion

The Euroregion Šumava–Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel neighbours to the Euroregion Egrensis in the northwest and to the Euroregion Silva Nortica in the southeast (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Euroregions in the Czech Republic](Source: CZSO, Euroregions on Czech-German border, 2012)

Apart from the Czech part of the euroregion there are also other interest associations of municipalities active in the Czech part of the Euroregion, which were established for different reasons and purposes than cross-border cooperation. Their focus is mainly on tourism or environmental protection, e.g. Association of Municipalities Úhlava, Regional Association Šumava, Mikroregion Upper Vltava – Boubínsko and others.

The Šumava – Bayerischer Wald Euroregion will have a central position in the forthcoming European Region Donau – Moldau (Figure 2).
The Šumava Euroregion stretches over the territory of five districts in the Czech Republic (Domažlice, Klatovy, Prachatice, Český Krumlov, and Strakonice). There are seven districts in Bavaria (the Landkreise Cham, Deggendorf, Freyung-Grafenau, Passau, Regen, Straubing-Bogen, and since 2004 Rottal-Inn) and additionally two free cities (the Freistädte Straubing and Passau). Finally, there are four districts in Upper Austria (Freistadt, Perg, Rohrbach, and Urfahr-Umgebung) making up the territory of the Euroregion as well.

To become a member of this euroregion, the interested town council/municipal council should submit its application. The application is discussed at the next general meeting of the Euroregion. The municipalities pay the member fees, which are calculated per capita (for example the membership fee is 3 CZK per inhabitant for Czech municipalities). There is even a possibility for legal entities to be a member of the Euroregion. In this case the membership fee is 5 000 CZK per year.

The membership of a legal entity terminates by its liquidation, by the leaving of a legal entity from the Association, or by exclusion due to breaking the rules of the cooperation. There is a list of the advantages, which can – according to the Czech secretariat of the Euroregion – be associated with the membership in the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel:

- full information service mainly to municipalities;
- further education concerning the preparation of areas and criteria in projects, respectively programs of cross-border cooperation (Phare CBC, INTERREG programmes, Objective 3, EGTC);
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- mediation of primary contacts for those interested in cross-border cooperation between municipalities in Bavaria, Upper-Austria and the Czech Republic;
- technical assistance for the application for various projects and further consultation about areas of preparation, process and evaluation of the projects;
- helping through commissions of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald in areas of tourism, economic and regional development, education and culture, ecology, environment, agriculture and forestry;
- representation of the whole region at fairs and through promotional materials.

Figure 3: Czech municipalities involved in the Czech part of the Euroregion
Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2005

4.3 Organisational structure

The structure of the Czech, German, and Austrian parts of the Euroregion is basically the same, however they are institutionally divided. Yet again it must be repeated that Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is made up by three independent entities, bearing the legal form of associations of municipalities (see Table 1).
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Table 1: The structure of the euroregion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country code</th>
<th>Name of entity</th>
<th>Seat</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>Euroregion Šumava</td>
<td>Běšiny</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>EUREGIO Bayerischer Wald - Böhmerwald - Unterer Inn e.V.</td>
<td>Freyung</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>EUREGIO bayerischer wald - böhmerwald Regionalmanagement Mühlviertel</td>
<td>Freistadt</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own compilation

The highest authority of the Euroregion is a trilateral general meeting, which takes place in one of the participating countries at regular intervals. Communication between these meetings is being ensured by e-newspapers published by all of the participating sections.

The General Assembly is the highest authority in each of the participating organisations. Most members – all of them legal entities – are municipalities, but also regions and various non-profit groups (mostly in Germany and Austria, e.g. Regional Muzeum in Passau, Catholic Educational Institute in Freyung or Regen, or limited companies e.g. Kifas) have been involved as well. A General meeting takes place once a year, usually in the spring.

At the general meeting members are obliged to elect the presidency and President. The length of their mandate is four years and it usually tries to copy elections to municipal council/town council (the last elections in the Czech Republic were in 2014). National presidencies meet at ceremonies once in two years. The president is at the same time a member of the presidency.

Particular working and project groups and even offices with their officers who ensure all the administration, processing annual reports, searching for eligible partnership to realise cross-border subjects, organisation of joint events and propagation, are accountable vis-à-vis the presidency (Figure 4). Following the municipal elections in the Czech Republic, the new presidency met on 3 December 2014.

All three associations co-constituting the euroregion have a similar structure: there is an executive secretary as head of office, being the main executive part of the Association, responsible to the President of the respective national part of the Euroregion. The Czech office consists of two employees; the Austrian and German offices consist of six staff members each. The difference is caused by the fact that both Bavarian as well as Austrian staff-members also act as administrators of the microprojects’ scheme of three cross-border cooperation programmes (Bavaria–Czech Republic, Austria–Czech Republic, and Bavaria–Austria). The latter’s implementation on the Czech side is conducted by the external Regional Development Agency Šumava.

There are even national commissions for various branches: tourism, culture, sport, education, economy, transport, agriculture, forestry, environment, and ecology. The chairman of
commission is at the same time member of the presidency – to ensure the link to municipalities and to the presidency.

![Figure 4: Basic organigram of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald](source)


The Bavarian presidency consists of three State counsellors (Landrat) from the districts Freyung-Grafenau (President Sebastian Gruber), Cham, and Passau. There are further two representatives in the main committee (State counsellors) from the districts Regen, Deggendorf, Rottal-Inn and Straubing-Bogen. Moreover, there are mayors of towns and municipalities, deputies of the Industrial and Business chamber (Industrie- und Handelskammer), former State counsellors as well as representatives of non-profit organisations.

### 4.4 Main activities

The fundamental objectives of the Association are declared in official documents and are motivated by the idea to „protect indisputable natural and even cultural wealth on the both sides of frontier“. They are:

- to preserve and enhance the native conditions of the whole area;
- to assist to the development of the regional economy;
- to enhance mutual cooperation between regions and coordinate their activities;
- to coordinate the construction of infrastructure that goes beyond the borders of the regions;
- to cooperate with significant institutions (regional authorities, unions of entrepreneurs, and financial institutions) in order to represent the positions and interests of the municipalities in the given region in conjunction with contemporary developmental trends in a particular region;
• to set up conditions for funding of individual projects and guarantee the effective, useful and targeted use of financial resources;
• to develop the self-executive functions of the region (especially main actors – towns and municipalities);
• to include the region in the activities of the EU.

The most important activities of the Euroregion are:
• cross-border cooperation, funding and implementing projects developing political, economical, social and cultural thematic areas that are in common interest;
• to represent regional interests and issues;
• to be a point of contact for cross-border projects between Bavaria, Austria, and the Czech Republic;
• to initiate sustainable and innovative projects in the area of regional and economic policy, strengthening regional attraction and competition, and also increasing quality of life in the region;
• to support regional projects during their planning, coordination, and realization;
• consultation focusing on obtaining national and European grants (at EU level, at state level, at federal level, respectively regional level);
• to represent the border region at the European level in AEBR;
• informing public about relevant topics of EU;
• active cooperation in building the Euroregion Donau-Moldau.

The Czech part of Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald defines its main activities as:
• improving and coordinating cross-border cooperation;
• regional representation;
• exchange of information;
• management of Disposition Fund, Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Objective 3 Czech Republic – Free State Bavaria in Šumava Region;
• participating in the creation of a developmental strategy and EU programmes.

The Euroregion has an ambition to be a platform for mutual neighbourly meetings, communication, exchange of information, and helping with implementation of cross-border projects. Furthermore, EU funds make up a vast majority of its agenda.
5. Composition of the working group

There have been 11 chairmen leading the (national) sub-parts of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel since its establishment. The Austrian part possesses the biggest stability and continuity because there have been employed only two persons from the beginning. This is undoubtedly contributing to the quality and efficiency of the work. On the other hand there was a high fluctuation in the Czech Republic, but the situation has stabilised by now as the current representative has served more than 15 years, and this is a kind of compensation for the previous fluctuation (see Table 2).

Table 2: Chairmen of the national parts of the Euroregion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Czech Rep.</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Bavaria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1999-</td>
<td>František Vlček</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 20 Jahre Euregio / 20 let Euroregionu, 2013*

The organizational arrangement, including the personification of the individual national parts of the Euroregion, can be found in the annexe at the end of the document.
6. Main activity fields

One of the principal tasks of euroregions is to work with European sources, which is a substantial part of their activities. This is certainly true for all euroregions with participation of Czech subjects, which have mostly been involved in administering these funds since the very start of their functioning (see for example Böhm 2014). Therefore this chapter will focus on the description of the work of the euroregion with European funds. The chapter will be divided into two parts: the first describing the cooperation topics and the second analysing the use of individual CBC operational programmes relevant for this trilateral border region.

This part of the study is based on an analysis of the web pages of the Euroregion, i.e. that of the Czech part. There, since 2006, the secretariat has been providing information about various activities in the “News” section. In the frame of the methodological procedure we have chosen three criteria, through which the particular activities (records, etc.) can be documented.

6.1 Topical orientation

As for the topical orientation, there are some complex matters which cannot be unequivocally classified within a distinct theme. We have included them in ‘regional development’. This information belongs to such cases where neither the subject nor the event is specified; however, its realization is secured by a municipality or by the region. The second group is represented by the activities that can be precisely identified, or, divided into widely used specializations. As Table 3 confirms, we can mostly find generally conceived activities related to the development of a particular area, or activities secured by the public administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reg. development / publ. administration</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tourism</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sport</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healthcare</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research

As for the specified activities, tourism leads without any doubts. This situation can be perceived as understandable, as a consequence of this being a region with both small and large protected areas (incl. national parks) as well as with cultural and historic monuments. Education and sport
took the second and third spots. Interestingly, during the whole observed programming period (2007-2013), free time activities, technical infrastructure, agriculture, forestry, or ecology have not succeeded once. At the same time, we are convinced that even these groups conducted important activities that would surely deserve some publicity.

In the second investigation we have looked at who “stands” behind the particular activities. The actors, stakeholders or players, as they are usually described, were – based on the prime inquiries – determined according to their rank level and institutional position, as showed in Table 4.

On the first two spots we see a set of various non-profit organizations as well as the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel, supplemented with particular regional development agenda (where appropriate). This can be considered as favorable, as it confirms the importance of the institution investigated; at the same time it shows the operation and importance of civic activities (society) abroad. Then, regional, national, and municipal institutions follow. Municipalities concentrate on partial, territorially relatively limited activities, so their representation is relatively low.

Table 4: Actors of the presented activities of Euroregion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-profit organizations</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion incl. RDA</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>region, land</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state (e.g., police)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>municipality</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>district, AD MEP, microregion</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chambers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research

Finally, the third criterion pays attention to the territorial aspect, i.e. the spatial location. Most active are particular localities, usually towns. However, otherwise defined places (e.g. natural formations) are no exception. In the more particular classification we distinguish Czech localities and localities in the German and Austrian border area; on a higher level we observe in one shot, because it is among others impossible to differentiate the area because of “transborderness”.

Following our analysis, we can state that the set of the mentioned localities is relatively rich, which demonstrates that the border activities are more or less effective. In the Czech part, 56 localities are declared; the most commonly represented can be found in Table 5. The district town of Klatovy leads the imaginary chart, followed by other towns of this category, together...
with two regional cities. The remaining localities have an entirely specific position. Železná Ruda can symbolize both the (former) division and the present cooperation within a so-called double town (with Bayerisch Eisenstein). In Běšiny the secretariat of the Czech part has the seat and, among others, many meetings take place there. 48 foreign localities succeeded, none of them being in Austria! Can we possibly conclude that the Austrian part gets less (the least) involved in border cooperation? Usually the district towns as administrative centers succeed – see Chart 8 above. On a regional level there are 20 examples in total, dominated – across all the criteria – by Šumava as a whole, i.e., including all the three parts. This position is stressed by both national parks being listed. Then the administration structures on the NUTS3 level follow, while Plzeň/Pilsen region (subjectively, or via public relations) appears to be the most active one.

**Table 5: Local determination of the presented activities of Euroregion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Czech Republic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Bavaria / Austria</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>localities</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klatovy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Freyung</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Šumava Euroregion</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Železná Ruda</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Plzeň Region</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plzeň</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deggendorf</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Danube-Moldau</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>České Budějovice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Freyung-Grafenau</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NP Šumava</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Běšiny</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Zwiesel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Upper Austria</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Český Krumlov</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BayerischEisenstein</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lower Austria</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>München</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NP Bayerischer Wald</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Bohemia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own research*

6.2 EU funded initiatives

We first analyse this part from the perspective of the various parts (Czech-Bavarian, respectively Czech-Austrian). Afterwards we focus on the whole Euroregion from a trilateral angle. Concerning the project scope we go from the major projects with high allocation down to smaller ones. We will work with the data until the end of 2013, as the newer ones are not eligible at the moment.

The CBC programmes, which during 2014-2020 return to the initial name “INTERREG”, offer two principal ways of the project support: the so-called microprojects´ scheme (in some places called as Disposition or Small Projects Fund), which support smaller “people-to-people” projects with a maximum budget set up to 30 000 Euros; and “normal” big projects requiring higher sums. The euroregions mostly act as the administrators of these microprojects´ schemes, which provide them with unique competence and finances for their own staff dealing with the administration of these smaller grants. This is also the case for all three national associations composing the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel. As mentioned previously, the Austrian and Bavarian associations do this job by the means of their own
employees, whereas the Czech part outsourced this task to the Regional Development Agency Šumava.

Besides their very prominent administrator’s role in distributing these small funds the three member association of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel can also act as project promoters in the three above mentioned ERDF funded CBC programmes, and they often do so.

The principal source of funds was a program of cross-border cooperation: Objective 3 Czech Republic-Free State of Bavaria 2007-2013. This program aimed to promote cross-border economic, cultural and communal cooperation; the development of tourism; the support of education and social integration; the improvement of transport accessibility in the cross-border region as well as the protection of the environment. In case of programmes related to cross-border cooperation, the cross-border impact of the project is a very important aspect; both sides of the border should benefit from the project. Projects must also include beneficiaries from both countries who work together at least in two of the following ways: joint preparation, joint implementation, joint utilization of working staff and joint financing.

The program of cross-border cooperation - Objective 3 Czech Republic-Free State of Bavaria 2007-2013 (Objective 3 Czech Republic-Bavaria) belongs to the Objective 3 strand (European Territorial Cooperation programmes). There is an amount of 115,51 million EUR allocated for the programme in the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This amount shall be increased by another sum of 20,38 million EUR taken from Czech and German national public resources. Objective 3 programme Czech Republic - Bavaria contains two priority axes dividing the operating program into logical units. The logical units are further specified by means of so-called support areas that define the types of projects that may be supported within a particular priority axis. The following priority axes were defined:

- Economic development, human resources and networks;
- Development of territory and the environment.

The main objective of the European Territorial Cooperation Austria-Czech Republic 2007-2013 focuses on improving the transportation accessibility of the cross-border region, protection of the environment, support for development of cross-border infrastructure and tourism services, support for education and social integration, support for cooperation of economic entities and technology transfer, as well as support for cross-border cooperation of local governments on both sides of the border. The operating project of Austria - Czech Republic is intended for the regions of South Bohemia, South Moravia and Highlands (Vysočina) on the Czech side and the regions of Waldviertel, Weinviertel, Wiener Umland Nordteil, Mühlviertel and Vienna City on the Austrian side.

The Operational Programme Austria-Czech Republic belongs also to the family of the Objective 3 programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation. It was supported by the European
Regional Development Fund with the amount of 107,44 million Euros. This amount was increased by other funds taken from Czech and Austrian national sources. Regarding the Czech side, they planned to use the amount of 69,12 million EUR from the EU funds. In case of operational programmes related to cross-border cooperation, cross-border impact of the project is a very important aspect; both sides of the border should benefit from the project. Projects must also include beneficiaries from both countries who work together at least in two of the following ways: joint preparation, joint implementation, joint utilization of working staff, and joint financing. The OP Austria-Czech Republic contains three priority axes dividing the operating program into logical units. The logical units are further specified by means of so-called activity areas that define types of projects that may be supported within a particular priority axis. The following priority axes were defined:

- socio-economic development, tourism, and transfer of know-how;
- regional accessibility and sustainable development; and
- technical assistance.

These priorities have been implemented by the means of following measures:

1.1 Infrastructure and business related services
1.2 Tourism, culture and economy of leisure time
1.3 Development of human resources, labour market, education and qualification
1.4 Social integration, prevention from health and social risks
2.1 Transportation and regional accessibility
2.2 Environment and risk prevention
2.3 Sustainable networks and structures of institutional cooperation

Similarly, as cross-border cooperation was (is) supported on the Czech border, the "remaining" section is addressed by the INTERREG IV A programme Bavaria-Austria. It was expected that the cross-border cooperation would be supported by an aggregate amount of 54.1 million Euros from the ERDF in the programming period of 2007-2013, for the entire subsidy territory. The following topics were selected to serve as priorities of the programme:

1. Research-oriented and competitive society through innovation and cooperation:
   - General economic conditions for strengthening entrepreneurial initiative;
   - Innovative activities in both regional and local economies of leisure time;
   - Just like the cross-border labour market through qualifications and lifelong learning. This is how we try to strengthen human resources.

2. Attractive living space through sustainable regional development:
   - Cross-border territorial development through sustainable networking and cooperating structures;
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- Protection of the environment and nature as well as sustainable regional development
- Improvement of accessibility;
- Strengthening and cooperation in the fields of health and social care;
- Strengthening regional identity.

This programme is implemented in the area through districts (Landkreise). On the Bavarian side there are for example the following districts: Freyung-Grafenau, Passau, Rottal-Inn. Exceptionally, projects of Deggendorf or Regen districts (distant ones seen from the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel) may be supported, too.

Regarding the current programming period 2014-2020, we can only mention priority axes yet. The amounts for individual border sections (operational programmes of cross-border cooperation will yet again bear INTERREG titles) are just being determined. By looking at Table 6 it is clear that only some of the eleven thematic objectives announced by the EU Strategy 2020 were applied in the Czech borderlands; most of them for the section of Czech Republic-Saxony (5), least of them for the section of Bohemia-Bavaria (2 only): (1.) strengthening of research, technological development and innovations (6.); protection of the environment and support for efficient use of resources.

Table 6: Priority axes of cross-border cooperation for the Czech borderlands for the period of 2014-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Sax</th>
<th>Bav</th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>SK</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strengthening of research, technological development and innovations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Support for adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and risk management;</td>
<td>Sax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Protection of the environment and support for efficient use of resources;</td>
<td>Sax</td>
<td>Bav</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Support for sustainable transport and elimination of barriers in key network infrastructures;</td>
<td>Sax</td>
<td></td>
<td>AT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Support for employment and support labour staff mobility;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Investment in education, skills and lifelong learning;</td>
<td>Sax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Strengthening of institutional capacity and efficient public administration</td>
<td>Sax</td>
<td></td>
<td>AT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MRD CZ (Ministry Of Regional Development CZ)
There are four priority axes that were not enforced in the Czech borderlands at all. They are the following:

2. Improvement of accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies;
3. Increasing of competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises; agricultural sector (EZFRV) and the sector of fisheries and aquaculture (EMFF);
4. Support for transition to a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
9. Support for social integration and struggling against poverty.

A further part of the case study tries to illustrate the distribution of funds in CBC programmes. This picture will be centred around the Czech part of the euroregion, as the authors found most of the accessible information sources on this side of the border.

**OP Bavaria – Czech Republic**

The ERDF supported so far more than 300 major projects with more than 152 million € under the Framework of the Bavarian-Czech Programme. Significantly more money is obtained by German subjects than Czech ones, on the other hand Czech subjects enjoy also 5% of national co-financing that partly compensates for the imbalance. The projects are selected by Monitoring Committees (MCs), and the number of selected projects varies between 10 (during the 11th MC meeting) and 80 (during the 5th MC meeting). The average amount per project varies according to the programme priorities addressed by individual calls. Generally, we can observe its gradual decrease (from max. 718 000 down to 142 000 Euros).

*Table 7: Global data on OP CBC Bavaria – Czech Republic 2007-2013 (in €)*
Table 8 shows the division of projects per priorities and it clearly shows that approximately 62% of them go for Priority 1. 247 projects were subject of our interest: we were interested in the fulfilment of the prescribed (four) criteria of cross-border projects, of which at least two were mandatory:

- Preparation;
- Implementation;
- Personal;
- Finances.

Whereas preparation and realisation were always joint, the fulfilment of the other two criteria is quite rare and exceptional. In the 2014–2020 programming period, the fulfilment of at least three criteria will be made compulsory.
The following tables offer a view inside: firstly, the allocation of ERDF funds among the national parts (Table 9.), afterwards the structure of resources. A total amount of 115 million Euros go for Bavaria in a ratio of 52:48. The share of the ERDF co-financing increased with more advanced programme implementation, which is valid for both parts of the border.

### Table 9: ERDF Bavaria – Czech Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>Bavaria</th>
<th>CZECH REP.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15 133 604</td>
<td>7 810 202</td>
<td>7 323 402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>15 501 398</td>
<td>8 018 660</td>
<td>7 482 738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>15 944 273</td>
<td>8 285 632</td>
<td>7 658 641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>16 466 416</td>
<td>8 614 440</td>
<td>7 851 976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17 003 066</td>
<td>8 953 086</td>
<td>8 049 980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>17 484 107</td>
<td>9 245 270</td>
<td>8 238 837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>17 977 585</td>
<td>9 545 560</td>
<td>8 432 025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115 510 449</td>
<td>60 472 850</td>
<td>55 037 599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.euregio.cz

### Table 10: Differences of the composition of a grant from the programme and the share of national and private sources in both countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>Public Sources</th>
<th>Private Sources</th>
<th>National sources total</th>
<th>Total costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CZECH REP.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td>33 022 559</td>
<td>5 244 760</td>
<td>582 751</td>
<td>5 827 511</td>
<td>38 850 070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>22 015 040</td>
<td>3 729 607</td>
<td>155 400</td>
<td>3 885 007</td>
<td>25 900 047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>55 037 599</td>
<td>8 974 367</td>
<td>738 151</td>
<td>9 712 518</td>
<td>64 750 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BAVARIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td>39 200 000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 917 647</td>
<td>6 917 647</td>
<td>46 117 647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>21 272 850</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 754 033</td>
<td>3 754 033</td>
<td>25 026 883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>60 472 850</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 671 680</td>
<td>10 671 680</td>
<td>71 144 530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1</td>
<td>72 222 559</td>
<td>5 244 760</td>
<td>7 500 398</td>
<td>12 745 158</td>
<td>84 967 717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>43 287 890</td>
<td>3 729 607</td>
<td>3 909 433</td>
<td>7 639 040</td>
<td>50 926 930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>115 510 449</td>
<td>8 974 367</td>
<td>11 409 831</td>
<td>20 384 198</td>
<td>135 894 647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own data of the Euroregion
**Table 11: Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel success rate in the monitoring committees meetings of the OP CBC Bavaria-Czech Republic in 2007-2013 (in €)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring Committee, place, date</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>Czech national budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. MC Prachatice 26.6.2008</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>14 104 100</td>
<td>287 722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>4 258 199</td>
<td>139 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MC / OP</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>3 060 974</td>
<td>158 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MC Frauenau 15.10.2008</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>12 340 571</td>
<td>153 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>2 005 835</td>
<td>42 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. MC Loket n. O. 18.3.2009</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>15 315 884</td>
<td>340 326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>4 876 671</td>
<td>48 829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>688 500</td>
<td>5 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. MC 15.6.2010</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>5 493 339</td>
<td>334 176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>1 985 674</td>
<td>297 751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. MC Lam 16.6.2011</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>6 129 767</td>
<td>90 579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>2 141 154</td>
<td>27 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. MC / OP Chodová Planá</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>284 966</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>284 966</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. MC Český Krumlov 7.12.2011</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>4 945 345</td>
<td>225 151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>778 566</td>
<td>16 462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. MC Deggendorf 10.5.2012</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2 346 900</td>
<td>21 686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>74 991</td>
<td>4 411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. MC Mariánské Lázne 14.11.2012</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>3 552 549</td>
<td>110 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. MC Kulmbach 10.6.2013</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1 219 787</td>
<td>28 759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>769 196</td>
<td>15 348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. MC Železná Ruda 19.11.2013</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2 316 205</td>
<td>56 385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>without precise definition of place of intervention</td>
<td>822 230</td>
<td>12 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>79 435 581</td>
<td>2 036 044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>without precise definition of place of intervention</strong></td>
<td>18 685 982</td>
<td>609 254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 shows that a significant part of all funds was used at the beginning of each programming period: more than half during the second, fourth, and fifth monitoring committee sessions. It was not always possible to determine the territorial impact of the projects, for example where only the region of intervention was mentioned or project partner develops its activities in the territory of the whole region.

Figure 5: The ERDF support for Czech-Bavarian projects from Euroregion Šumava–Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel (in €)

The OP CBC Austria – Czech Republic

The OP CBC Austria–Czech Republic influences the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel territory only partially, which is also mirrored in the small number of supported projects from that territory; just 12 out of totally 132 implemented projects come from there.

Table 12: Czech-Austrian cross-border projects in Euroregion (in €)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Project topic</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSB-innocat</td>
<td>innovation</td>
<td>RDA, park / 3 technological centres</td>
<td>JČ / Rohrbach, Freistadt-Mühlviertel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipensko-Mühlviertel</td>
<td>tourism</td>
<td>2 municipalities and their service bodies, RERA / GmbH</td>
<td>JČ, Přední Výtoň, Lipno nad Vltavou, Kovářov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyklo Lipensko-Mühlviertel</td>
<td>tourism, sport</td>
<td>2 municipalities, foundation / tourism cluster 4x</td>
<td>Přední Výtoň, Lipno nad Vltavou / Schönegg, Böhmerwald, Mühlviertler Kernland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The regional exposition 2013</td>
<td>regional development</td>
<td>RDA, museum / OÖ, RM OÖ</td>
<td>Český Krumlov, JČ / OÖ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating channel</td>
<td>tourism</td>
<td>Forrests of the CZ / Tourismusverband</td>
<td>NP Šumava / Böhmerwald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE TRACK</td>
<td>tourism, sport</td>
<td>municipalities 2x, club / Tourismusverband</td>
<td>Nová Pec, Horní Planá, Trojmezí / Böhmerwald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunsthandwerk</td>
<td>culture</td>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>Český Krumlov / OÖ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Rescue Services Activities</td>
<td>health-care</td>
<td>Water rescue service</td>
<td>Český Krumlov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Therapy</td>
<td>health-care</td>
<td>Hospital, school, house of seniors</td>
<td>Prachatice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclo-track Horní Planá</td>
<td>tourism</td>
<td>Municipality, tourism union</td>
<td>Horní Planá / Böhmerwald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion OÖ/JČ 2010-2012</td>
<td>regional development</td>
<td>RDA / RM OÖ</td>
<td>Šumava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion OÖ/JČ 2013-2014</td>
<td>regional development</td>
<td>RDA / RM OÖ</td>
<td>Šumava</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Financial aspects of these projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>National co-financing</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Year of implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSB-innocat</td>
<td>423 560</td>
<td>145 374</td>
<td>568 934</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipensko-Mühlviertel</td>
<td>1 179 924</td>
<td>255 922</td>
<td>1 435 846</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyklo Lipensko-Mühlviertel</td>
<td>1 256 668</td>
<td>515 422</td>
<td>1 772 090</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The regional exposition 2013</td>
<td>498 466</td>
<td>190 321</td>
<td>688 787</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating channel</td>
<td>727 830</td>
<td>128 442</td>
<td>856 272</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE TRACK</td>
<td>115 751</td>
<td>20 427</td>
<td>136 178</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunsthandwerk</td>
<td>296 580</td>
<td>52 338</td>
<td>348 918</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Rescue Services Activities</td>
<td>408 527</td>
<td>83 092</td>
<td>491 619</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Therapy</td>
<td>1 481 039</td>
<td>474 277</td>
<td>1 955 316</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclo-track Horní Planá</td>
<td>361 420</td>
<td>63 780</td>
<td>425 200</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion OÖ/JČ 2010-2012</td>
<td>367 698</td>
<td>115 366</td>
<td>483 064</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion OÖ/JČ 2013-2014</td>
<td>180 172</td>
<td>211 810</td>
<td>391 982</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Whereas Table 12 deals with the projects’ content, Table 13 focuses on their financial aspects. Most of the activities concentrated on tourism or tourism extended with elements of regional development. The partners differ as far as their typology is concerned (we can observe the representatives of all municipalities, RDAs, NGOs, etc). Most of the projects concerned are targeting a broader territory, e.g. a national park or a region. Out of the total sum of appr. 9,9 million Euros, 75% is provided by the ERDF and the rest by national public or private sources.

Best practices – major projects

The representatives of the EUREGIO identified the following projects as the most representative ones:

- Talent Regio - Life and work without borders;
- Centrum granite Hauzenberg;
- The park Bogen-Slavonice;
- House Ludwigsthal Wilderness National Park;
- Town hall Deggendorf with the German-Czech contact office;
- Tourist Destination Management Bavarian Forest-Forest / Bayerischer Wald-Böhammerwald;
1000 Years of Golden Path;
Biking in the valley of the Danube;
We are Europe!;
Day of European cooperation in the Czech Krumlov;
Flood control measures for Malše River;
Crafts without borders;
Establishment of new stops in Bucina - boundaries and turnabout for buses;
20th anniversary of the reopening of the railway route Iron Ore and Bayerisch Eisenstein;
Disposition Fund CBC program Objective 3 Czech Republic - Free State of Bavaria and the Small Projects Fund Objective 3 European Territorial Cooperation Czech Republic-Austria 2007-2013;
Cross-border Provincial Exhibition Upper Austria - South Bohemia "Old Tracks - new ways";
Learning trip to Czech-Bavarian information centers;
After castles country roads from the Danube Malše;
The Jewish Cemetery in Rozmberk;
Groove Castle.¹

We are Europe! Talents, perspectives, future in the region of Pilsen and the Upper Palatinate

Source: http://www.bbkult.net/

This project is a joint initiative of the Regional marketing Upper Palatinate / Oberpfalz Regionalmarketing and the Chamber of Commerce / Industrie und Handelskammer Regensburg for the Upper Palatinate / Kelheim and Pilsen region.

The regions of Pilsen Region and Upper Palatinate as well as their towns have significantly benefited from brisk business and tourism between East and West. After a number of policy

¹ Annotations of these projects come from the respective websites and interviews with Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel representatives.
changes in the 21st century, the chance of this transborder cooperation re-emerged with the capacity of becoming a symbol of the united Europe without borders.

Why live, work, and play in the region Plzeň-Upper Palatinate? One could find countless career opportunities in worldwide known companies, renowned colleges and universities, cross-border cooperation, contact networks, and a wide range of leisure activities for everyone. The aim is to give specific impulses to learn from and network with Bavarian and Czech entrepreneurs. The Bavarian-Czech border region has an advantageous geographical location in Central Europe with a significant number of innovative small and medium-sized enterprises. Nine measures are planned with a variety of topics ranging from cross-border traffic arrangements to joint training activities and cluster cooperation in the field of mechatronics. The total project budget was 2.1 million Euros.

The tourist infrastructure around Dragon Lake

Upper Palatinate, Pilsen Region, the City of Furth im Wald, and the Office of Water Management/ Wasserwirtschaftsamt Regensburg

In 2009, a new flood tank was filled with "Dragon Lake" in the border region around Furth im Wald - Eschlkam. Besides flood protection it aims to improve tourism infrastructure, and its catchment area involves both sides of the border. One of the tools should be cross-border cooperation, which should help to achieve the project objectives. The project includes the construction of parking places, buildings for water sports, an information pavilion, nature trail, and a bicycle station. This will provide a natural jewel that is unique and combines four areas: leisure, ecology, experience from sheer nature, and an economic zone.

The Czech-German vocational education class for the field of machinery

Upper Palatinate, Pilsen Region

The aim of the project is to model a common dual education of young people from the Czech Republic and Bavaria, under a joint training to achieve professional (European) qualifications and to give an example of a best practice. The project should show that vocational education can be conducted on a cross-border basis in the Czech-Bavarian border area. The project plans the apprenticeship of at least eight young Germans (finished primary school) and eight young Czechs within a two-year apprenticeship "Plant and machine operators'. It will be done together at German and Czech companies. The theoretical parts will be provided in the vocational school Europa-Berufsschule Weiden (DE) and in the Secondary school ofTachov (CZ). Before and during the apprenticeship period, language courses will be offered to both German and Czech participants in order to improve their language skills in the specific vocational field. This approach will be complemented by an excursion and joint action/project days, which will make apprentices familiar with the culture of both countries. In addition to a successful
apprenticeship of all young people involved, the project will also help to build a network between the two schools.

The website of three regions - South Bohemian Region, Upper Austria, and Lower Bavaria

Documents prepared by the working group, which was composed of representatives from the following institutions:

- Regional Office for Non-governmental Bavarian Museum / Landesstelle für die nichtstaatlichen Museen in Bayern;
- Region Lower Bavaria / Bezirk Niederbayern;
- Office for Rural Development of Lower Bavaria / Amt für Entwicklung Ländliche Niederbayern;
- Association of the Upper Austrian museums / Verbund Oberösterreichischer Museen;
- Prácheňské Museum in Pisek;
- South Bohemian Regional Authority;
- Euregio Bavarian Forest - Šumava - Lower Inn / Bayerischer Wald-Böhmerwald-Unterer Inn;
- The company Theorie & Praxis, Passau.

Bilingual database, with search options, originated as a project associating printed publication "Guide to museums" of these three countries. The initiative came from South Bohemia and Prácheňské Museum in Pisek. The database has a unique information base about more than 200 museums with information about their history, which is a valuable offer to the visitors. Pictures are attached to individual objects or exposures. One can view detailed information about each museum (e.g. opening hours, contacts, services offered, etc.). Individual museums are also classified into different categories according to their focus and specialization, like Architecture, Geology, Historical interiors, Mining, Shipping and Rafting Ethnology, Personalities, Beer & Crafts, Religious monuments, contemporary history, or Golden Path.

Disposition Fund

"Wild as an Animal III - local projects"

Lower Bavaria, Pilsen, South Bohemian Region

The project builds on a similarly oriented project "Wild as an animal - marketing". It aims to expand and improve the tourism infrastructure offer on both sides of the border, which should strengthen their competitiveness. Each municipality covered by this project accepts local partnerships with a wild animal living in its territory (fox, deer, etc.). The project will be accompanied by the means of events, exhibitions, and programs (e.g. Deer Week – protection of species, deer habitat, feeding animals – guiding on the one hand, cuisine and gastronomy on
the other) that simultaneously encourage tourism, but also the protection of nature and various species.

Expert Forum on cross-border cooperation in tourism 2010 / Prospects for International tourism and development destinations: from local competence to local offer

Catholic University/Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Regionales Kompetenzzentrum für den Landkreis Regen, Kommunaler Zweckverband Volkshochschule/Regional Expertise Centre District Regen, Local Union of the Adult Education Centre Regen

The central theme of this professional forum was "Development of products and services." Attractive products and offers present the basis for the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Without brands and products, tourism destinations cannot function properly. In cross-border destinations, however, it is very difficult to produce them due to overlapping administrative powers and/or everyday difficulties in addressing various issues. Regarding the development of cross-border products and their overall supply, a particular attention should be dedicated to the strategic development of products, since this can help to create or damage the name of a destination in the longer term. The event was suitable for all interested regional and national officials, as well as for managers in tourism, representatives of public and scientific institutions, as well as community organizations.

Green Buses

Pilsen, South Bohemian Region, Lower Bavaria

The project aims to improve the system of regional public passenger transport within the Šumava National Park linked to the transport concept of the Bavarian Forest National Park. The intention is to make the concept of "Green buses" more popular and in particular to ensure their connectedness with the Bavarian system "Igelbus", "Waldbahn", and "Bayerwald-Ticket". Green buses include a set of bus lines which have been operating since 1996. This project could reduce the pressure of car traffic. A common bus schedule will be created, and the ticketing system will be harmonized on both sides of the border. Partners prepare bilingual informative material, etc. The timetables, tips for trips, walking tours and other information are provided on the Bayerwald-Ticket website (www.bayerwald-ticket.com).

Cross-border Action Association Čerchov / Aktionbündnis Schwarzkopf

Even before formal EU enlargement in 2004, the representatives of the municipal sector sought to implement institutionalized cross-border cooperation in 2003 by establishing the cross-border Action League Čerchov. It brings together six Bavarian (especially the original district Waldmünchen) and 14 Czech municipalities, which are also members of the micro-region
Chodská League. The motto is "Čerchov - a landscape full of energy". The aim of all activities is to develop environmentally friendly tourism in the Bavarian-Czech borderland area as well as to lay the ground for a progressive region in the field of technology (aimed at environmental protection), renewable energy sources and the efficient use of wood, cultural space focused on the exploitation of natural resources, construction and history, along with the cooperation of local partners.

**EUREGIO-Gastschuljahr / Visiting year**

Participants are the Bavarian State Chancellery / Bayerische Staatskanzlei, the Czech-German Fund for the Future / Deutsch-Tschechisches Zukunftsfond and the EUREGIO Bayerischer Wald - Böhmerwald / Šumava- Unterer Inn eV.

The project is aimed at Czech secondary school students in the border region, who wish to spend one academic year at a grammar school in Bavaria. The aim of the program is to enable Czech participants to spend a year in a Bavarian family, since this form is the best way to become familiar with the social environment of the host country. This is a very successful project; it has involved about 400 students from 12 secondary schools and 14 Czech German grammar schools, as well as numerous host families. In the school year 2014/2015, it is the 19th year of the project with a huge interest from the students’ side.

**Selected projects Czech-Bavarian border (-Austria) cooperation in the academic sector (solved at the Department of Geography University of West Bohemia in Pilsen)**

**Networked consumer protection Bavaria / Czech connect - Objective 3 (2008-2010)**

The aim of the project was to analyze the problems of consumer protection. Consumers should have redressed the information deficit, promote and coordinate the exchange of ideas and experiences among regional actors.

**Euroregion Šumava - past and present (2013-2014)**

The intention of the project was to publish a German version of the publication "Euroregion Šumava - Past and Present", which should serve as a presentation material for the Euroregion Šumava / Bayerischer Wald-Unterer Inn / Mühlviertel and the development Agency of Pilsen Region. This publication is a geographical analysis of the entire area of the Euroregion Šumava, which evaluates the natural sphere of the region, its demographic potential, economic base and infrastructure. A geographical analysis is supplemented by a subjective view of the population from the Czech, Bavarian and Austrian parts on the role of the Euroregion in cross-border cooperation. The publication involves spatial analysis of cross-border projects in the CBC program.
History of the Czech-Bavarian border region in the years 1945-2008 (2009-2011)

The aim of the project was to show the consequences of "closed borders and the Iron Curtain" in political, cultural, spiritual, legal, economic and natural terms. The comparison of the impact of closed and open borders with specific material contributes to the convergence of people in the Czech-Bavarian borderland. The aim of the project was to deepen the practical cooperation of the participating universities.

6.3 Disposition fund and Small projects fund

The Euroregion Šumava through RDA manages the Disposition fund Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Objective 3 – Czech Republic–Bavaria. In 2012, 112 projects were approved, including 43 small investment projects. The total amount of subsidies reached ca 808 000 €; the next call offers 120 000 €. It is possible to assume that the fund will be spent until the end of the programming period; there is an option to use it for so-called spare projects. For the whole period (2007/2008-2013) approximately 2,94 million € were available for the Czech partner, and 2,4 million € for the Bavarian partner. The Fund excels at the number of processed, but mainly approved projects at the European level.

The German partner has during the entire period (2008-2014) helped to co-finance the implementation of 281 small projects, totalling 2 441 000 €. This corresponds to an average of € 8 688 per project. The highest number of projects – 51 – was supported in 2013, when the average amounted to around € 11 360.

Non-profit organisations are eligible to get funding from the Disposition fund for soft projects and even for smaller hard projects.

- The first group focuses on cultural exchanges, local democracy, human resources, planning and developmental studies, economic development, tourism, environment, marketing and communication, as well as institutional cooperation.
- The second group focuses on activities concerning touristic hiking trails, information branding of towns and municipalities, environmental issues, and the reconstruction/renovation of "small monuments".

In the Czech-Austrian border, the Small Projects Fund is managed by the neighbouring Euroregion - South-Bohemian Silva Nortica. So far, 462 projects were supported with the approved financial contribution from the ERDF with an amount of 2 858 000 €. This was supplemented by co-financing totaling 963 000 €. As a result of the delayed start of the programme, as well as payment delays only 1 626 000 €, i.e. approx. 57% of all funds available have been used until now. Due to the length of the Czech-Austrian border and the small representation of the Euroregion Šumava on its length, it is understandable that our concerned
area has had a relatively small share. Still, there are some interesting projects that were selected and are presented here.

**Best practice projects from the Small projects fund AT-CZ 2010-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibition of education and craft</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant (CZ)</td>
<td>Partner (AT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Bohemian Economic Association</td>
<td>České Budějovice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech School of Tourism Bad Leonfelden</td>
<td>School of Tourism Bad Leonfelden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project enabled the realisation of a cross-border exhibition, education and craftsmen training with the attendance of high school students and students of craft schools (10 CZ, 2 AT). The implementation of the project enabled a transfer of experiences in the fields of technology, know-how, and educational methods of technical and craft professions. The project also contributed to the development of the language skills of students and teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peace ride</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant (AT)</td>
<td>Partner (CZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Österreicher Cavallerie-Verband Pregarten</td>
<td>Jockey Club Borová Český Krumlov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty riders from traditional societies of cavalry from Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Austria were wearing ceremonial uniforms of the emperor’s and king’s dragoons, lancers, and hussars. They attended the Peace ride from Gmunden to Český Krumlov via Wels, Linz, and Vyšší Brod. The ride pointed out the particular historical realities in the times of the monarchy, the two World Wars, the post-war period, and even present times. Collectively bearing remembrances stimulates and brings peace, symbolised by reading aloud a message of peace in each place where the riders stayed overnight, followed by planting a tree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle station</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant (AT)</td>
<td>Partner (CZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Schönegg</td>
<td>Village Přední Výtoň</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cycle station in Schönegg, situated immediately at the state border, is part of a great project that supports the development of cycle tourism. It is the starting point for cycle path to Lipno dam. Another activity of the project was a stabilisation of the cycle path from Přední Výtoň to the state border. This new leisure time activity was presented on the occasion of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the partnership of the two villages.
Power of place of pilgrimage in Horní Malše (Obere Maltsch)

Applicant (AT) | Partner (CZ)
---|---
Association Zukunftsforum Freistadt | Cultural and Informational Centre Kaplice

Since the opening of the state border in the surrounding area of the river Malše (in Austria called Maltsch), a substantial resurrection of cycle tourism and hiking could take place, especially thanks to the initiatives establishing this area as a „Natura 2000“ – line above Malše river, the refurbishment of the gothic church in Cetviny, and renovation of the chapel and the stations of the cross. The precondition for this development was GIS and photographic documentation of sacral constructions, literature searches and translations of valuable cultural information, and making them available through trilingual information columns close to churches of pilgrimage and bilingual information leaflets.

Photographers of Šumava

Applicant (AT) | Partner (CZ)
---|---
OÖ Kulturquartier Linz | Cistercians Abbey Vyšší Brod

By means of photographs from vast private collections amended by exhibits from Šumava museum in Vienna and the Regional museum in Český Krumlov, nine photographers were presented who were working in Šumava. They documented in extraordinary way an environment in which citizens lived for the period of 100 years (1890–1990). The exhibition was supplemented by actual photographs and text contributions of students from Upper Mühlviertel and Southern Bohemia, which shed some light and added their own view on life in Šumava.

Reinforcement of trilateral structure fire departments

Applicant (AT) | Partner (CZ)
---|---
Fire department Rohrbach | Fire department Přední Výtoň

Fire departments, the police, the Red Cross, alpine rescue service and civil defence took part in the exchange of experiences and information. Partners from Rohrbach and Přední Výtoň showed emergency vehicles of single organisations, and carried out joint training of emergency actions and a competition. The aim of this activity was to improve the communication and the coordination of the single fire departments for the case of cross-border operations and catastrophes so to make them work at their best.
Crossing the borders: Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
The Euroregion Šumava – Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel

Roller-skating track in Lipno lake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant (CZ)</th>
<th>Partner (AT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Lipno nad Vltavou</td>
<td>Association SternGartl Mühlviertel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lake Lipno has a huge potential not only during summer, but even in the winter. The frozen surface offers many opportunities for ice-skating for locals and visitors, holiday ice-skaters, and even top competitors. The track was officially measured and with its 10 922 m declared as the longest ice-skating track in the world. A regular maintenance of the track was ensured.

South-Bohemia compass

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant (CZ)</th>
<th>Partner (AT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural association Metropol České Budějovice</td>
<td>OÖ Tourismus Linz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 92 exhibitors at the fair, including Bavarians and Austrians, and the number of visitors reached 3 200. The aim of the project was to show South-Bohemia as a significant touristic destination and to popularize cross-border cooperation with Upper Austria and Bavaria as well as to organise a press trip for journalists and tourism providers. Fostering a deeper cooperation of infocentres within the region and with the neighbouring region was also an objective.

Green bridges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant (AT)</th>
<th>Partner (CZ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Association Grünes Herz Europas Haslach an der Mühl</td>
<td>Association Zelené srdce Evropy České Budějovice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Czech Ministry of Environment organised a very impressive photographic exhibition about four cross-border natural parks in the country (Šumava, Krkonoše, Podyjí, České Švýcarsko). This exhibition goes through the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries (2011 in Haslach). Additionally, some excursions took place to Czech protected areas, especially to the Šumava Park.

6.4 Analysis of the cross-border cooperation programmes’ contribution

A need for cross-border cooperation and its perception is reflected in the findings, which were articulated by the representatives of the Euroregion themselves in one of the former research activities. This research focused on cooperation as such, with a particular attention dedicated to the contribution of EU programmes. These findings were put on web by the Euroregion.
What measures were taken to improve the flow of information among all participants?
The development of information technology has contributed to the improvement of information flows; many joint projects contributed to the process of information exchange in all areas, but especially in the areas of culture, education and tourism.

How significant are language barriers in joint cooperation?
There is certain complication in establishing partnerships; partners will however find a communication path after a certain time.

In which areas do you see cooperation across borders mostly meaningful?
Education, culture, tourism, infrastructure, environment, etc.

In what areas is cooperation not needed or helpful?
Cooperation is needed in all areas.

Cultural projects are over-represented in cross-border cooperation. How important is a border region to you?
Cultural projects predominate in our region; it is a certain inertia in which everyone is trying to keep pace with missing meeting activities interrupted by the Second World War and the period of totalitarianism in the Czech Republic.

Where do you get your ideas for projects in your region?
These are requirements of the individual places of the region; it has always been emerging from cross-border cooperation. In particular, they reflect the needs of individuals, entities, associations, micro-regions, and cross-border micro-regions as well.

How important do you consider the dependence of the Czech nation on cross-border cooperation?
We were certainly missing mutual understanding of culture and customs. Opening the borders meant a substantial experience for the Czech nation and cross-border cooperation has brought new knowledge on both sides.

What is your main source of information related to the opportunities and strategy of cross-border cooperation?
You can take advantage of all events, seminars. However, awareness of informal knowledge for all events in the areas of cooperation prevails.

Can you name an important selection criterion for cross-border projects that differs from the regulations of Brussels?
A number of criteria for cross-border projects are set up as complicated on the Czech side. They unnecessarily complicate conditions for applicant submission, as well as the processes of
implementation and sustainability. For example, the difference in the administration of Disposition Fund of Interreg IIA on both the Czech and Bavarian sides.

What were the problems before the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU in relation to projects that were funded from Phare CBC and INTERREG?

Pros: The preparation and documentation of the projects were simplified.

Cons: The pre-financing of the project, i.e. an implementer gets the co-financed money late, and in case of large financial volumes it could generate difficulties. It was possible to get advance payments in Phare CBC.

Can you suggest some improvements for making the process of applications through the INTERREG more effective?

Simplification of the methods of administration related to projects, documentation as well as implementation. On the Czech side, it is necessary to simplify the Disposition Fund and to actually implement the DF as one project, not as a number of part projects.

What is the benefit of cross-border cooperation for joint growth in Europe?

Coordination, share of experience, elimination of economic differences, and utilisation of potentials in particular areas.
7. Management (revenues/expenses)

The management of the Czech part of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald consists of the Chairman and two employees. The management transfers information concerning its activities through “annual reports” that are presented on the Euroregion’s website. (http://www.euregio.cz/euregio/index.php?page=31&lang=cz&sm=1). Apart from providing the obligatory information, they also publish a “Newsletter for members” (http://www.euregio.cz/euregio/index.php?page=66&lang=cz&sm=1) that informs about important events, working group meetings and calls within Disposition fund.

The financial management is an integral part of the activities of the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel. A particular report is discussed and approved by the general assembly (last meeting on 27th of May 2014 in Sušice). There were lower allowances of member municipalities than presumed due to unsettled allowances even for the decrease of inhabitants. Regional allowances reached over 0,5 million CZK (South-Bohemia region pays 330 000 CZK and Pilsen region pays 200 000 CZK). There were other revenues from Objective 3 programmes for costs related to the office. Expenses for wages and levy were lower than expected. On the other hand, the AEBR fee was higher because of the exchange rate of CZK/EUR.

The project Objective 3 “Office” included material, stationary, treat. Cycle maps and event calendars were financed from the Tourism Fund. The reserve (100 000 CZK) was used for celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald. The difference between costs and revenues is caused due to exchange rate losses between the Czech domestic currency (CZK) and Euro.

The report was approved by all 30 votes: none was against and no one abstained from voting. The actual situation in the financial management of the Czech part is demonstrated by Table 15, which makes it obvious that the budget is drafted in a balanced, respectively surplus manner. There is an almost similar share of revenues from municipalities as representatives of local level and regions as representatives of regional level. Furthermore, a fundamental position among expenses are the staff-costs – approximately 45% of all costs. The second significant amount is the outsourcing of the Regional Developmental Agency Šumava services. Other items of different character are used for office operation of the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel in Běšiny.
Table 14: Budget proposal of the Czech part of Euroregion for year 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>amount CZK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPENING SITUATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe</td>
<td>2 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank account Komerční banka</td>
<td>444 711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank account EUR DF CZ-D</td>
<td>152 980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total amount</td>
<td>599 833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>town and villages member fees for year 2014</td>
<td>510 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>associated organisation member fees for year 2014</td>
<td>15 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regional authorities member fees</td>
<td>530 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other incomes (project „Office Objective 3“)</td>
<td>700 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank interest rate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total amount</td>
<td>1 755 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wages and levy (social and health insurance)</td>
<td>800 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invoice RDA Šumava for year 2014</td>
<td>300 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travelling</td>
<td>5 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone, internet (domain)</td>
<td>25 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material, stationery</td>
<td>30 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postage</td>
<td>5 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treat</td>
<td>20 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repairing, services, others</td>
<td>20 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fees KB</td>
<td>10 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fee AEBR 2014</td>
<td>36 990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total amount</td>
<td>1 251 990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reserve, shares of projects, costs DF, 25 year after opening of borders</td>
<td>503 010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1 755 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRANT DF CZ-D</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administration of project DF CZ-D revenues</td>
<td>9 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administration of project DF CZ-D expenses</td>
<td>-9 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difference</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: internal material of the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel

The official languages of the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel are German and Czech. The (joint) working language is German, but there is a visible trend to employ staff-members with the knowledge of both languages also in Bavaria and Austria (roughly one quarter of the employees representing Austrian and Bavarian partners are Czech native speakers; this is also true for the office of the European Region Danube – Vltava).
8. SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Unique geographical position
- Well situated territory for leisure activities, with vast capacity and ability to receive groups of visitors
- Healthy mountain climate
- High potential for tourism activities
- Abundant territorial history in conjunction with tourism activities
- Valuable historic buildings
- Well preserved nature, large scale of protected areas (National parks)
- Possibilities of environmental education in context with connection of naturally valuable territory and economic activities
- Good reputation of the brand „Šumava“ or Böhmerwald
- Traditional destination for tourists from abroad (NL, D)
- Very good network of tourist paths for hiking and cycling
- Routes for modern sport activities (e.g. in-line)
- Good qualification for hippotourism
- The area is convenient even for seniors and families with children
- Development of tourism supporting employment of citizens
- Existence of quality regional information centres
- Good availability of the area
- Wood wealth, tradition of forestry
- Tradition of agriculture

Weaknesses

- Inadequately developed infrastructure for alternative forms of spending leisure time on the Czech side
- Depopulated areas with limited potential for further development
- High age index of citizens
- Poor attendance in the off-season
- Complicated links to higher level centres (regional centres), mainly on the Czech side
- Inadequate quality of access roads
- Unsatisfactory transport links to main roads of some parts of Šumava with inadequate links to Bavaria without north-south link
- Unfavourable division of foot, cycle and motor traffic in some areas
- Inconsistent and uncoordinated promotion of the region
- Lack of visitor evidence system
- Limited possibilities of tourism development in the protected areas
• inadequate quality of infrastructural services for tourists (financial services, cover of GSM service, internet etc.) in specific areas
• inadequate infrastructure of tourism services (water supplies, sewerage system)
• limits of nature protection that constrain investment activities
• lack of parking places during season
• inadequate marketing, coordination of public and private activities
• limited further development due to nature protection
• imbalanced structure and capacity of tourism spots
• excessive uniformity of restaurant offers, little selection of local specialities
• only few common cross-border projects
• insufficient utilisation of a low-season time
• aggravated quality of roads and accessibility of higher-level places
• inadequate public utilities in peripheral regions

Opportunities

• integrated trilateral presentation of the whole euroregion as a marketing product and its particular areas
• more co-ordinated use of potential cross-border complementarities
• improving cooperation of the public and private sectors in the region within and beyond national borders
• new generation of INTERREG programmes for 2014 – 2020 period (cross-border cooperation programmes)
• reduction of seasonal influence on tourism and rising number of tourists as a result of intensified cooperation
• time extension of the visitors’ stays in all three parts of the territory
• coordination of activities for tourism promotion between all three subjects creating the euroregion
• synergies obtained thanks to the cooperation with European region Danube – Vltava/Moldau
• greater cross-border cooperation in attracting foreign tourists, mainly from China and Russia
• improving the quality of roads mainly on the Czech side
• improving tourist roads and paths density, cyclo paths, hippo-roads, natural trails and their extension and connection across the borders
• creating favourable conditions for the cross-border cooperation of economic and civic society actors from all three states co-creating the cooperation territory, possible introduction of industrial zone/s of (SMEs)
Threats

- emigration of young and well educated people to the metropolitan centres (Vienna, Nuremberg, Munich, Prague)
- lack of a joint strategy
- limited possibilities to use the INTERREG programmes for trilateral projects to solve the problems which can only be solved trilaterally
- failure in exploiting EU funds effectively
- limited willingness of various levels of public administration to create functional multi-level governance mechanisms
- unemployment on the periphery of the region
- population decrease in some parts of the euroregion
- stagnation of the quality of tourism infrastructure (ratio price/quality)
- competition of regions creating the euroregion with similar or alternative possibilities for spending a leisure time
- unwillingness to find a compromise or to cooperate with other regional actors inside and outside the national contexts
- different priorities of all parts creating the euroregion
- non-co-ordination in the approaches of environmental protection
- limits of the economic activity of citizens as an obstacle for future development
- another limit for the development of tourism due to environmental protection
- unwillingness of regions to invest into the transport infrastructure and their cross-border connections
9. Future plans and cooperation aims

According to the research mentioned in Chapter 2, the perspectives of the Euroregions’ activities generally lie in serving municipalities and associations. Another significant workphase is taking part with the preparations of the programming period 2014-2020. The Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel would hitherto remain the administrator of the Disposition Fund in this period.

The development program of the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel for 2014-2020 is currently being processed. The main goals of the Euroregion in the following period include the support of cross-border cooperation and regional anchoring, mutual meetings, the removal of prejudices and learning to understand each other. The key task of the Euroregion is to initiate, realize and support border-crossing processes of regional development and activities. In the following period, the Euroregion will continue fulfilling the vision of developing a common space in terms of economy, work, culture and living standards, strengthening the competitiveness of rural areas in interregional competition as well as encouraging the overtaking of obstacles in the inhabitants’ minds through looking for solutions.

The most important tasks of the Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel Euroregion in the following period are according to the information available on their website and confirmed by the phone interviews with some stakeholders:

- border coordination, planning and developing in the political, economical and cultural fields that are of a common interest,
- representing regional interests and topics,
- focal point for border projects between Bavaria, Austria and the Czech Republic,
- initiating sustainable innovative projects in the field of regional attractiveness and competitiveness and increasing the quality of life in the region,
- supporting regional projects in planning, coordinating and realizing important border initiatives,
- counselling regarding receiving national and European grants (on the level of the EU, states, lands or regions),
- representation of the region on European level in AEBR,
- providing information to the inhabitants concerning relevant EU topics,
- active interaction in building European Region Danube-Vltava/Donau-Moldau.

Thus the Euroregion Šumava-Böhmerwald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is the central platform for cross-border cooperation and regional development in the field of cooperation of companies, transport and mobility, labour market, social matters, agriculture, ecology and environment, tourism, education, sport and culture, technology transfer as well as using energy in a European border region, the border triangle of Lower Bavaria, Pilsen/Plzeň Region, South Bohemia, and Upper Austria.
9.1 The European Region Danube/Donau-Vltava/Moldau

The cooperation on the Czech-B Bavarian-Austrian triangle has until recently been the domain of municipalities, which were supported by districts and regions, while the most active role and competences have remained within municipalities. This approach has been changed quite recently, when the regions (at NUTS 3 level) decided to engage in cooperation more actively and establish a joint body to create a cooperation area covering the territory of all seven founding regions, which are the following:

- Upper Austria;
- Lower Austria (regions of Mostviertel and Waldviertel);
- Lower Bavaria with Altötting;
- Upper Palatinate;
- Pilsen Region;
- South Bohemian Region;
- Vysočina Region;

The European Region Danube-Vltava is a trilateral union established on a political level in the form of a working community. Its founders provided the following motivation (source: [http://www.evropskyregion.cz/cs/european-region-danube-vltava-erdv.html](http://www.evropskyregion.cz/cs/european-region-danube-vltava-erdv.html)): “Since the Iron Curtain fell the border regions have become closer and work on joint projects, such as the economy, tourism, culture, social sphere and education. For participating municipalities and regions it has been beneficial to cooperate with their neighbours, even though their home is in another country. Over the years, networks transcending borders and increasing the attractiveness of the regions have been established. Many projects which have recently been jointly implemented prove there is a strong interest for cooperation with neighbouring regions. Plans and projects can be processed even more effectively and in closer concordance within the European region.”

The establishment of this region was financially supported from the OP CBC Austria-Czech Republic, which co-funded the project called Europeregion Donau-Vltava with the sum of almost € 300 000 in 2009. The main purpose of this project was to develop the strategic documents and prepare networks which would conduct the work of the establishment of the region itself. There is a major similarity between this cooperation entity and the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation TRITIA on the Czech-Polish-Slovak borders, which adapted exactly the same approach and used the finances from Objective 3 programmes to prepare their own cooperation strategies.

The founders of the European Region Danube-Vltava present it as one common region with 6 million inhabitants on an area of 60 000 km² composed from territories of 3 countries, where 2 official languages are spoken. The goal of the region is the development of cooperation for the welfare of the population, strengthening the region and its capacity to compete with other agglomerations, and to implement the European idea. According to the interviews, the region
has been constructed as a kind of counter-balance to the principal metropolitan agglomerations, presented here mainly by the cities of Vienna, Munich and Nuremberg, with the possible inclusion of Prague.

The establishment of the European Region Danube-Vltava started the operational activities of this community, which is devoted to cooperation and further development of the partner regions in the following prospective areas:

- Research and innovation;
- Cooperation of universities;
- Cooperation of enterprises and the creation of clusters;
- Qualified workforce and labour market;
- Tourism oriented towards nature, health, cities and culture;
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- Mobility, accessibility and transport.

A so-called knowledge platform has been established for each prospective area, which is represented by experts of all seven regions. Their task is to devise and plan specific measures within the European Region Danube-Vltava strategy and support projects from a professional viewpoint through their knowledge and contacts. Each European Region Danube-Vltava member entity is responsible for the functioning and work of a knowledge platform.

9.2 Goals

The partner regions want to shape the European region Danube-Vltava through their trilateral cooperation as:

- a region where people have a future,
- an attractive living and economic space between metropolitan regions/agglomerations,
- a strong partner for European politics,
- a learning and dynamic region.

All partners also want to:
- jointly develop and build the future of European Region Danube-Vltava,
- jointly preserve and strengthen intact living space, natural and cultural areas,
- develop research and educational opportunities in cooperation between universities and schools,
- create interesting jobs in cooperation between enterprises,
- support competitive enterprises in cooperation between politics and administration.
The cooperating partners plan to have the cooperation as a platform of cooperating entities and do not foresee any institutionalisation in a legal form, as for example the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation chosen by the EGTC TRITIA on the Czech-Polish-Slovak border region. This might also be caused by a strong role of Austrian partners in the cooperation entity, as Austria is one of the EU countries with the coldest attitudes towards creating EGTCs (there was only one EGTC with Austrian members, Europaregion Tirol, Südtirol und Trentino, as of the end of 2014).

9.3 Relations between the Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel and the European Region Danube - Vltava

The official rhetoric of representatives of both cooperation groupings insist mutual cooperation, which is reflected on the web presentation of both groupings. Nevertheless, the reality is somewhat more colourful: the Bavarian partner of the European Region, the Lower Bavaria Region, has already started to act as an institutional partner for both cooperation groupings and it acknowledges the added value of the engagement in both initiatives with clear complementary effects and benefits. According to its representatives, the Region plans to remain the founding member of both initiatives, nevertheless during the interviews we were under an impression that the new initiative is seen as the more strategic one. A similar approach could also be observed on the Austrian side of the Euroregion, where the potential of cross-border cooperation at regional level is also clearly seen as an asset.

The European Region Danube–Vltava received the most hesitant welcome from the Czech side of the Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel, as it was evident from phone interviews. The Czech partners of the Euroregion are mostly municipalities. Their engagement in the euroregional cooperation is motivated mostly by local impulses and cooperation at regional level seems to be too abstract and sometimes rather intangible. The role and involvement of both regions – Southern Bohemia and Pilsen Region – in the CBC is less direct. Both regions were constituted only in 2000 and they thus joined the euroregional cooperation when it was established and the cards were distributed. Therefore the initiative leading towards creating the European Region Danube–Vltava was found attractive mainly by regions on the Czech side of the euroregion.

These different approaches from Austrian, Bavarian and Czech members clearly show a different approach to multi-level governance of the territory. Multi-level governance as a system in which “supranational, national, regional and local governments are enmeshed in territorially overarching policy networks” (Hooghe, Marks 2003). We could observe that the Iron Curtain left its traces on the behaviour of CBC actors in both parts of the Euroregion (Austro-Bavarian on the one hand and Czech on the other): the preparedness to apply multi-level governance mechanisms is still significantly lower on the Czech side, where the cooperation environment is not mature enough yet.
The expected scenario of the further development of the relations between the Euroregion Šumava–Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel and the European Region Danube-Vltava is based on the qualitative aspect of the research: the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel will mainly conduct the administration of the microprojects’ schemes under three bilateral operational cross-border cooperation programmes and thus support further people-to-people projects. The Austrian and Bavarian partners of the Euroregion Šumava–Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel will also try to search for synergies between both cooperation units, whereas the Czech partners will prefer status quo.
10. The position of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel among other Czech euroregions

The position of the Czech part of the euroregion is demonstrated via chosen statistical and socioeconomic data. Out of 37 pointers featured in publications (overview, tables) by Czech Statistical Office, we have chosen 6 examples, which we supplemented with information from other sources or recalculated statistics. We have also (both visual presentation and description of the situation) used graphs and charts comparing all 13 Czech euroregions.

Table 15: Position of Šumava Euroregion among other Czech euroregions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Euroregion</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>Area (sq km)</th>
<th>Inhabitants (thsd.)</th>
<th>Population density (inh./sq km)</th>
<th>Economically active (thsd.)</th>
<th>EA/inhab. (%)</th>
<th>Unemployment rate-reachable (%)</th>
<th>Accommod. beds (thsd.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nisa-Nysa-Neisse</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2 703</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>52,6</td>
<td>8,82</td>
<td>36,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbe/Labe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1 646</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>51,9</td>
<td>13,59</td>
<td>9,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ore Mountains</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1 523</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>52,2</td>
<td>18,02</td>
<td>5,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egrensisis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2 150</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>54,1</td>
<td>10,14</td>
<td>27,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>92</td>
<td><strong>3 317</strong></td>
<td><strong>160</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>52,5</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,25</strong></td>
<td><strong>24,4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacensis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2 069</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>52,2</td>
<td>7,56</td>
<td>26,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praděd</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1 799</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>51,6</td>
<td>15,63</td>
<td>11,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silesia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1 151</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>51,1</td>
<td>11,88</td>
<td>3,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Těšín/Cieszyn Silesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>49,1</td>
<td>17,3</td>
<td>4,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beskydy Mountains</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>48,5</td>
<td>12,74</td>
<td>6,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Carpathians</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>2 640</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>51,0</td>
<td>9,12</td>
<td>16,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomoraví - Weinviertl.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1 727</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>50,7</td>
<td>10,25</td>
<td>19,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silva Nortica</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1 630</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>52,3</td>
<td>6,11</td>
<td>14,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: RiSy.cz*

*Note: maximum / minimum*

The table explicitly shows the indicators in every domain, hence the maximum and minimum numbers can be easily identified. Based on these indicators, the Euroregions can be statistically compared. The Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald is by far the largest Czech euroregion, being shared by two regions and four districts. In other domains, like the representation of districts and municipalities, the region shows average results. The highest numbers are reached by the Euroregion Pomoraví - Weinviertl (Czech Republic, Austria, and Slovakia), while the lowest/minimum indicators are reached by the Euroregion Praděd with Cieszyn Silesia (Czech
Republic, Poland). The Czech-Slovak euroregion of White Carpathians comprises the most municipalities, while the fewest municipalities can be found in the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion.

As for the population, the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel is on the penultimate (i.e. 12th) position among Czech euroregions. This low number of population coupled with a large area leads to an extraordinarily low population density. The whole region (with Bavarian and Austrian parts) is said to be one of the least densely populated areas in Central Europe. The population density is only slightly higher than 10% of the most densely populated Czech euroregion, Těšín/Cieszyn Silesia. This also influences the position in economically active population (11th position). Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel shows a relatively high economic activity (3rd position), while the lead goes to the neighbouring Egrensis Euroregion. Favourable numbers are recorded when comparing unemployment rate too. Finally the last of the indicators presented – number of beds in public accommodation places – confirms a significant position in terms of tourism (4th place, 12% of all the Czech euroregions).

Using the graphical supplementary material, the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel can be described and characterized by:

- a negative trend of natural population increase (together with all euroregions), but a positive migration rate (together with the euroregions of Neisse, Elbe/Labe, Ore Mountains, and Beskydy Mountains);
- a migration loss in towns (as well as in all euroregions), but a relatively significant migration win (cca 7 ‰ in 2001-2005, together with all the euroregions with the exception of Praděd);
- a negative rate in terms of internal migration, although less than in the remaining euroregions; on the other hand, there is a win in international migration (e.g. appr. 5 % in 2005). Migration turnover (the sum of immigrants and emigrants) reaches one of the highest numbers;
- in terms of stability, represented by the division of natives (born in the place of current residence) the Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel took the 10th position with about 45%. The most stable population can be found in the euroregions of Pomoraví - Weinviertel, White Carpathians and Silesia, but even lower stability is typical of the regions of Praděd, Ore Mountains and Egrensis;
- the Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel shows a lower education rate than the Czech Republic as a whole;
- relatively high business activity is typical (4th place among 13 euroregions);
- out of all the regions the most commuters to work in the Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel: in 2001 ca. 7% of all the commuters, which is about twice as high as in the euroregions to follow (Pomoraví - Weinviertel, Silva
Nortica, Egrensis). Germany is the country that takes the undoubtedly dominant position (80%) as the foreign country where the commuters go;

- when analyzing unemployment rate on municipal levels, there are significant differences among the euroregions (0–38%);
- the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel has the most border crossing points of all the Czech euroregions, or even supplemented with the crossing points less far away than 10 km from the border of the region (road crossings prevail);
- the most people crossed (as of 2005, when the situation was last statistically observed) the border with Germany. Between 1998 and 2005 the number fluctuated between 110 and 120 million in the sum of entries and exits, with a maximum of 122.3 million persons reached in 2005. This is only slightly less than the sum for all the remaining border crosses: with Poland there was a decrease from 78.1 to 47.3 million; with Slovakia and Austria it was largely stable between 49.2 and 46.7 resp. 40.7 and 40.1 million persons;
- the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel receives the most money in grants per capita – nearly 11 000 CZK (2003–2005 average), tax incomes can be considered average. This situation is reflected in total expenses of municipalities per capita – appr. 25 500 CZK means the second position behind the Pomoravi - Weinviertel Euroregion;
- there are the relatively most unoccupied flats in total in the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel, which is also a consequence of the recreational use of these residential units (nearly 16 resp. appr. 7% out of total numbers of flats);
- the Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel is the region where the most flats were built (between 2000-2005) – considered according to the numbers of flats finished (by co-ops and municipalities) per 1 000 inhabitants. The Euroregion Šumava - Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel is the only region where the number is higher than 20 flats per 1 000 inhabitants, while it is about 15 in most other regions, the last being Ore Mountains (appr. 5 flats).
11. Summary

The Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is an example of a cooperation entity between “old” and “new” Europe, which was created in the first half of the 1990s. The euroregion is full of imbalances: the population on the German/Bavarian and Austrian side has been stable and unchanged, whilst most of the original German speaking inhabitants were forced to leave the Czech territory in 1945. In 1945–1989 the territory was divided by the Iron Curtain; the border was a sheer physical barrier with very strict dividing functions.

The fall of the Iron Curtain brought a new geopolitical situation in Europe. Consequently, the creation of smaller cooperation entities, as it was the case also for the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel in 1994, started to be initiated along the borders.

The cooperation included two different and for a long time hermetically closed and divided worlds, which were about to start to get in more frequent contact in this asymmetric borderland after 1989. The cooperation territory is rather large (compared to other euroregions with Czech, Austrian, and Bavarian members) and the number of inhabitants and population density is very low, due to the mountainous character of the territory.

Cross-border relations strengthening the integrity of this region after the opening of borders in the beginning of the 1990s had different characters and motivations: the principal motivation of these relations was to benefit from economic imbalances of all parts of the borders. Therefore, many Czechs have been commuting on a daily basis to the neighbouring Austrian and Bavarian regions after the opening of the borders in the 1990s. Nevertheless, due to very different income levels on all sides of the borders this flow has had one direction mostly. This remained unchanged until recently. Following EU enlargement in 2004 Germany and Austria imposed limitations on the free movement of workers from the new members states, which were in force until 2011. Yet after 2011 there was no dramatic increase in the number of Czechs working in Austria and Germany. Despite several initiatives – led by the euroregion itself, but we can also mention EURES Bavaria–Czech Republic – trying to eliminate border effects, ambitions to co-ordinate complementarities of potentially joint cross-border labour market remain only in the planning phase in the strategic documents of the European Region Danube – Vltava/Moldau (Plan of Strategies and Measures for European Region). This is worth mentioning as there is in the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel – at least on its Czech side – a higher number of cross-border commuters compared to other euroregions with Czech participation. This reflects also some deeply rooted anti-Czech sentiments or stereotypes in Bavaria and Austria, but this deserves a further research.

Cooperation was driven and managed by unions of municipalities and the cooperation goals thus reflect the characteristic needs of municipalities. The Austrian and Bavarian members tend to prefer greater integration of this euroregional cooperation with the newly developed
European Region Danube–Moldau/Vltava, whereas the Czech members – at least those representing municipalities – have shown a rather hesitant approach towards this new cooperation entity, which is led and controlled by regions (NUTS 3 level). This has to be attributed to the probably lower level of institutional thickness and preparedness to apply multilevel governance mechanisms on the Czech side.

EU funds, represented here by INTERREG programmes, present the most important source to finance the cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel; accordingly it is also the most important subject of cooperation, as the Euroregion, respectively its three national secretariats, are responsible for the distribution of INTERREG smaller funds under the framework of Small Projects/Disposition Funds. This joint task requires a close cooperation and has helped to create functional cross-border networks, mainly between municipal actors. This has been reflected mainly on the Czech-Bavarian perimeter as a vast majority of all (so called big projects exceeding 30 000 Euros) projects supported from the OP Bavaria–Czech Republic in the 2007–2013 period came from the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel territory. The Austrian-Czech programme is a different story, as the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel is at the very (short) end of the entire border. Most of the projects supported from INTERREG programmes in the Euroregion address the fields of tourism and regional development (in general). These topics have absolutely predominated over other fields, such as cooperation in the softer fields helping to create some sort of joint identity, through education, culture, or sports. One of the possible interpretations is the physical mountainous character of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn–Mühlviertel; others would probably be deeper and related with the complicated history and certain antagonisms on both sides of the former Iron Curtain: but this should be the subject of another research project.

At this moment we can conclude that the basic integrated element of the Euroregion is a spatial integrity, which was artificially divided along the lines of national borders. We can divide integrating aspects into managed and unmanaged ones; unmanaged elements can further be classified as physical-geographical/natural aspects and social aspects. These natural aspects create a basic identity for the Euroregion (mountains), even though this integrity has been partially broken by different environmental initiatives. As an example we can mention different approaches towards the protection of forests. Social aspects, having their roots in the „place factor” and regional hierarchisation, strengthened this identity by creating a joint cross-border transport infrastructure. The euroregional structures have played the role of co-ordinated integrating aspects creating cross-border structures, which significantly assisted the intensification of cross-border cooperation. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to be done.
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European Region Danube – Moldau/Vltava European Region Danube – Vltava/Moldau (Plan of Strategies and Measures for European Region): www.evropskyregion.cz


Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic – www.strukturalni-fondy.cz


Regionální informační servis - RIS [www.risy.cz](http://www.risy.cz)


13. Annexes

Annex 1: Actual Czech members of the EUROREGION ŠUMAVA-BAYERISCHER WALD (as of May 2012):

Presidency:

Regional Union Šumava
- Miloš Picek, RRA Šumava, o. p. s.
- Václav Vostradovský, Kvilda
- Bc. Petr Mottl, mayor, Town Sušice

Region / District towns
- Václav Šlajs, hejtman/president, Plzeňský kraj - krajský úřad/regional authority
- Ing. Miroslav Mach, mayor, Town Domažlice
- Mgr. Rudolf Salvetr, mayor, Town Klatovy
- Ing. Martin Malý, vice mayor, Town Prachatice
- Ing. Jitka Zikmundová, MBA, vice mayor, Town Český Krumlov
- Jan Löffelmann, mayor, Town Kdyně
- Ing. Libor Picka, mayor, Town Bělá n. Radbuzou

Regions / rural areas
- Ing. František Vlček, mayor, Municipality Běšiny (předseda předsednictva)
- Jiří Jukl, mayor, Town Hartmanice
- Oldřich Petrášek, mayor, Town Netolice
- Jiří Fastner, mayor, Horní Vltavice
- Jiří Hůlka, mayor, Town Horní Planá
- Ivana Putzerová, MěÚ Kaplice
- Jiří Iral, mayor Chelčice

Procurement:
- Ing. František Vlček, mayor
- Bc. Jana Mixánová, project manager, director of the office
- Ing. Vendula Francová, asistent, tourism
Members:

District Klatovy

- Běšiny, Bezděkov, Čimice, Dešenice, Dlouhá Ves u Sušice, Hamry, Hartmanice, Hlavňovice, Horažďovice, Horská Kvilda, Hrádek u Sušice, Chudenín, Janovice nad Úhlavou, Kašperské Hory, Klatovy, Kolínec, Kovčín, Modrava, Nezdice na Šumavě, Nýrsko, Petrovice u Sušice, Prášily, Rejštejn, Srní, Strašín, Stražov, Sušice, Švihov, Týnec, Velhartice, Vrhaveč, Železná Ruda, Žihobce

District Domažlice

- Bělá nad Radbuzou, Domažlice, Horšovský Týn, Kdyně, Klenčí pod Čerchovem, Mutěnín, Poběžovice

District Prachatice


District Český Krumlov


District Strakonice

- Chelčice

Other members:

- District Chamber of Commerce Klatovy
- District Chamber of Commerce Prachatice
- National Park Šumava Administration
- Roman-Catholic parish Žihobce
Annex 2: Actual representation of Bavarian side

Presidency/Vorstand:
- Landrat Sebastian Gruber, Landkreis Freyung-Grafenau, chairman
- Landrat Franz Löfler, Landkreis Cham, vice-chairman
- Landrat Franz Meyer, Landkreis Passau, vice-chairman

Main committee/Hauptausschuss:
- Landrat Sebastian Gruber, Landkreis Freyung-Grafenau, chairman
- Landrat Franz Löfler, Landkreis Cham, vice-chairman
- Landrat Franz Meyer, Landkreis Passau, vice-chairman
- Landrat Michael Adam, Landkreis Regen
- Landrat Christian Bernreiter, Landkreis Deggendorf
- Landrat Michael Fahmüller, Landkreis Rottal-Inn
- Landrat Josef Laumer, Landkreis Straubing - Bogen

Mayors:
- Oberbürgermeister Dr. Christian Moser, Stadt Deggendorf
- Oberbürgermeister Jürgen Dupper, Stadt Passau
- Oberbürgermeister Markus Pannermayr, Stadt Straubing
- Bürgermeister Franz Krah, Stadt Pocking
- Bürgermeister Josef Lamperstorfer, Markt Wegscheid
- Bürgermeister Elmar Buchbauer, Gemeinde Julbach
- Bürgermeister Ludwig Reger, Stadt Rötzt
- Bürgermeister Eduard Schmid, Gemeinde Hohenau
- Bürgermeister Erich Schmid, Stadt Plattling
- Bürgermeister Hermann Brandl, Gemeinde Arnbruck

Other members:
- Franz Schedlbauer, Stadt Bogen
- Walter Keibart, Hauptgeschäftsführer der IHK Passau
- Richard Brunner, Geschäftsführer der IHK Regensburg, Geschäftsstelle Cham
- Dr. Stefan Rammer, Drei-Länder-Gesellschaft
- Klaus Storm, ARGE Mittleres Labertal
- Altlandrat Ludwig Lankl
- Altlandrat Alfred Reisinger
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
The Euroregion Šumava – Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel

- Altlandrat Alfons Urban
- Altlandrat Ingo Weiß
- Landrat a.D. Theo Zellner, Präsident Bayerisches Rotes Kreuz

Secretariat / Das Team der EUREGIO-Geschäftsstelle in Freyung

- Kaspar Sammer, Geschäftsführer/director
- Dana Biskup, Bav-AU, FMP / cooperation CZ
- Ulrike Jarosch, finances, Disposition fund (DF) Bav-CZ
- Johanna Kern, FMP Bav-AU, DF Bav-CZ, administrative
- Lucie Dreher, Objective 3 project management of EUREGIO-Gastenschuljahr
- Vendula Maihorn, information office EUROPE DIRECT
- Sabine Mayer, accounting
- Barbara Daferner, regional contact of Europaregion Donau-Moldau (European Region Danube-Moldau)
- Kathrin Altmann, project manager Wissensplattform Hochschulkoperationen der Europaregion Donau-Moldau (Scientific Platform of European Region Danube-Moldau)
- Kathrin Braumandl, FMP Bav-AT

Member municipalities:

Landkreis Cham


Landkreis Deggendorf

- Außernzell, Bernried, Deggendorf, Grafling, Grattersdorf, Hunding, Künzing, Lalling, Metten, Moos, Niederalteich, Osterhofen, Plattling, Winzer.

Landkreis Freyung-Grafenau


Landkreis Passau

- Aidenbach, Aldersbach, Bad Füssing, Breitenberg, Eging a.See, Fürstenstein, Fürstenzell, Haarbach, Hauzenberg, Kirchham, Kößlarn, Malching, Neuburg a.Inn, Neuhaus a.Inn,
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region  
The Euroregion Šumava – Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn – Mühlviertel

Neukirchen vorm Wald, Pocking, Rotthalmünster, Ruderting, Ruhstorf a.d.Rott, Sonnen, Thyrnau, Tiefenbach (Pa), Tittling, Untergriesbach, Vilshofen, Wegscheid.

Landkreis Regen

Landkreis Rottal-Inn
- Arnstorf, Bad Birnbach, Bayerbach, Eggenfelden, Eggglham, Ering, Johanniskirchen, Julbach, Mitterskirchen, Pfarrkirchen, Roßbach, Stubenberg.

Kreisfreie Stadt Passau

Kreisfreie Stadt Straubing

Landkreis Straubing-Bogen
- Bogen, Geiselhöring.

Next members – organisations / EUREGIO-Mitglieder:

- Adalbert Stifter Verein e.V.
- ArGe Naherholung Mittleres Labertal
- ARGE Unterer Bayerischer Wald
- Bild-Werk Frauenau
- BLSV-Kreis Cham
- Bolta Industrie- und Bauprofile GmbH
- DJH Landesverband Bayern e.V.
- Drei-Länder-Gesellschaft e.V.
- DTSG Bayern e.V.
- Bayernwerk AG
- Europa-Union Niederbayern (EU Dolní Bavorsko)
- Förderverein Ilztalbahn e.V.
- Förderverein KulturLandschaftsMuseum Grenzerfahrung e.V.
- Glaube und Heimat e.V.
- Historischer Verein 'In der Freyung e. V.
- IHK Passau
- IHK Regensburg Jugendbildungsstätte Waldmünchen
- Katholische Erwachsenenbildung Freyung e.V.
- Katholische Erwachsenenbildung Regen e.V.
- Katholische Landvolkshochschule St. Gunther
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- kifas GmbH
- Kultur- und Passionsspielverein Perlesreut e.V.
- Museum Moderner Kunst – Wörlen GmbH
- Ost-West-Wirtschaftsclub
- Sparkassenverband Bayern
- Tourismusverband Ostbayern
- VHS Cham
- VHS Regen
- Zweckverband Müllverwertung Schwandorf
Annex 3: Actual Representation of Austria

Procurement:

- LAbg. KommR Gabriele Lackner-Strauss, co-ordinator (Obfrau)
  Team Regionalmanagement OÖ – Geschäftsstelle Mühlviertel
- Wilhelm Patri, MAS, jco-ordinator (Geschäftsstellenleiter), regional manager for economics
- MMag. Martin Luger, MA BEd, regional manager for border area development
- MMag. Maria Hochholzer, Mar, regional manager for sustainability and environment
- Josef Fürnhammer, regional manager districts Freistadt a Perg
  DI Heide Spiesmeyer, FMP AU-Bav, AU-CZ
- Elisabeth Steinmetz,
- Helene Winkler, secretary
  Regina Grünberger, assistant

Presidency:

- Obfrau LAbg. KommR Gabriele Lackner-Strauss
- Christian Reisinger, Obfrau-Stellvertreter/

Municipalities:

- LAbg. Vzbgm. Georg Ecker, Obfrau-Stellvertreter
- Bgm./mayor Erich Punz, Obfrau-Stellvertreter/
- Bgm./mayor Johann Buchberger, member (Konferenz Perg)
- Andreas Eckerstorfer, member
- Bgm./mayor Mag. Andreas Fazeni, member (Konferenz Urfahr/Umg.)
- BH HR Dr. Paul Gruber, member (BH Urfahr/Umg.)
- NR Bgm./mayor Marianne Gusenbauer, member
- Mag. Johannes Gahleitner, member (BBK OÖ)

Other members:

- Werner Pürmayer, member (Tourism)
- Bundesrat/spolkový radní Mag. Michael Hammer, member Bgm./mayor Johannes Hinterreither-Kern, member (Konferenz Freistadt)
- BH HR Mag. Alois Hochedlinger, member (BH Freistadt)
- Bgm./mayor Wilfried Kellermann, member (Konferenz Rohrbach)
- BH Ing. Mag. Werner Kreisl, member (BH Perg)
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- Mag. Robert Leitner MBA, member (WK OÖ)
- BH HR Dr. Wilbirg Mitterlehner, member (BH Rohrbach)
- LAbg. Alexander Nerat, member
- Bgm./mayor Dominik Reisinger, member
- Klaus Riegler, member (AK OÖ)
- LAbg Ulrike Schwarz, member

Members:

District Freistadt

District Perg

District Rohrbach

District Urfahr/Umgebung
- Alberndorf, Bad Leonfelden, Eidenberg, Goldwörth, Gramastetten, Haibach i.M., Herzogsdorf, Lichtenberg, Oberneukirchen, Ottenschlag, Ottensheim, Puchenau, Reichenaun, Reichenthal, St. Gotthard, Schenkenfelden, Sonnberg, Vorderweißenbach, Walding, Zwettl an der Rodl
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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

Written by
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Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
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1. Introduction

This case study is dealing with the cross-border cooperation between the towns of Subotica from Serbia and Osijek from Croatia (shown on figure 1), illustrating a good example of institutionalised cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border. Such forms of collaboration intensify cross-border relations, a kind of local identity can be dedicated to their area; moreover, the participants succeed in exploiting development funds, and their objectives contribute to socio-economic development of the affected region.

![Figure 1: Geographic position of the twin towns Osijek and Subotica in their macro regional environment](maps.google.com)

The study tries to reveal the extent of relations between these two towns after the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1992, with respect to the similar ethnic structure in Subotica and Osijek. It also examines the potentials for developing cross-border relations, as well as the effects of Croatia’s EU accession of 2013 on promoting and substantial improvement of the relations between these two towns.
Concerning the question of cross-border cooperation between Subotica and Osijek, the explanation should be based on their geopolitical position, similarities in their history, ethnic diversity of their inhabitants – namely the presence of Croatian, Serbian and Hungarian population – and their common cultural needs, as well as on their potentials for economic development.

Relation between these two towns is based on historic facts, since both of them became border towns during the 20th century, after decades of being in the inland of the same country, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On the other hand, there are similarities in their economic structure, and an intensifying regional and cultural cooperation between them.

The first substantial change happened after the World War I and with the Treaty of Trianon, which divided the Austro-Hungarian Empire into several smaller nation-states driven by the idea of national self-determination. Hence, Subotica (Szabadka) and Osijek (Eszék) found themselves in a new state frame, specifically, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later called as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. As a result, the Hungarian population became a minority group in the new country.

After dissolution of the second Yugoslavia in 1992, Osijek remained on the eastern periphery of Croatia. The town, lying along the Drava and the Danube, is the most eastern gate of Croatia towards the Carpathian Basin. Due to the changes of the region’s geopolitical orientation, it became a peripheral area with increasing backwardness (producing 5.4% of the GDP of Croatia in 2010) compared both to the capital Zagreb and the seaside-towns with attractive tourism magnetism (Faragó – Rácz 2010). Despite their peripheral position at country level, Osijek, together with Vukovar, can make new cross-border connections with Sombor, Subotica and Novi Sad from Serbia and Pécs from Hungary.

Table 1: Number and proportion of nationalities in the population of Subotica and Osijek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Subotica</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>141,554</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarians</td>
<td>50,469</td>
<td>35.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>38,254</td>
<td>27.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croats</td>
<td>14,151</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunjevci</td>
<td>13,553</td>
<td>9.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavs</td>
<td>3,202</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diversity of cultural relations between the minority-majority groups of the towns is an important and appreciable feature of cooperation between Subotica and Osijek. It is evident that while certain nationalities form the majority on one side of the border, they are a minority group on the other side, and vice versa. So according to the last census from 2011, the ethnic structure of the population in Subotica and Osijek was quite similar in many respects (see Table 1). While in Subotica, the majority is formed by national minorities (the proportion of Hungarians, Croats and Bunjevci is more than 55%, while the share of Serbs is only 27%), in Osijek only every tenth inhabitant is not Croat (the total proportion of Serbs, Hungarians, Albanians and Germans is around 8%).

Both Subotica and Osijek are centres of sub-regional areas. Osijek connects eastern Croatia with Zagreb and Western Europe through the motorway and its international airport. On the other hand, Subotica lies along the Budapest–Belgrade motorway (the Pan-European Corridor X).

It is important to underline that these two towns have achieved considerable results in exploiting EU funds. Firstly within the framework of Hungary–Croatia and Hungary–Serbia INTERREG and IPA CBC programmes, but lately also in joint application to calls for proposals of the Croatia–Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation programme. Namely, Osijek-Baranja County has realised the highest number of IPA CBC projects (75) within the whole of Croatia (Sumpor et al. 2013). On the other hand, the City of Subotica has implemented several projects within Hungary–Serbia INTERREG IIIA-CARDS and IPA CBC programmes.

In this case study we give a short presentation of the development of relations between Subotica and Osijek. It is followed by the description of the border section between Serbia and Croatia, as well as of the analysed twin towns. After that we present the functioning of their cooperation, and illustrate it with a list of projects and activities realised by actors from these towns or their local municipalities. The SWOT analysis of the cross-border cooperation of Subotica and Osijek precedes the description of the future potentials of their relations. Finally, we summarise the findings of this case study. In the annex there are shown two documents, the charters of cooperation between Subotica and Osijek, as proof of its institutionalisation.

To achieve the necessary information for analysing the cross-border cooperation of Subotica and Osijek, we conducted interviews with the representatives of these two municipalities. In case of Subotica, the respondents were Mr László Horváth, the Head of the Protocol Office of the Mayor, and Erika Kudlik, the Head of the Office for Local Economic Development, as well as Siniša Babičković, the town councillor for international relations and regional cooperation. From the Croatian side we contacted Romana Radić, the Head of the Sub Department of International Cooperation along the Department of Economic and European Affairs in Osijek. Moreover, we examined the published documents about international and cross-border cooperation projects of the institutions and the involved municipalities of Subotica and Osijek. Finally, beside statistical data, we also used the strategic documents of the towns.
2. The development of the cross-border cooperation

Subotica and Osijek were cities in the same country until the wars in the ‘90s. During this period there was no actual need for establishing special partnership between the towns because they were parts of the same internal state frame. However, disintegration of the former Yugoslavia meant a huge change for the region and several cities suddenly found themselves within new spatial space. Croatian people living in Vojvodina lost their direct contacts with their motherland. Nevertheless, the biggest “weight” was caused by the bloody Yugoslavian war and by the tragic events following it, subsequently, contacts and relations have become even harder with the newly established independent Croatian state.

Breakup of Yugoslavia resulted in several new state structures, however, the ethnic structure of the Yugoslavian territory was not homogenous, hence several ethnic minorities found themselves living in other states. The most significant population of Croatian and Bunjevac ethnic minorities lives in and around Subotica, consequently, it is obvious that Osijek, as the nearest bigger town in Croatia, presents a natural “umbilical cord” with their motherland. The Croatian minority has always played an important role in the local municipality of Subotica. In the time of the former Yugoslavia, they took part in leading the town, while from the country’s disintegration to the beginning of the 2000s, they led the municipality of Subotica together with the Hungarian national parties of that time.

Therefore the cooperation between Subotica and Osijek is the direct result of the efforts of the Croatian minority to make contacts with their homeland. Right after the war, some officials of the self-government bodies established individual contacts with Osijek. Subsequently, these initiatives were necessarily and naturally followed by institutionalised contacts between the municipalities.

During the nineties, there had been several reciprocal visits of the representatives from Subotica and Osijek; however, these events still cannot be treated as legal form of cooperation. The first institutionalised cooperation happened in 2004, when the Mayors of Subotica and Osijek signed the charter of good-neighbourly relations. In this document, the parties declare that they are ready to “cooperate in the fields of society, culture, education, science, sports and economy”, what is more, this cooperation involves an institutional framework too. The parties pay special attention to the “questions of human rights and civil liberty, the development of self-governments, environmental protection, youth and regional development”. All these cooperation activities should be performed in accordance with the European values.¹

¹ The document can be found in the annex.
The memorandum from 2004 was replaced by the charter of friendly relations and cooperation in 2010, which was signed by the Mayors Saša Vučinić from Subotica and Krešimir Bubalo from Osijek. Practically it means a town twinning (see the Annex). The content of this document remains the same in comparison with the document from 2004, nevertheless, it places the cooperation to a higher level. The charter on town twinning deals with the following areas:

- cooperation between self-governments,
- economic cooperation,
- educational cooperation,
- cultural cooperation,
- cooperation in the field of social affairs,
- civilian cooperation.

\[2\] The document can be found in the annex.
3. Description of the study area

This chapter offers a description of geographic, economic and societal features of the studied region.

Figure 2 presents the shortest road connection between Osijek and Subotica, which involves the border-crossing through the Danube in Bezdan. Its length is 121 km and the journey takes about two hours by car. There are only four bus lines between these towns, and that journey takes six hours on average.

![Figure 2: Road connection between the twin towns Osijek and Subotica](source: maps.google.com)

These two towns were also connected with a railway line, which crosses the border and the Danube in Bogojevo. However, currently there are no passenger trains on this relation.
3.1 The Serbian–Croatian border

The border between Croatia and Serbia\(^3\) is 239 km long and runs south from the junction with Croatia, Hungary and Serbia to the junction with the Bosnian border. The central stretch along the Danube is the oldest border section between Serbia and Croatia, established in the Karlowitz Treaty between the Austrian and the Ottoman Empires in 1699, while the northern stretch was set in 1954 as the border between the Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Serbia. The Baranja region on the right riverbank of the Danube was assigned to Croatia. Other deviations from the river course are based on ancient municipal rights.

The border dividing Croatia and Serbia became international since the recognition of Croatia in 1992. Osječko-Baranjska and Vukovarsko-Srijemska counties constitute the administrative units of the border area on the Croatian side. On the Serbian side there are the three districts of the autonomous and multi-ethnic province of Vojvodina: West Bačka, South Bačka and Srem.

The E-70 road represents the most important infrastructure axis, which connects Serbia and Croatia. It is a motorway that is utilised daily by thousands of people who cross the border between Serbia and Croatia for business, leisure and family reasons, often travelling further east or west. The E-70 motorway is part of the backbone of transport Corridor X, linking Croatia and Serbia to the European Union as part of a longer connection that goes from Slovenia in the north to Greece in the far south.

3.2 Osijek from Croatia

Osijek is a town in eastern Croatia. It is located on the right bank of the Drava River, 25 kilometres from its confluence with the Danube and 30 kilometres from the borders between Serbia–Croatia and Hungary–Croatia. The elevation of the city is 94 metres. Osijek is the seat of Osijek-Baranja County. It is the industrial, administrative, judicial and cultural centre of Eastern Slavonia and the fourth largest town in Croatia.

Osijek is the most eastern point of the Split–Rijeka–Zagreb–Osijek axis that connects the regional centres in Croatia (Reményi, 2000). Though its position within Croatia is quite peripheral, Osijek is near the vicinities of the Serbian towns Sombor and Subotica in the east, and the Hungarian Pécs in the north.

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Figure 3: Osijek from aerial perspective
Source: http://www.osijek.hr/en/content/view/full/3371

In the 1st century BC when Romans had occupied the whole territory of Pannonia, they established the settlement of Mursa on the marshland right to the Drava River and built a bridge over the river. Due to its excellent geographic location and flourishing trade with its neighbourhood, the number of inhabitants had increased gradually, turning Mursa into the largest settlement in Southern Pannonia. The stone bridge and the road enabled good communication with the town of Aquincum, thus in 124 Roman Emperor Hadrian declared the old settlement of Mursa to a town with full power called Colonia Aelia Mursa. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the territory was conquered by the Huns who destroyed it.

In the 7th century, not far from the ruins of Mursa, some Slavic settlers established a village called Osijek. This crossing on the Drava River was first mentioned in historical documents in 1196, when King Emeric (1196–1204) confirmed the right of the Cistercian abbey Cikador to levy duties of customs and trade, as well as the ferry fare across the river. It proves that the town had already been an important trading spot in the 12th century, on the route of the old Roman Road, which connected the south-east of Europe with the Pannonian Plain.

Before the Battle of Mohács, Osijek became an important strategic point of the Ottoman conquerors, who rebuilt it in Ottoman oriental style. The Turks constructed a famous eight-kilometre-long wooden bridge of boats on the Drava in 1566, which was considered to be one of the wonders of the world of that time. This bridge gave key position to Osijek along the road from Istanbul to Buda. Osijek was liberated from the Ottomans in 1687, when the Habsburg Empire occupied the city and the Austrian authorities built a new fortress between 1712 and 1715.

A new development wave began in 1745 when Osijek became the seat of Virovitica County. Its favourable location and economic development led to population growth. The Habsburg Empire also facilitated the migration and settlement of German immigrants into the town and region. In 1792, some German settlers came here from Banat and Bačka, establishing the newer part of the town. During the 18th and the 19th centuries more and more immigrants arrived to Osijek from Styria, Carniola, Bavaria, Moravia and Italy, turning it into a multiethnic city. Osijek
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was granted the title of Free Royal Town in 1809, thus it became the largest city of Croatia in the first half of the 19th century.

Figure 4: The coat of arms of Osijek

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, Osijek became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, after 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During World War II Osijek entered the Independent State of Croatia, while after that and until its disintegration, the town was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In 1958, Osijek became connected with Zagreb and Belgrade by constructing a modern paved road. The new Drava bridge was built in 1962. Today Osijek is situated near the European corridor X and along the corridor V/c (Budapest–Pécs–Osijek–Ploče), thus it has direct motorway connection with Zagreb and Southeast Europe. However, this whole corridor is not as attractive as its section from Osijek to the Belgrade–Zagreb motorway, since its southern part through Bosnia and Herzegovina is poorly developed.

The airport in Osijek makes the city an integrative part of the Central-Eastern European and the Western Balkan airway system, and even the Serbian districts of West and South Bačka belong to its catchment area.

There is a quite traditional economic structure in Osijek, primarily oriented to its local area. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2011, GDP per capita amounted to 8,271 Euros in Osijek-Baranja County and 10,325 Euros in Croatia. In 2014, the number of employees in the town of Osijek was about 46 thousand people, while the number of unemployed was more than 9,000.

In 2007, the town of Osijek, together with Osijek-Baranja County and through the Regional Development Agency of Slavonia and Baranja Ltd., opened the representation of Slavonia and Baranja in Brussels, which represents their interests in front of all the institutions in Brussels. Osijek has 11 twin towns, with which it has signed charters of friendship and cooperation or charters of good neighbourly relations. These cities are: Pécs from Hungary (since 1973), Pforzheim from Germany (since 1994), Maribor from Slovenia (since 1995), Tuzla from Bosnia
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and Herzegovina and Ploiesti from Romania (both since 1996), Lausanne from Switzerland and
Nitra from Slovakia (both since 1997), Budapest XIII District from Hungary (since 2001), Prizren
from Kosovo and Subotica from Serbia (both since 2010), and finally Vicenza from Italy (since
2014).

3.3 Subotica from Serbia

Subotica is the economic, cultural and educational centre of North Bačka district located in the
Pannonian Basin about 10 kilometres from the border with Hungary. It is the second largest city
in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and the fifth largest one in Serbia. According to its
spatial plan, Subotica is a regional-industrial centre with moderately complex industrial
technology. Subotica is located in the vicinity of Lake Palić, which presents a potential for
tourism development (spa, ecological, hunting and rural tourism) together with the utilisation
of the cultural heritage (protected urban spatial-cultural-historical sites with cultural
monuments) of Subotica.

The most important development factor of Subotica is its geographic location, which is
determined by the closeness of the EU member Hungary, the significance of the north-south
transport corridor X/b and the railway line between Budapest and Belgrade that will be
modernised soon.

![Subotica from aerial perspective](http://www.park-palic.rs)

*Figure 5: Subotica from aerial perspective*

According to archaeological finds, the territory of Subotica had been inhabited even in the
Prehistoric Period. Between the 1\textsuperscript{st} and the 4\textsuperscript{th} century, the area was controlled by the
Sarmatian Iazyges, who were occasionally allies and occasionally enemies of the Roman Empire. Since the Middle Ages, the region had been ruled by various other people and states, including Huns, Gepids, Avars, Slavs and Bulgarians.

The settlement was probably established in the 13th century, but the first historical document about a village called Zobotka originates from 1391. According to a document from 1429, Subotica was a free royal place at that time. Ten years later it was mentioned as an oppidum, i.e. market-town. The town went under Ottoman rule in 1543, which lasted until 1686. That year both Szeged and Subotica were liberated, so the inhabitants that were withdrawn in the surroundings, returned to these towns gradually. At that time, some Slavic settlers arrived as well. The Habsburg Monarchy sent Southern Slavic immigrants to this area, while some other settlers arrived from Serbia.

In 1779, Empress Maria Theresa of Austria proclaimed the settlement a Free Royal Town. At that time the inhabitants renamed Subotica as Maria-Theresiopolis. This act served as the basis for intensified economic and special development in the town, attracting many people from all over the Habsburg Monarchy, which led to a considerable demographic change with an increasing number of Hungarians and Jews settling in Subotica.

After the establishment of the Dual-Monarchy in 1867, there followed the so called golden age of Subotica. The railway reached the town in 1869, connecting it to Sombor, Osijek, Novi Sad, Zemun and Titel, but also to Szeged and Budapest. In 1896 an electrical power plant was built, further enhancing the development of the city and the whole region.

Subotica was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the end of World War I, after which it became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The economical and political circumstances had changed to that extent that the new border-town could never experience its former dynamic prosperity again, which was typical to Subotica on the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It was an important industrial centre at that time, being the most populous city in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes right after its establishment. However, Subotica had gradually lost its leading position, mostly due to its peripheral location in the new country.
During World War II, Subotica was reannexed to Hungary from 1941 to 1944. After the war, it belonged to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, then to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1992, Serbia and Montenegro from 2003, and finally it has been in the independent Republic of Serbia since 2006.

Subotica has already signed six charters with partner cities, which relations are normally called town-twinning. The twin towns of Subotica are the following: Szeged from Hungary (since 1966), Oderhelen from Romania (since 1994), Dunajská Streda from the Republic of Slovakia and Olomouc from the Czech Republic (both since 1996), and finally Érd from Hungary and Osijek from Croatia (both since 2010).
4. Operation of the cross-border cooperation

In this case study we present the cooperation of two twin towns; however, there is no room to talk about any kind of special institution or organisation behind this relation. The participating towns and their self-governments are the ones who implement all the activities of cooperation. In this chapter we give a description of the forms of cooperation, which are performed mostly through certain institutions.

Cooperation between self-governments

The cooperation of the municipalities of Subotica and Osijek is coordinated by the Charters that we presented in chapter 2. However, these documents are of protocol character, they are not obligatory for the partners, but rather provide a framework for their cooperation.

The delegations of the twin towns of Subotica and Osijek participate at all important celebrations of their partners and give honour with their presence. These meetings are often linked with negotiations beside their pure protocol character.

There is a regular contact between the municipality administrations, when the representatives of certain departments exchange their experience, consult with each other. The main objective of such meeting is to take over the good practices of the Croatian partner, which is an EU Member State; therefore Osijek can help Subotica and its administration in practical questions in terms of the EU accession.

The administrative system of Croatia and Serbia is quite similar, primarily due to their common roots, thus the experience from Croatia is especially valuable for the Serbian partner on its European path.

Among the future plans there is an initiative to organise a joint meeting of the General Assemblies of Subotica and Osijek, which could be the place for discussing further potentials in their cooperation.

Economic cooperation

The economic cooperation between Osijek and Subotica is determined by similar character and structure of their economic structure. The industry has suffered great losses in both towns due to transition and political transformation, thus solution to economic hardness also require similar activities both in Osijek and Subotica.

An important manifestation of their economic cooperation is their mutual appearance at business fairs in Subotica and Osijek, but also in joint participation at other fairs with a common
stand of the two cities and their business units. These activities are appreciated by economic operators and the inhabitants of the towns.

During the past decade, important cooperation was established between the following actors and business institutions:

1. Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Regionalna privredna komora) from Subotica and Croatian Chamber of Economy – Osijek County Chamber (Hrvatska Gospodarska Komora – Županijska komora Osijek) from Osijek
2. Business Incubator Subotica (BIS) and Poduzetnički inkubator BIOS from Osijek

The tourist organisations of the two towns coordinate their appearance at tourist fairs, thus the cooperation is also present in this field.

The municipal offices for local economic development have jointly developed several project proposals and applied for funds in cross-border cooperation programmes. The results of these activities are listed separately, in chapter 5.

**Educational cooperation**

The secondary school of economics Bosa Miličević from Subotica maintains good cooperation with two schools from Osijek, namely Ekonomski i upravnički inštitut and Ugostiteljska i turistička škola. Within this cooperation, they have already cooperated on student exchanges, excursions and competitions, but there were also examples of joint project development and implementation. Moreover, there is an institution in Subotica called Open University, which has also had cooperation with the similar institution from Osijek, embodied in the implementation of joint projects.

**Cultural cooperation:**

Culture is the most lively area of cooperation between the twin towns of Osijek and Subotica. Most of the cultural institutions from Subotica have some contacts with similar organisations from Osijek. The basis of this cooperation is the need of the Croatian minority to have contacts with their motherland, but there are some examples of cooperation between Hungarian minorities from Subotica and Osijek as well. Thus the smaller Hungarian community from Osijek may utilise these relations in making contacts with cultural institutions in Hungary.

There is a significant collaboration between the Serbian Popular Theatre (Narodno pozorište – Narodno kazalište – Népszínház) from Subotica, which also employs several Croatian actors, and the Croatian National Theatre (Hrvatsko narodno kazalište) from Osijek. They participate in the exchange of performances, make joint productions and often invite guest artists (actors,
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

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directors, costume and stage designers). Subsequently, two productions are usually performed in the partner theatre every year.

Another example of cultural cross-border cooperation is between the children’s theatres of Subotica (Dečije pozorište – Gyermekszínház) and Osijek (Dječje kazalište Branka Mihaljevića), as their cross-border interaction involves guest performances every year.

The Municipal Museum of Subotica (Gradski muzej Subotica – Szabadkai Városi Múzeum) has had contacts with Muzej Slavonije from Osijek for 15 years. This relation dates back to the former Yugoslavia, as part of a trilateral cooperation with Tuzla as the third partner. This collaboration has already resulted in several jointly organised and prepared exhibitions and there have been some guest exhibitions as well. Since the Municipal Museum of Subotica has considerable cooperation with similar institutions from Hungary, they often involve further partners in their joint projects. In 2012, two museums made a written confirmation of their cooperation, thus establishing a legal framework, hence the cooperation is no longer on ad hoc basis.

Moreover, there is a cooperation between the Municipal Library (Gradska biblioteka – Gradska knjižnica – Városi Könyvtár) from Subotica with its partner institution from Osijek (Gradska i sveučilišna knjižnica). Another interaction is between the historic archives from Subotica (Istorijski arhiv – Povjesni arhiv – Szabadkai Történelmi Levéltár) and Osijek (Državni arhiv), as well as among the art galleries like Galerija dr Vinko Perčić in Subotica.

Cooperation in the field of social affairs

The Gerontology Centre (Gerontološki centar) from Subotica has established good cooperation with the Retirement Home (Dom umirovljenika) from Osijek, which resulted in the implementation of a joint project financed by the European Union.

Civilian cooperation

This form of cooperation is also performed between actors from the towns of Subotica and Osijek. Their interaction represents a collaboration between Local Democracy Agencies within the frames of ALDA – Association of Local Democracy Agencies organisation, but it also involves several bilateral projects that were funded by the EU.

The entire cooperation between Subotica and Osijek is based on the individual needs of the Croatian minority living in Subotica. Thus the prime movers of all forms of cooperation have always been those officials and representative in the municipality of Subotica who belong to this national group. However, there is no special institution that is in charge of managing cross-
border cooperation between Subotica and Osijek, therefore there are no separate working organs, which would administer and oversee the cross-border interaction. The actual contacts and interactions are driven by individual personal contacts, hence they are generated by the leaders, colleagues and officials of certain institutions and organisations that want to cooperate with their partners from the other town.

The partner towns are not even planning to raise their cooperation to a higher level, since the adequate regulations are still missing from Serbian side. Namely, Serbia has not passed a law on joining EGTC, which could allow for state and local organs from Serbia to join any European territorial cooperation. As soon as this question would be involved in the Serbian legislative, which is also a prerequisite for Serbia’s EU accession, there would be numerous new potentials for collaboration between Subotica and Osijek. From this perspective, the current, rather loose level of cooperation between the twin towns would provide an excellent basis for their future joint activities.
5. Joint activities of the twin towns

Subotica and Osijek have already had numerous joint project proposals, mostly as applications for grants from the European Union, but some other supporters as well. The partners have allocated funds also from the CARDS Programme, the neighbourhood programmes and the Europe for Citizens programme. Other, non-EU resources, like the Freedom House have also financed the interaction.

The territory of both towns belongs to the eligible area of the Croatia–Serbia Cross-border Cooperation Programme. Although Subotica does not have explicit border contact with Croatia, but it can participate within cross-border cooperation. Subsequently, these two towns, their local governments, their institutions and/or organisations have jointly applied for several funds. Beside cross-border cooperation projects, the cities have also applied for direct funds from Brussels together with other partners, e.g. the BETonEU project, which has been financed from the Europe for Citizens programme.

The following pages offer a brief description of joint projects, their development and implementation between Subotica and Osijek.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Regional partnerships for intercultural exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total value of the project:</td>
<td>285,510 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of the donation:</td>
<td>228,260 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme:</td>
<td>CARDS – EU, DG Enlargement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym:</td>
<td>CARDS 2009/201-720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period for the realization:</td>
<td>11/05/2009 – 11/05/2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Partners: | ALDA  
LDA Subotica  
LDA Mostar  
LDA Osijek  
Lighthouse Wolverhampton |
| Description: | The overall objectives of the programme were to ensure wide participation of public and private members of civil society, to strengthen civil society organisations, i.e. to support civil society dialogue in the Western Balkans and enable civil society organisations to fulfil their role through joint actions: contributing to a consolidated democracy in the region, participating in the decision making process, encouraging effective intercultural exchanges and ensuring the protection of rights of persons belonging to a minority in the Western Balkans countries. |
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Regional economic development without borders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme:</strong></td>
<td>Croatia–Serbia CBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong></td>
<td>Applied twice but it was not supported.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Partners:** | Town of Subotica  
Osijek Fair  
NGO Open Perspective  
Town of Osijek  
Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Subotica |
| **Description:** | The basic idea of the project is fully consistent with the overall objectives of the IPA program: providing opportunity for a larger and more substantial occurrence in order to encourage cross-border cooperation, to enhance sustainable regional economy and to improve good neighbourly relations. Secondly, the project plans capacity building of local, regional and national institutions in order to develop an administrative/institutional structure which is able to implement EU programmes and EU structural funds. To achieve both objectives, local and regional partnerships are necessary. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Towards communities that recycle in the Osijek-Baranja County and North Bačka District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme:</strong></td>
<td>Croatia–Serbia CBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website:</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.otpad.eu/">http://www.otpad.eu/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Partners:** | Zeleina Akcija, Zagreb  
Association Centre for Ecology and Sustainable Development (CEKOR), Subotica  
Zeleni Osijek, Osijek |
| **Description:** | The planned activities are summarized as the following items: Development and implementation of a system for waste management in both municipalities (Osijek and Subotica). Installation of community recycling boxes, where they will perform selection of waste. Applicants will design and develop five recycling boxes that will serve for five buildings with 30 apartments 2-day international conference about promotion of best practices, with speakers from the EU 2-day workshops (one in each municipality) about the plans for waste management, available funds, legislation, stakeholders meetings with local governments, public enterprises and representatives of the business sector who are engaged in processing, storage and recycling of waste Training of “recycling officers” who will be in daily contact with the users of the recycling boxes analysis of the current waste management system in two municipalities promotional campaigns, educational materials |
### CB NET project – Innovative cross-border network of SMEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>CB NET project – Innovative cross-border network of SMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme:</td>
<td>Croatia–Serbia CBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cbnet-shop.com/">http://www.cbnet-shop.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners:</td>
<td>Open University Subotica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poduzetnički inkubator BIOS Osijek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Town of Subotica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Town of Osijek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>The overall objective of the CB NET project was sustainable economic development in the border area through effective utilisation of business potentials in the region. The specific objective of the project was to promote business cooperation, trade exchange, competitiveness and export of the enterprises from the border area, using modern technology, as well as with specific training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Balkans and Europe Together: Opportunity for a New Experience towards Unification! – BETonEU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Balkans and Europe Together: Opportunity for a New Experience towards Unification! – BETonEU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme:</td>
<td>Europe for Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project duration:</td>
<td>01/05/2014 – 30/04/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead applicant:</td>
<td>City of Subotica, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main partners:</td>
<td>ALDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Osijek, Croatia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Ravenna, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners:</td>
<td>19 individual subjects (local municipalities and NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipality of Érd (HU), The Mountain Community Jezer Muscel Association (RO), International Platform for Citizen Participation (BG), Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities (UBBSLA) (BG), Municipality of Knjaževac (SRB), Municipality of Zavidovići (BIH), Wolverhampton City Council (UK), Municipality of Lecce (I), Municipiul Odorheiul Secuiesc (RO), Municipality of Bijelo Polje (MNE), Municipality of Nikšić (MNE), Municipality of Szeged (HU), Municipality of Aerodrom (MK), Municipality of Novo Mesto (SLO), Municipality of Kumanovo (MK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project value:</td>
<td>148,000.00 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>A new project promoting EU enlargement in the Western Balkan countries has been approved: BETonEU a two year co-operation and twinning gathering 19 partners from 12 EU Member States and Western Balkans countries. The project is important considering the fact that ALDA Head of Development Unit, Marco Boaria, delivered training on how to prepare a successful application within another CBC Project – SNET.EU. The project has 19 partners - 12 partners are EU members and 7 partners are from the Balkans. It aims to represent an unbiased platform for exchanging, reflecting, debating, networking and acting for the future of Europe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region**

Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border

CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Balkans and Europe Together: Opportunity for a New Experience towards Unification! – BETonEU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>The main objective of the project is to promote European values, i.e. benefits of the EU membership. Moreover, the project was conceived as a series of international visits, informational meetings, workshops and media-educational activities that are individually or jointly implemented by the partners. The role of the City of Subotica is central, since it is responsible for the project, or it is the signer of the Grant Contract with the European Commission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Pannonian route of peace – Strengthening cooperation and proliferation of institutions of higher education in the arts and ecology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant:</td>
<td>120,000.00 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Partners:     | Green Network of Vojvodina  
Green Osijek Association                                                                                                  |
| Description:  | Pannonian route of peace is a bicycle route which is 80 kilometres long and it connects the cities of Osijek (Croatia) and Sombor (Vojvodina, Serbia). The route passes through the best preserved natural areas of midstream Danube: Natural Park Kopački Rit and Special Nature Reserve Gornje Podunavlje, linking the local multinational population which is preserving the rich traditional heritage. Taking this route, you will be able to experience and enjoy various indigenous culinary specialties, you will see displays and unique showpiece of handicrafts, cultural – historical landmarks, you can take boat and carriage rides, photo safaris etc. In Osijek, the bicycle route begins at the bridge across the Drava River, and in Sombor the starting point of the route is located at the monument of St. Florian in Batinska street.  
The Route was established as a part of the Cross-border cooperation and reconciliation project between Osijek and Sombor, which is financially supported by CRS and USAID. The idea was developed as a network of bicycle routes in the Pannonia region of Croatia, Serbia and Hungary – Pannonian route of peace/Via Pacis Pannoniaen launched by the Green Network of Vojvodina and the Green Osijek Association in 2004. The aim of the Road of Peace is to connect people, preserve natural and cultural heritage and a long-term sustainable development of the Danube. The Route is the third cross-border peace route in the world. Part of this project, among other things, is the installation of straw bikes that are placed along the bike route Osijek-Subotica. |
### Cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border**

**CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th><strong>New Horizons</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donor:</strong></td>
<td>Freedom House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Partners:** | Forum of Tuzla Citizens (Bosnia and Herzegovina)  
Association of Citizens for Transition – AlbertE (Osijek, Croatia)  
Open University Subotica (Serbia) |
| **Description:** | New Horizons is a regional co-operation project realized in 2002, supported by Freedom House organization. The aim of the project was to connect cities of the former Yugoslavia. Three partners were included within the project. Local structures, like the field of economy, culture, education, small business, media, NGO, local and regional authorities were presented to the participants in the project. Direct co-operation and exchange of experiences were enabled between the representatives of local authorities of Tuzla, Osijek and Subotica, as well as between the representatives of media, economy, sports and non-government organizations. The main aim of the project was to generate joint cross-border initiatives, programmes and projects. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th><strong>Regional Centre for education, prevention and physical rehabilitation of persons affected by stroke and multiple sclerosis</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme:</strong></td>
<td>Croatia–Serbia CBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Partners:** | Gerontology Centre Subotica, Serbia  
Home for Elderly and Disabled Persons Osijek |
| **Contract value:** | 41,439.36 EUR  
35,399.81 EUR |
| **Description:** | The project deals with the issue of two widespread diseases in our time. Subotica and Osijek provided a range of activities with the aim of investigating the causes and the ways in which these diseases manifest themselves, and taking certain actions to prevent their consequences. The target group of the project includes people with multiple sclerosis and stroke, especially the elderly and persons with disabilities; their families, and medical and other professional staff which is engaged in their treatment. The project foresees the implementation of a regional research on the causes and consequences of multiple sclerosis and stroke, through the foundation of the regional rehabilitation centre as an organisational unit of the Gerontology Centre, purchase of appropriate medical equipment for physical rehabilitation of patients, training of medical staff from Osijek and publication of research results, as well as publication of a manual that contains the instructions for living a healthy life, in order to prevent the occurrence of stroke. |
**Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region**

Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Support for networking and twinning at European level - SNET.EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme:</td>
<td>IPA CBC Croatia–Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure:</td>
<td>People-to-people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract value:</td>
<td>57,370.00 EUR 55,120.00 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA contribution:</td>
<td>48,758.76 EUR 46,725.22 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe:</td>
<td>17 September 2012 18 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description:**
The project aimed to build capacity at the local level in order to understand the active EU citizenship and the role of local government in the process of EU integration. It promoted cross-border twinning between towns through an active program of the EU citizenship, facilitated knowledge transfer in collaboration with local institutions and promoted citizen participation in policy making and decision making at local level.

The project established twinning centres in Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Srijem County in Croatia and Bačka and Srem areas in Serbia.

Main activities: Capacity building - Seminars for LA and CSO on European policies and EU integration process, Training on developing of EU projects on town twinning; Resource centres for town twinning – Equipping, Opening and Functioning of Resource Centres for Town Twinning in Osijek and Subotica (Promotional workshops events); Networking between local authorities in Croatia and Serbia – Coffee House meetings.
6. SWOT analysis of the cross-border cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• good historic relations</td>
<td>• similar structure of the industry makes the towns rivals for potential foreign investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• linguistic (Croatian and Serbian, formerly Serbo-Croatian), ethnic,</td>
<td>• indirect railway transport connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural, historical and mental homogeneity</td>
<td>• the contacts are more on ad hoc basis, focusing on certain events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strong Croatian community in Subotica</td>
<td>• contacts between the inhabitants are not intensified enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hungarian minority in Osijek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strong cultural relations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• official contacts between the self-governments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• economic cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cooperation of the chambers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• educational cooperation of the faculties of economics and secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• religious cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• good road traffic connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• joint development financed by the EU</td>
<td>• delayed EU accession of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• establishment of an EGTC</td>
<td>• sensitive political relations – after the war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• exchange of experiences</td>
<td>• unresolved question of the demarcation between Serbia and Croatia on a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• coordination of production capacities</td>
<td>section of the Danube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• joint appearance on the market</td>
<td>• lack of legal framework in Serbia for strengthening the cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• small distance between the towns after future road traffic modernisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• construction of direct railway line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• coordination of higher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sharing the experiences of EU accession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• collaboration in the field of environment protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

### Opportunities

- development of joint tourist thematic routes including Sombor
- sustainable utilisation of cultural heritage and endowments
- cultural cooperation of institutions and NGOs
- cooperation between social and healthcare institutions
- generating projects along the triple border of Croatia–Hungary–Serbia

### Threats

Based on the above, we could make the following conclusions:

- The situation analysis depicts the different development phases in the relations of the towns of Subotica and Osijek – shaped by historic changes.
- As it is visible from the SWOT table, there are disproportionally many strengths and opportunities behind this cooperation, which indicate the potentials of further development in the relations of these two twin towns, rather than stagnation of these contacts.
- In the long run, the minimisation of the current threats may make the separating function of the border more virtual. In order to improve cross-border cooperation, it is inevitable to resolve the question of exact border between Serbia and Croatia along the Danube, while on the other hand, the revitalisation of the public transport, especially of the railway connection between the towns is essentially important.
- This favourable process could be encouraged with more intensified neighbourhood policy in the course of Serbia’s EU accession, materialised in newly developed relations and successful implementation of projects funded by the European Union, through INTERREG CBC and IPA CBC programmes.
7. Future potentials of the relations

Since the moment when the EU financed projects became available, new cooperation opportunities were opened between Subotica and Osijek. There was the already existing relation between the Croatian population of the towns and the former contacts between the municipalities, their institutions and some NGOs, which had been functioning even without external financing.

These well-developed relations brought their first results in the 2007-2013 programming period of the European Union with the implementation of joint projects (listed in chapter 5). The experiences of these make an excellent basis for the exploitation of newly available funds in the 2014-2020 programming period. Thus these two towns could be the drivers of economic development in the northern border region between Serbia and Croatia.

The programming document of the Croatian–Serbian neighbouring programme contains numerous items that can serve as potential cooperation opportunities of these two towns, and which can be utilised by them for their own development. This programme defines four thematic priorities:

- “Health and Social Care Services,
- Environment, Biodiversity, Risk Prevention, Sustainable Energy and Energy Efficiency,
- Tourism and Cultural and Natural Heritage,
- Competitiveness and Business Environment Development.”

Compared to the opportunities of the cross-border cooperation between Subotica and Osijek, the enumerated items of the SWOT analysis are in line with these priorities.

However, the future of the cooperation between Subotica and Osijek cannot only be based on the prospective funds accessible from the above described IPA CBC programme, but also on the specific objectives from the strategic documents of both towns.

Based on the analysis of the strategic plans of Subotica\(^4\) and Osijek\(^5\) it can be stated that there are numerous similarities, which could be exploited with collaboration and joint projects, and the synergy effects of such actions could lead to considerable development in both towns in the following decade.

---


According to the vision of the sustainable development plan of Subotica, it will be a “modern city having satisfied, employed, healthy and open-minded inhabitants, with increasing living standards and quality of life, where the state, the private and the civilian sectors work in partnership, and where all citizens have equal opportunities and freedom ensured through fostering solidarity and humanity.”

In relation to this, the vision of Osijek is the following: “a city of satisfied people where it is pleasant to live, where the potentials are realised in terms of sustainable development and social justice, economically developed, strong university and cultural centre of Osijek-Baranja County and of eastern Croatia, which is integrated into the contemporary European trends.”

With the comparison of the overall objectives of these two strategies, we find similar set goals. In case of Subotica:

- Supporting and encouraging economic development
- Ensuring and promotion of social development
- Protection and improvement of the environment
- Consistent implementation of the concept of good administration

In case of Osijek:

- Working together (entrepreneurial city, intelligent city)
- Learning together (city of knowledge, a virtual city)
- Living together (attractive city to live in, the city of youth)

Beyond the overall objectives, we have selected those specific objectives that are present in the development strategies of both towns. Since they have defined strategic goals in these areas, there is a potential for joint actions in reaching these goals, through cooperation projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subotica</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed mechanism of institutional support for the development of entrepreneurship and SME sector with the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment primarily in industries based on knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Development of technology infrastructure, development and implementation of new knowledge and technology Development of the manufacturing industry with particular emphasis on the food industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border

CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subotica</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established a favourable environment for attracting new direct investments while retaining the existing ones, cooperation of the local economy and connection with educational and scientific research institutions for re-industrialisation of the city</td>
<td>Development of technology infrastructure, development and implementation of new knowledge and technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of local sectoral clusters, networking of entrepreneurs and institutions</td>
<td>Promotion of the city and of its economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market-oriented, sustainable agricultural production with developed capacities for processing and distribution with a growing share of organic production</td>
<td>Diversification of economic activities in rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improving the quality of education of citizens through greater integration of marginalized groups, increasing coverage of children in preschool and primary education, offering vocational and higher education as well as alternative and additional education and skills development in line with market needs</strong></td>
<td>Increasing involvement in pre-school education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improving the health of citizens through the promotion of healthy lifestyles and diet, disease prevention, combating health risk habits, early diagnosis and prompt appropriate treatment programs</strong></td>
<td>Development of health programs beyond the standard protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing the level of social protection, particularly of vulnerable groups of citizens through the introduction of innovative organisational forms and local social welfare services on the principle of cooperation and partnership between sectors and with the plurality of service providers, as well as active protection through social inclusion</strong></td>
<td>Promoting the availability of social services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improving the availability of social services</strong></td>
<td>Improving horizontal and vertical coordination and creating a network of social services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing the availability of social services</strong></td>
<td>Human resource development in the field of social welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation of the Strategy of Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in the City of Osijek</strong></td>
<td>Improving horizontal and vertical coordination and creating a network of social services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border**

**CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subotica</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased participation of citizens in cultural and sporting life through inter-sectoral collaboration and the development of sustainable mechanisms that will make the service available to all, as well as protection and fostering multiculturalism and interculturalism</td>
<td>Improvement of programs in culture Evaluation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage Infrastructure development in culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functioning of responsible government, along with participatory involvement based on consensus Providing effective and efficient services to citizens and businesses while emphasizing the importance of accountability in all circumstances</td>
<td>Strengthening administrative and human capacities to manage local development Increasing the availability and quality of public services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring sustainable development through spatial and urban planning; optimal use of the newly created values, management of natural resources and protected areas, waste management, encouraging the introduction of &quot;green&quot; technologies using the best available technology and technical solutions in the manufacturing processes, to ensure the achievement of a high level of human health protection and improvement of the environment</td>
<td>Strengthening capacities for the conservation and management of natural values Survey, inventory and monitoring of the component of natural heritage Implementation of measures to protect the landscape, natural habitats, habitats important for biodiversity conservation Evaluation of the natural heritage for sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring sustainable organisation of urban development by avoiding urban fuzziness, reuse and regeneration of abandoned areas and facilities by providing appropriate conservation, restoration and use of urban cultural heritage (especially architecture, namely architecture in Art Nouveau style), promoting high-quality architecture and building technology with increasing energy efficiency</td>
<td>Strengthening capacities in the field of spatial planning and environment management Well-balanced spatial development in compliance with the economic, social and environmental background Continuous implementation of spatial planning through monitoring the situation in space, planning spatial development, use and protection of space through physical planning documents Developing the urban design of the city by creating the conditions for the citizens to identify with their city</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Summary

This case study investigated the cross-border cooperation between the towns of Subotica from Serbia and Osijek from Croatia, and it intended to illustrate a good example of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border.

Osijek and Subotica are two towns with significant similarities, at a distance slightly more than 100 kilometres. Both cities strive to be the leading centres of their own regions, based on their historic traditions and geographic conditions.

Subotica and Osijek had been in the same country until the wars in the 1990s and the dissolution of Yugoslavia; firstly within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then in Yugoslavia and its legal predecessors. Therefore the relation between these two towns is based on historic facts. On the other hand, there are similarities in their economic structure, and also some intensifying regional and cultural cooperation between them. But most importantly, the cooperation between Subotica and Osijek is the result of the efforts of the Croatian minority living Subotica in making contacts with their homeland. Some officials of the self-government in Subotica had initialised individual contacts with Osijek right after the war. These initiatives were necessarily and naturally followed by institutionalised contacts between the municipalities. The cooperation between Subotica and Osijek was developed gradually, and this relation was crowned with the signing of the Charter of Friendship Relations and Cooperation in 2010.

Cross-border cooperation between Subotica and Osijek is mainly driven by personal contacts and individual actions of leaders, organisations and/or institutions, hence the interaction lacks institutional framework, subsequently, it lacks separate/special administrative bodies/working groups whose task would be to manage the cooperation. Consequently, cooperation is mainly managed and directed by the general assemblies of the involved cities, therefore the decision-makers are those who can fill the cooperation with empirical content. The parts responsible for executing these decisions are the Mayors. The actual functioning of the partnership is entitled to certain departments of local administration and to specific institutions founded by the municipalities.

The motives for cooperation between these two twin towns do not resemble to any other similar town twinning initiatives. The closer cooperation does not date back to history, since there was no need for any official form of relations before, at the time when Osijek and Subotica were located in the same country. The decomposition of the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the nineties created a situation for the gradual development of relations between these two towns. The cooperation has been fulfilled with more and more contents since then.

The cooperation between Osijek and Subotica has also encouraged the rapprochement of Serbia and Croatia. After the war there was almost no contact between the two neighbouring countries. This situation was changed by the representatives of Subotica and Osijek who first
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

initialised contacts with each other. Therefore these towns have considerable merit in this process with making such attempts in local that have later become normal in the relations between the two countries as well: constant cooperation and fostering good-neighbourly relations.
9. Bibliography


Generalni plan Subotica-Palić do 2020. god. J.P. Zavod za urbanizam Opštine Subotica


Strategy for sustainable local development of the town of Subotica 2013–2022 (Strategija lokalnog održivog razvoja grada Subotice 2013–2022

Osijek:

Subotica:
10. Annex

Charter of Good Neighbourly Relations and Cooperation between Subotica and Osijek, signed in Subotica, 1 September 2004 (text in Croatian)

Sukladno ciljevima istaknutim pri uspostavi diplomatskih odnosa između Republike Hrvatske i Srbije i Crne Gore, a u namjeri da sudjelujemo u promicanju dubrosusjedskih odnosa i suradnje među našim državama i narodima, te unapređenju slobode i demokracije u Europi, potpisujemo sljedeću zajedničku

POVELJU

o dobrosusjedskim odnosima i suradnji između
Grada Osijeka u Republici Hrvatskoj i
Općine Subotica u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori

U našim međusobnim odnosima zalagat ćemo se za uspostavu i izgradnju dobrosusjedskih odnosa i suradnje među društvenim, kulturnim, znanstvenim, obrazovnim, gospodarskim, športskim i drugim institucijama i subjektima Grada Osijeka i Općine Subotica.

Osobitu pozornost posvetit ćemo zaštiti ljudskih i građanskih sloboda, razvitku lokalne samouprave i zaštiti okoliša, suradnji u području urbanog razvitka grada i poticanju drugih pitanja od interesa i značaja za lokalnu samoupravu, problemima i pitanjima mladih potičući njihove međusobne susrete kako bi se bolje upoznali i na ovim temeljima nastavili prijateljstvo i suradnju.

U međusobnim odnosima poštivat ćemo naše različitosti, razvijati međusobno povjerenje i toleranciju kao temeljne vrijednosti ujedinjene Europe.

Ovo potvrđujemo našim potpisom.

U Subotici, 01. rujna 2004. godine

Za Općinu Subotica

Za Grad Osijek

Prezidnica Općine Subotica

Građa Krunić

Prezidnica Grada Osijeka

Source: Protocol Office of the City of Subotica
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

Charter of Friendship Relations and Cooperation between Subotica and Osijek, signed in Osijek, 3 December 2010 (text in Hungarian)

Source: Protocol Office of the City of Subotica
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian – Croatian border
CBC between twin towns Subotica and Osijek

Nationalities in Subotica according to 2002 and 2011 census

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# Nationalities in Osijek according to 2001 and 2011 census

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*Source: Census 2011: Stanovništvo prema narodnosti po gradovima/općinama, popis 2011, www.dzs.hr*
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2016

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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study
The Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

Written by
Superna Ltd (Croatia)
Andrea Vugrinović
Andrej Dominko
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1. Introduction

The Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava (EDDS) represents one of the most long-lasting cross-border cooperation efforts between local and regional self-government bodies and their related institutions in the cross-border space of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), and Hungary. The EDDS provides a good example for an institutionalized cross-border cooperation, worth to be further analysed within a case study. The main reason for this is that this cooperation has a rich history of self-development and activities, and has also undergone organisational reforms in order to ensure its full functioning. Moreover, it can provide with a solid ground for deducting certain insights on the weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles that every cross-border cooperation can come across in the process of its development. Insights deducted from the case of the EDDS are appropriate to be used as lessons for other cross-border initiatives in a European Union (EU) context.

There is a severe lack of successful institutionalized cross-border cooperation between actors in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and between Croatia and its other neighbours, and generally in Southeast Europe. The vast majority of existing cross-border institutions in the region have neither really achieved any significant developmental results nor managed to continue their activities after the projects that were instrumental for their establishment – mainly funded through various EU cross-border programmes – were implemented. In most of the cases, appropriate financial and institutional sustainability of such cooperation was not ensured, or the stakeholders engaged in the cooperation lost their interest in the continuation of cross-border activities. In addition, many of the cross-border initiatives simply lack the basic visibility elements (prepared and available for public official documents, reports, articles and other recorded events) and are thus inadequate for any sort of reconstruction of their developmental process. Additionally, central figures in the cooperation are no longer accessible for interviewing since in most cases they moved to other fields of activities. In this context, the EDDS represents an exception.

The Euroregion was relatively inactive during the last few years; nevertheless, it has a pretty history of development that stretches over a decade. During that time, members of the Euroregion conducted numerous joint activities and were engaged in solving challenges and problems related to the cross-border area in Croatia and B&H in order to enhance and catalyse overall economy and social development of the Eurozone space. Moreover, the history of these efforts, which represents the life of the “Danube-Drava-Sava” cross-border cooperation, is well recorded and detailed enough, so it can be reconstructed in a manner that provides enough insights and information to allow certain lessons to be deducted.

The main reasons why the EDDS was chosen as a theme for a representative case study are the following: a long period of its existence, a high number of implemented activities and fields of engagement, an eager enthusiasm of its members, a well-recorded and accessible history, and a dedication to self-enhancement.
1.1 Methodology and approach

This case study builds on the combined findings of desktop research as well as information gathered through direct contacts with the representatives of the Eurozone “Danube-Drava-Sava”. The desktop research includes the identification and analysis of various materials related and relevant to the Euroregion, such as official documents of the Euroregion, reports, statistical reviews, media articles and other available records.

Direct contacts with the representatives of the EDDS were utilized in order to gather additional information which are inaccessible via desktop research. Interviews were carried out with:

- Zoran Kovačević, President of the Croatian Chamber of Economy – Municipal Chamber Osijek
- Stjepan Ribić – Director of the Regional development agency of Slavonia and Baranja,
- Kornelia Mlinarević – Main secretary of the EDDS and Chief Director of the Department of economy and EU projects and programmes of the City of Osijek, and finally
- Davor Brunčić – Secretary of the Slavonia-Baranja County.
- Subsequently, a high level of objectivity and reliability of the case study has been ensured.

It is also important to point out that the prepared case study has attempted to search, investigate and analyse the existing cross-border cooperation and the best practices in cross-border cooperation. Prior to the selection of the best practices examples, a thorough research was conducted in order to define existing cross-border cooperation, their efforts and involved actors.

The following forms of cross-border cooperation were identified during the selection process:

- Adriatic Ionian Euroregion;
- Euroregion “Drina-Sava-Majevica”;
- Alps-Adriatic Alliance;
- Tourism zone Haloze-Zagorje;
- Euroregion “Danube-Drava-Sava”;
- Transfrontier Euro-Institute Network; and
- the Cross-Border Municipal Working Community Dežela pod Peco–Petzenland.

Additionally, numerous networks of twinned towns were also recognized but were immediately excluded from further assessment due to their extremely poor visibility element and a severe lack of joint activities as well as accessible information regarding these activities.
During the selection of the cross-border cooperation initiatives, the following main selection criteria were adopted:

- a consistent history of activities conducted jointly by the members of the cross-border cooperation;
- the cross-border cooperation had to be initiated by local and/or regional actors; and
- a good visibility and accessible representatives.

Following the selection process, two cross-border cooperation efforts were selected as the main objects of the case studies, the tourist zone Haloze-Zagorje and the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava. Other identified forms of cooperation were either initiated on a state level or they represented purely formal networks with no real background, without implemented cross-border activities and without achieved results during their existence.
2. The development of the cross-border cooperation

Experiences of different Euroregions and cross-border cooperation show that most of the cross-border areas engaged in a cross-border network/cooperation played a marginal role in a geographical or economic sense during their pre-accession period. Within the context of EU integration, the entry of such areas in cross-border cooperation initiatives provides an appropriate solution for this situation. It can be concluded that cross-border cooperation has a huge impact and it is able to substantively transform the peripheral regions into more important entities, assuring a more central position of these regions within the EU.

The Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava reflects the same principle where the peripheral regions situated at the borders engage in cross-border cooperation in order to improve their condition and to strengthen the roles and voice of cross-border areas. Subsequently, the EDDS is a cross-border cooperation between Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Hungary. The background and the 'triggering spark' of the organisation was the project of European highway within the Pan-European Corridor V/c which was prepared as a means to enhance traffic connection of the cross-border area with Central Europe and the Adriatic coast.

That means the EDDS is an international cooperation, an organisation of regional and local self-government bodies (counties, municipalities, and cantons), their capital cities, their associated regional economies, trade chambers as well as other similar economic organizations from the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Hungary. The Euroregion is also open to other centres in the region situated near the rivers Danube, Drava, and Sava. The organization is entirely open to new members.

2.1 The Establishment of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

The main motive for the establishment of the cross-border cooperation was the TEM project with the aim to construct a European highway, the Corridor V/c with the purpose of improving traffic connections and overall ties of the cross-border region with other regions in the Central European and Adriatic space. The initiative for establishing the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava came from the County of Baranya (Hungary). After the necessary initial steps, the founding letter of the interregional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava was signed on 28th of November 1998 in Pécs. The first members and founders of the cross-border cooperation were Baranya County, the City of Pécs and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Pécs-Baranya (on the Hungarian side); Osijek-Baranja County, the City of Osijek, HGK Osijek, the Chamber of Economy Osijek (on the Croatian side); Tuzla-Podrinj Canton, the Municipality of Tuzla and the Economy Chamber of Tuzla (on the Bosnia and Herzegovina side). That means the

---

1 HGK – „Hrvatska gospodarska komora“ – Croatian Chamber of Economy
2 today „Cantonal Chamber Tuzla“
organisation’s establishment can be considered as a result of a bottom-up strategy, rather than a top-down decision initiated by local and regional self-government bodies in partnership with local actors from private and civil sector.

The main additional pros for the establishment of the Eurozone were closely related to the idea that the common institutional cooperation framework would provide a solid base for future actions in various fields except for traffic. These possible areas of cooperation are tourism, economy, education, environmental protection, health and social care, etc.

![Figure 1: The logo of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava](http://www.ddseuro.org/)

The Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava was recognised by the European Council on 15th of September 2000. The Director of the Co-operation for Local and Regional Democracy had informed the representatives of the Euroregion that establishing the organisation contributes to implementing the principles of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities. Consequently, the Euroregion “Danube-Drava-Sava” was officially acknowledged and registered as a euroregion.

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3 Source: [http://www.ddseuro.org/](http://www.ddseuro.org/)
3. Determination of geographical confines

3.1 Membership of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

The Statute of the Euroregion is the main document that determines the general framework regarding its membership and tasks. Two types of membership are defined within the Statute: member and observer.

Article 12 of the Statute defines that every regional self-government body, local self-government body with regional body status, city, seat of regional self-government as well as regional chamber of commerce, economy, industry and similar institutions from Hungary, Croatia, and B&H as well as from other territories closely related to the rivers of Danube, Drava, and Sava are eligible to become members of the Euroregion. Nevertheless, each new member must be directly adjacent to the existing territory of the Euroregion, which means the territorial contiguity is a predefined territorial feature of the cooperation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution (+area and population, if applicable)</th>
<th>Associated settlements (if applicable)</th>
<th>Member since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Tuzla Canton area: 2.649 km² population: 498.549</td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Banovići, Čelić, Doboj Istok, Gračanica, Gradačac, Kalesija, Kladanj, Lukavac, Sapna, Srebrenik, Teočak, Tuzla, Živinice</td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posavska County</td>
<td>area: 324.6 km² population: 59.478</td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Domaljevac-Šamac, Odžak, Orašje</td>
<td>December 21st 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brčko District</td>
<td>area: 493 km² population: 93.028</td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Bijela, Boče, Boderište, Brezik, Brezovo Polje, Brezovo Polje (village), Brka, Brod, Bukovac, Bukvik Donji, Bukvik Gornji, Buzekara, Cerik, Čađavac, Čande, Čoseti, Donji Rahić, Donji Zovik, Dubrave, Dubravice Donje, Dubravice Gornje, Gajevi, Gorice, Gornji Rahić, Gornji Zovik, Grбавica, Gredice, Islamovac, Krbeta,</td>
<td>June 27th 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution (+area and population, if applicable)</th>
<th>Associated settlements (if applicable)</th>
<th>Member since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Republic of Croatia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Krepšić, Laništa, Lukavac, Maoča, Marković Polje, Ograđenovac, Omerbegovača, Palanka, Popovo Polje, Potočari, Rašljani, Ražljevo, Repino Brdo, Sandići, Skakava Donja, Skakava Gornja, Slijepčevići, Stanovi, Šatorovići, Štrepci, Trnjaci, Ulice, Ulović, Vitanovići Donji, Vitanovići Gornji, Vukšić Donji i Vukšić Gornji</td>
<td>November 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brod-Posavina County</strong></td>
<td>Municipality of Tuzla</td>
<td>CITY: Tuzla</td>
<td>November 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>area: 436 km2 population: 131.778</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cantonal Chamber of Commerce Tuzla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CITY: Tuzla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Bebrina, Brodski Stupnik, Bukovlje, Cernik, Davor, Donji Andrijevci, Dragalić, Garčin, Gornja Vrba, Gornji Bogičevci, Gundinci, Klakar, Nova Kapela, Okučani, Oprisavci, Oriovac, Podcrkavlje, Rešetari, Sibinj, Sikirevci, Slavonski Šamac, Stara Gradiška, Velika Kopanica, Vrbje, Vrpolje</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CITIES: Nova Gradiška, Slavonski Brod</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Drnje, Delekovac, Ferdinandovac, Gola, Hlebine, Kalinovac, Kalnik, Kloštar Podravski, Koprivnički Bregi, Koprivnički Ivanec, Legrad, Molve, Novigrad Podravski, Novo Virje, Peteranec, Podravske Sesvete, Rasinja, Sokolovac, Sveti Ivan Žabno, Sveti Petar Orehovec, Virje</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CITIES: Đurđevac, Koprivnica, Križevci</td>
<td></td>
<td>December 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

### Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution (+area and population, if applicable)</th>
<th>Associated settlements (if applicable)</th>
<th>Member since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Požega-Slavonija County</td>
<td>area: 1.823 km² population 78.034</td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Brestovac, Čaglin, Jakšíć, Kaptol, Velika CITIES: Kutjevo, Lipik, Pakrac, Pleternica, Požega</td>
<td>28 November 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virovitica-Podravina County</td>
<td>area: 2.024 km² population: 84.836</td>
<td>MUNICIPALITIES: Crnac, Čačinci, Čaďavica, Gradina, Lukač, Mikleuš, Nova Bukovica, Pitomača, Sopje, Suhopolje, Špišić Bukovica, Vočin, Zdenci CITIES: Orahovica, Slatina, Virovitica</td>
<td>December 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Koprivnica</td>
<td>area: 91 km² population: 30.994</td>
<td>SETTLEMENTS: Bakovčice, Draganovec, Herešin, Jagnjedovec, Koprivnica, Kunovec Breg, Reka, Starigrad, Štaglinec</td>
<td>December 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

### Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution (+area and population, if applicable)</th>
<th>Associated settlements (if applicable)</th>
<th>Member since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Osijek</td>
<td>area: 30km² population: 107,784</td>
<td><strong>SETTLEMENTS:</strong> Brijest, Brijese, Josipovac, Klisa, Nemetin, Osijek, Podravlje, Sarvaš, Tenja, Tvrđavica, Višnjevac</td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Požega</td>
<td>area: 134 km² population: 26,248</td>
<td><strong>SETTLEMENTS:</strong> Alaginci, Bankovci, Cosine Laze, Crkveni Vrhovci, Dervišaga, Donji Emovci, Drškovci, Emovački Lug, Golobrdci, Gornji Emovci, Gradski Vrhovci, Komušina, Krivaj, Kunovci, Laze Prnjavor, Marindvor, Mihaljevci, Nova Lipa, Novi Mihaljevci, Novi Štitnjak, Novo Selo, Požega, Ramanovci, Seoci, Stara Lipa, Seovci, Škrabutnik, Štitnjak, Turnić, Ugarci, Vasine Laze i Vidovci.</td>
<td>June 27th 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Vukovar</td>
<td>area: 100 km² population: 27,683</td>
<td><strong>SETTLEMENTS:</strong> Trpinjska cesta, Borovo Naselje, Mitnica, Petrova gora, Sajmište, Supoderica, Lužac, Centar <strong>VILLAGES</strong>: Lipovača, Sotin i Jakobovac</td>
<td>June 27th 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian Chamber of Economy – Municipal Chamber Osijek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian Chamber of Economy – Municipal Chamber Požega</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 27th 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian Chamber of Economy – Municipal Chamber Vukovar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 27th 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 under the administrative control of the City of Vukovar
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution (+area and population, if applicable)</th>
<th>Associated settlements (if applicable)</th>
<th>Member since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Baranya County</td>
<td>CITIES AND TOWNS: Pécs, Komló, Mohács, Szigetvár, Siklós, Szentlőrinc, Pécsvár, Kozármisleny, Bóly, Sásd, Harkány, Selye, Villány, Mágocs in addition to approximately 300 villages</td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipality of Somogy</td>
<td>CITIES AND TOWNS: Kaposvár, Siófok, Marcali, Barcs, Nagyatád, Balatonboglár, Csurgó, Fonyód, Balatonlelle, Tab, Nagybajom, Lengyeltóti, Kadarkút, Zamárdi, Balatonföldvár, Igal in addition to approximately 230 villages</td>
<td>December 15th 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Barcs</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Pécs</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of Szekszárd</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pécs-Baranya Trade and Industry Chamber</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 28th 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total members: 24**
3.2 Territory and population of the EUROZONE Danube-Drava-Sava

Figure 2: Extension of the Euroregion’s territory to the area of participating countries:

Figure 3: Participation of the countries in the Euroregion’s territory:

---

6 Source: authors’ work
7 Source: authors’ work
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

The rights, obligations, and responsibilities of the Euroregion’s members are the following:

- definition of politics and programmes of the Eurozone;
- engagement in the decision-making processes;
- cooperation in order to achieve common goals;
- implementation of the jointly defined activities;
- right to vote and being selected in the Eurozone’s bodies;
- right to be informed about the Eurozone’s engagement and about its financial management;
- obligation to pay the membership fee;
- promotion of the Eurozone and preserving its reputation;
- compliance to the Eurozone’s Statute and to other agreed acts.

Furthermore, the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava also includes observer institutions that are not part of the organisation. Observer status is granted to organisations that do not fulfil the membership prerequisites according to Article 12 of the Statute, or whose membership request is in the process of evaluation. Observer institutions can participate in the activities of the Euroregion’s highest body, without the right to vote in decision-making processes. EDDS’s current observer members are Apatin, Bač, Sombor, and Subotica. All observer members are from Serbia, and have their observer status since 22nd of June 2002.

The working languages of the Euroregion are Croatian, English, and Hungarian, moreover, Bosnian language is used in communication between Croatia and B&H.

---

8 Source: authors’ work
4. Organisational and institutional structure

The organisational structure of the Eurozone is defined within the Statute of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava, further elaborated in an official document called 'Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava Organization Structure Model'. The initial organisational model of the Euroregion was defined during the establishment in 1998, reformed in 2001. The reform of the organisational structure reflected the knowledge, experience and know-how of other Euroregions.

4.1 The first organisational model of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava (1998-2001)

The initial organisational structure of the Euroregion was composed of the following functions:

- Council – decision making and monitoring function
- President – coordination of the Council
- Secretariat – administrative and technical function
- Working Committees (12) – preparation and executive function

*Figure 5: Organisational structure of the Euroregion prior to the reform*[^9]

The EDDS’s first organizational model was composed of the Presidency, consisting of the representatives of the Euroregion’s members, the President, the Secretariat, and twelve working committees. The main characteristics of this first organisational model:

- decision-making and monitoring were assigned to the Presidency;
- preparation was assigned to the working committees;
- the President was coordinating the work of the Presidency; and
- the Secretariat had administrative functions.

The established first model provided a solid framework for the decision-making functions, the function of preparation and implementation, but it did not achieve the appropriate and expected results. The working committees were composed of the members’ representatives, nevertheless, there was no real structure that could coordinate the work and activity of the working committees. Subsequently, the whole concept/idea of working committees was not suitable because it was unable to fulfil its functions. In addition, neither a clear protocol, nor a functional working methodology, not even a well-defined organisational structure were drafted for the committees; consequently, these failed to perform the expected functions. Furthermore, another obscure institutional element was incorporated in the first organisational model, namely that every member body of the Eurozone was obliged to have its representative in each working committee, leading to paradoxical situations (e.g. the Chamber of Economy had its representative in the Committee for Culture, regardless of its activity and engagement). Based on these unclear and confusing organisational issues, the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava faced a substantial failure; thus reform was inevitable.

4.2 Reform of the organisational structure OF THE EUROREGION DANUBE-DRAVA-SAva in 2001

A reform of the organisational structure was carried out in 2001, in order to correct the obscure and unclear institutional structures of the Euroregion. During the preparatory phase, a comparative analysis of the organisational structure of other Euroregions was conducted and their experience, knowledge, institutional know-how was translated into a new institutional dimension: a political level (function of decision making), an executive level (executive function and management), and an administrative & technical level. The working committees were assigned to carry out preparatory, advisory and coordinative functions within the new model. Following this, the new organisational structure of the EDDS was proposed, and the reformed structure was divided into the following organisational bodies:

---

10 Rhein-Waal Euroregio, Elbe-Labe Euroregion, Pomerania Euroregion, Euroregion Tatry, Nestos-Mesta Euroregion, West Nyugat-Panonia Euroregio, Nemunas-Niem-Hemak Euroregion
Assembly

The Assembly represents a political body of the highest level and it carries out the main decision-making function in the Eurozone. The Assembly defines the Statute, member relationships, programme, as well as the members of the Executive Board. Membership of the Assembly is composed of the members’ representatives of the Euroregion and each member of the organisation has one representative in the Assembly. Each member of the Euroregion chooses its representative for the Assembly.

Executive Board

The Executive board carries out the executive functions and it is composed of the representatives of the Euroregion’s member organisations. Each member has the same number of representatives in the Executive Board. Each member of the Executive Board is assigned for a four-year-mandate by the Assembly.

Council (President and vice-presidents)

The Council is composed of the President and two vice-presidents of the Euroregion. The President and vice-presidents are assigned by the Assembly every two years. The President and each of the vice-presidents must to be from different countries.

The President and vice-presidents are default members of the Executive board and they administer the activities of the Executive board. Furthermore, the President and the vice-presidents are the main coordinators of the Eurozone, where each is responsible for his own member state. The Assembly also coordinates the activities of the Executive board and the Working Committees and manages the activities of the Secretariat.

The selection of the President and vice-presidents is based on the Statute (specifically, Article 24). The Statute of the EDDS defines that the President and vice presidents of the Euroregion are appointed for a two-year-mandate. The Presidency of the Euroregion is based on the rotation system, i.e. after the expiration of the mandate, the newly elected President and vice presidents have to be from a different member state. Hence, this principle ensures an equal representation of all members within the Council.

The current President of the EDDS is Mr. Nedret Kikanović, Director of the Cantonal Chamber of Commerce Tuzla.
Secretariat

The Secretariat provides administrative and technical support to all other bodies within the organisational structure of the Euroregion. It is divided into three national offices: in Pécs, Osijek and Tuzla.

The members of the Secretariat are assigned by the Executive board. The activities are administered by the secretaries, while the Secretary General is a member of the national office where the President comes from. The President and the Secretary General are only elected for two years. Moreover, there are no permanent members of the secretariat since the EDDS has not professionalized its working structure until this day and the staff of the secretariat is ad hoc appointed.

Working committees

The working bodies are established by the Executive Board. Their role is to conduct activities related to their fields: the preparation and submission of proposals, the management and implementation of programmes, the coordination of institutions, and conducting other activities to enhance the activities of the Euroregion.

Working bodies can be temporal/ad hoc or they can be permanent in nature. Their name, field of activities, composition, working methods and the mandate of their members are defined during the act of their establishment.

Permanent working bodies (committees) are formed in the fields where the Euroregion has its interest in the preparation of projects in accordance with its developmental priorities. Permanent working bodies are aimed at preparing and implementing joint projects between the members of the Euroregion. Coordination bodies are formed in fields where developmental activities are formed outside the Euroregion’s membership. In such cases, bodies for coordinating the activities of the Euroregion with activities of other institutions are formed. The primary aim of the coordination bodies is to share experience and best practices between the members of the EDDS and between other institutions, which fall outside the Euroregion’s membership despite being situated on its territory.

Permanent working committees are established in the following fields: traffic and economic infrastructure, tourism, culture, sports and information. Coordinating bodies are established in the fields of science, health and social care as well as education. In the fields of spatial planning, environmental protection, and national minorities and other programmes, related to the cross-border area, committees for cross-border cooperation are established.

The presidents and members of the permanent working committees are assigned by the Executive board based on the proposal of the Euroregion’s members.
Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board is a controlling body. It is responsible for ensuring that the financial funds, which are under the jurisdiction of the bodies of the Euroregion, are spent according to the rules. Members of the Supervisory Board are assigned by the Assembly.

Figure 6: Reformed organisational structure the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava

Source: [http://www.ddseuro.org/](http://www.ddseuro.org/)
4.3 The OrganiSation of the “Euro-regional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia“

Regarding the institutional form, it is important to point out that the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava is organised as a non-legal entity. As such, it has been facing some major obstacles such as:

1. not having a bank account and not being eligible to be engaged in any form of financial transactions;
2. not being eligible to apply for, nor to act as a partner in EU-funded projects.
3. One of the EDDS’s priorities is related to the need of professionalization of its secretariat as a working organ. On the other hand, it is not possible for the Euroregion as a non-legal entity to form and professionalize this organ and thus realise this priority.

In order to address the aforementioned problems, the President of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava initiated the establishment of an additional organisation with a legal status. Subsequently, the organization 'Euro-regional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia' was established. The purpose of the newly established organisation was to eliminate the problems that the Euroregion was facing due to its non-legal character.

Once the majority of the Euroregion members accepted the proposal for the establishment of the organization with a legal personality, the new Euroregional cooperation was founded in Osijek on the 4th of February 2008. The founding members of the organization were Osijek-Baranja, Brod-Posavina, Koprivnica-Križevci, Virovitica-Podravina and Vukovar-Srijem counties, the City of Osijek and the City of Vukovar. Even though the majority of the Euroregion’s members accepted the formation of the Euroregional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia, and even though the organization is entirely open to new members, only the Croatian partners became members of the newly established organization. One of the recommendations given within the paper “Information on the establishment of the Euroregional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia” has directly pointed out that the members from B&H and Hungary should also establish organisations within their own countries with respect of the national laws. But neither Bosnian nor Hungarian partners established acted so. Consequently, the only base for conducting any engagement of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava as a legal entity is ensured exclusively through the Croatian organization.

The founding assembly declared the Statute of the Euroregional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia, it assigned the President and vice president of the organisation, the members of the Executive Board as well as the President and members of the Supervisory Board. The office is seated in Osijek.

The operational structure of the Organisation is entirely composed of Croatian partners; namely, Mr Davor Brunčić was elected for presidency, while the vice presidential mandate was given to Mr Željko Cirma.
Following the establishment of the organisation, the Executive board implemented a series of decisions related to ensuring a full functionality of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava as a legal entity. The organisation was registered under the Croatian Law on non-government non-profit organizations (March 19, 2008) and in the Registry of non-government non-profit organisations of the Republic of Croatia. At the same time, a bank account was registered which ensured the opportunity to engage in financial transactions.

In this context, it is necessary to point out that the Organisation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia was not established in order to substitute and take over the functions of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava. The sole purpose of the association was to act as a service for the Euroregion, in the following ways.

- It provides the Euroregion with a legal identity, which is necessary for the fulfilment of its statutory obligations and programmatic priorities;
- It provides the Euroregion with the opportunity for submitting development projects funded under the EU programmes and other means of financing. This is necessary due to the fact that applicants and partners in the vast majority of the cases need to be legal entities;
- It creates ground for financial activities of the Euroregion;

12 Source: [http://www.ddseuro.org/](http://www.ddseuro.org/)
• Its existence is necessary in order to establish the Office of the Euroregion (including a secretary and other professional staff), which represents a statutory obligation of the Euroregion\textsuperscript{13}.

To sum up, the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava does not represent a legal entity, subsequently, its legal personality has been ensured via the Organisation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia since 2008.

\textsuperscript{13} However, this obligation has not been fulfilled up until today. This is going to be further elaborated later on in this study.
5. The Composition of the working group of the Euroregion DDS

Although there were initiatives related to the professionalization of the working body, the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava has not managed to establish a professionalized employee structure. The main cause for this situation is closely related to the fact that the Euroregion does not have a separate budget\(^\text{14}\) that would ensure a constant source of financing for a staff. Thus the organisation does not have any official employees in its structure; all work is performed on a voluntary basis. Each person included in the Euroregion’s operational structure conducts his/her activity within the country of his/her primary institution; there are no commuters within the organisational structure.

The interviews found that the majority of the members of the Euroregion’s working bodies have a university degree, e.g. in economics, law, humanities, engineering, or social sciences.

\(^{14}\) This topic is further explained under the “Management, budget (incomes/expenses”) section.
6. Main activity areas and profile

6.1 Goals of the EUROZONE Danube-Drava-Sava

The EDDS defined the following main goals for cross-border cooperation:

- To enhance the economy and cultural connections between the member areas;
- To coordinate developmental programmes of the member areas;
- To make the cross-border area attractive to foreign investors;
- To establish cooperation links between educational, scientific and research institutions in the member areas;
- To provide assistance to programmes related to the preservation of nature; and
- To improve the mutual understanding, tolerance and cooperation between local communities with different cultural influences within the cross-border area.

Based on these objectives the organisation defined a wide spectrum of activities for the cooperation in various segments relevant for the cross-border space, as follows.

Fields and related activities of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava cross-border co-operation initiative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority field</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Spatial planning, preservation of nature and environment | • Coordination of activities related to the establishment of spatial information systems with the use of modern GPS technologies
• Coordination of activities related to spatial planning for infrastructure objects (roads, highways, etc.)
• Establishment of waste disposal sites and other waste management technologies
• Initiating joint actions for the improvement of the quality of river waters
• Management of joint databases related to the flora and fauna in the region
• Protection of natural heritage in the cross-border space (e.g. establishment of cross-border nature parks etc.)
• Joint promotional activities aimed at raising the awareness of the population on joint cross-border actions
• Joint actions related to specific fields (e.g. construction of high-voltage live wires etc.) |
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

### Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

### Priority field | Activities
--- | ---

### Transport and communication
- Providing information on certain risks relevant for the area (i.e. risks related to chemical industry, floods etc.)
- Creation of action plans for the case of danger and emergency (e.g. natural disasters and other accidents)
- Coordination of activities related to the construction of traffic infrastructure (e.g. trans-border roads and rails)
- joint activities related to the maintenance of river and road traffic
- improving the functionality of border crossings
- Coordination of the usage of infrastructure related to air traffic
- Organization of the cross-border transportation services

### Economy
- Joint promotion of the member regions
- Development of practical legal guides that describe the opportunities of the cross-border areas
- Organization of business meetings and other professional events with the purpose of enhancing exchange of best practices in relevant fields
- Development of the address book of the economy-related institutions in the cross-border area
- Development of various economy and business related organizations for institutions in the cross-border area (e.g. trade and craft chambers, local centres for entrepreneurs, industrial and technology parks, free zones etc.)
- Providing assistance in the organization of various trade fairs and other events
- Coordination of imports and exports
- Providing support to joint investments
- Preparation and implementation of joint developmental programmes
- Cooperation in the field of industry innovation, transfer of technologies etc.
### Priority field | Activities
--- | ---
Tourism and recreation | • Analysis and identification of complementary tourism potentials and development of the joint tourism offers  
• Utilization of complementary joint tourism resources  
• Joint development of tourism wares  
• Organization of joint promotional activities (e.g. tourism brochures, exhibitions, maps etc.)  
• Organization of promotional and tourist excursions  
• Cooperation in the field of education of staff in tourism services

Healthcare and social care | • Preparation of plans for risk mitigation in the case of catastrophes  
• Cooperation between the health services of the members  
• Exchange of the professional staff in the health care system  
• Organization of professional seminars in order to enhance the exchange of best practices  
• Cooperation in the field of supressing the usage of drugs and recovery of addicted people  
• Cooperation in the field of children protection and care for handicapped people

Science | • Preparation and implementation of joint scientific projects  
• Organization of scientific seminars and similar events

Education | • Exchange of experts, knowledge and experiences  
• Cooperation in the field of post-graduate programmes  
• Education of teachers in order to enable the organization of education for national minorities in their own language  
• Cooperation in the education of the minorities  
• Organization and implementation of the learning courses (beginner and advanced) in different languages
### Priority field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| • Organizing cultural events (exhibitions, concerts, performances, shows etc.)
| • Organization of the joint cross-border cultural manifestations
| • Assistance in the implementation of various historiographical, ethnographical and other studies
| • Providing assistance to manifestations organized by national minorities
| • Joint promotion of cultural life in the cross-border region to the public
| • Publication of books, guidelines, atlases etc. |

### Sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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</table>
| • Development of the cross-border sport centres and objects
| • Joint usage and utilization of sport facilities and infrastructure
| • Organization and promotion of regional sports events
| • Organization of joint manifestations in different sports |

### Informing the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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</table>
| • Development of the integral information system for the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava
| • Development of the informational tools for the Euroregion (e.g. web pages, various publications etc.)
| • Development of joint programmes for electronic media (radio, television) and broadcasting
| • Exchange of information between media |

## 6.2 Joint activities prepared and implemented by the members of THE Euroregion

Since the establishment of the Euroregion, members have been active in applying for developmental projects for funding through various EU programmes for developing the cross-border space. This process includes an exchange of project ideas, suggestions between member organisations and joint work on preparing project proposals, informing and preparing local actors on available programmes as well as including them into projects as target groups.

However, the Eurozone as an organization has never applied for funding; the reason for this being the non-legal personality. As it has already been pointed out, the Euroregion is a non-
legal entity thus being ineligible for EU or nationally funded projects. The establishment of the organization Euro-regional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia was an attempt to remedy this situation. Euro-regional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia provided the legal base for the Euroregion to get engaged in EU and various national programmes, nevertheless, it did not fulfill its primary raison d’être, i.e. to facilitate the application for project proposals by the means of providing a legal framework for engaging in legal processes.

There are many examples of successful developmental projects implemented by EDDS members. In line with the activities foreseen in the developmental priority fields, those projects aim to improve the existing situation in the fields of ecology and environmental protection, economy and entrepreneurship, information infrastructure, history and cultural heritage, tourism as well as protection against natural disasters.

The Eurozone also engaged in publishing the magazine 'Our Europe', in Croatian language. The magazine was launched in 2000 and was released until April 2002, when B&H took over the presidency of the Euroregion. The magazine was financed from the budgets of the members of the cross-border cooperation.

![Figure 8: Covers of different editions of the Euroregion’s magazine “Our Europe”](image)

### 6.3 OrganiSation of events (meetings and congresses)

During the period 1999-2009, the EDDS was actively engaged in organising and implementing various joint events between its members. The representatives of the Euroregion were also participating in other relevant events organised by other institutions in the EU. These events can be divided into three thematic segments: conferences and seminars; the Harkanian\(^{16}\) initiative; and bilateral meetings. The list of the recorded events is described on the following pages.

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\(^{15}\) Source: [http://www.ddseuro.org/](http://www.ddseuro.org/)

\(^{16}\) derived from „Harkány” (the city in Hungary where the initial meeting took place)
Conferences and seminars

The conferences and seminars were international events either organised by the EDDS or attended by its representatives. All members of the Euroregion were involved in these events and they are closely related to the theme of this case study, namely cross-border cooperation between Croatia, Hungary, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following events (seminars, conferences, visits, meetings) took place:

Seminar “Regional development and cooperation”, Osijek, 5-6th of November 1999

The seminar was organised as part of the project “Democratization in eastern Slavonia” and it was helped by local and regional self-government bodies from the Danube region and other interested actors. Members of various Euroregions attended the round table, where issues relating to cross-border cooperation and its future were debated.

International conference “European transport corridor V/c – bridge to cooperation and welfare”, Osijek, 9-10th of December 1999

Approximately 80 prominent representatives visited this conference, either from states like Croatia, B&H, Hungary, and Turkey, or from various international organisations such as OESS. This conference and its topics were dedicated to the transport corridor V/c and its importance for development of the Hungary-Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was in development at the time. The conference was organised by the EDDS.

Conference “Economic cooperation between Croatia and Hungary”, Pécs, 28th of March 2000

The conference was organised by the Hungarian partners, aimed at reviewing the achieved results and define future priorities for the cooperation between Croatian and Hungarian regions. Mr Josip Škorić, the EDDS’s leader of the Working group for infrastructure, represented the Euroregion and introduced the Hungarian partners to the traffic opportunities of the airports near Osijek.

Seminar on cross-border cooperation projects, Osijek, 15th September 2000

The seminar was organised by the Agency for local democracy and was dedicated to the elaboration of cross-border developmental projects. Various entities were present during this conference such as the representatives of the EDDS and of other cross-border initiatives, ministries, local and regional self-government bodies. They debated the possible future cross-border projects, especially in the field of economy.
Participation on the 3rd CEI Summit Economic Forum, Budapest, 22-25th of November 2000

The forum was organised by the Hungarian government, which took over the presidency of the Central European Initiative. EDDS representatives participated in round-tables, seminars and panel-discussions dedicated to questions of regional development and its importance.

Meeting regarding the reform of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava, Osijek, 29th of March 2001

This meeting between the members of the Euroregion was organised in order to discuss the future activities of the Euroregion and to suggest ideas about the foreseen reform of the cooperation. The conference was organised in order to debate and discuss the issue of institutional and organisational reform. There were two events pushing for reform, namely the entry of new members in the Euroregion, and the past experience and possible ways to improve the efficiency of the cooperation. The conclusion was that the existing model of the cooperation needed to be adjusted.

III Conference in Szeged, 23-24th of March 2001

The conference was organised by the Szeged Pact as an event under the „Szegedin process”. The conference was attended by the representatives of national and local/regional self-government bodies from Serbia, Hungary, Croatia, B&H etc. During the conference, EDDS was presented to guests by its representatives. Moreover, an establishment of the educational centre for local self-government bodies was agreed upon.

Conference “Cooperation of Bavaria and Tuzla regions in the context of Euroregional integrations”, Tuzla, 15th of November 2001

This international conference was jointly organized by Tuzla Canton and the Municipality of Tuzla, and was funded by the Hans-Seidel-Stiftung organisation from Munich. During the conference, experts from various fields and countries discussed about the possibilities of future cooperation in the field of technical sciences.

Seminar “Regional and cross-border cooperation – European experiences and perspectives for South-East Europe”, Brussels, 27th of November – 2nd of December 2001

Representatives of EDDS founding members were invited to this seminar, and they debated issues and opportunities for funding joint projects.
Seminar “Cross-border cooperation in Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava, Osijek, 11-12th of December 2001

This seminar was organised by the Council of Europe and the Agency for local democracy Osijek, and it was attended by various participants from Croatia, B&H, Hungary, and Vojvodina. During the seminar, various topics related to the cross-border initiatives in Europe were discussed. The seminar also covered themes related to the role of local self-government bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), schools, and media, in the processes of cross-border initiatives.

Study visit to Hungary with the purpose of best practices exchange in the field of implementation of the PHARE CBC Programme, 18-20th of February 2002

Together with the official representatives of the Ministry of European Integration (Croatia) and various regional self-government bodies, EDDS representatives attended a study trip to Hungary in order to learn about Hungarian experiences in implementing the PHARE CBC Programme. During the two days the Technology Centre in Eisenstadt, the Industrial park in Sopron, the Business incubator in Lenti, the castle and Nature Park in Szécsisziget, and the Nature Park in Örség (examples of Austria-Hungary, Slovenia-Hungary, and Slovakia-Hungary cross-border cooperation efforts) were visited.

4th Szegedin conference, Szeged, 2nd of March 2002

At the conference, topics related to the development of civil society and investment opportunities in Southeast Europe were discussed, with a special emphasis on cross-border cooperation initiatives in those processes. Mr Šarčević was the representative of the EDDS at this event.

Workshop on PHARE and INTERREG, Zagreb, 11th of April 2002

This conference was organised for members of various governmental bodies in order to introduce them to cross-border cooperation initiatives on the EU level. Topics such as sustainable development, development of institutions and human resources, cross-border cooperation in the field of economy and culture were discussed.

Congress on Euroregional cooperation, Strasbourg, 11th of June 2002

EDDS representatives and the County prefect of the Osijek-Baranja County attended this congress, dedicated to Croatia’s accession process to European institutions. The special emphasis of the conference was put on the importance of Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Hungary cross-border cooperation initiatives.
Seminar and workshops on cross-border cooperation, Ilok, 14th of November 2002

As part of the educational activities within the project “Democratization in eastern Croatia”, this seminar was organised for and attended by the representatives of local self-government bodies from Croatia, B&H, Serbia, Hungary, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other EU countries. The representative of EDDS, Mr Davor Brunčić, introduced the issue of cross-border cooperation, its experiences and challenges.

International conference “Cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe: opportunities and obstacles”, Osijek/Bizovac, 18-19th of November 2002

The EDDS organised this international conference in cooperation with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Council of Europe, and the East-West Institute. The purpose of this conference was to promote, stimulate, and enhance cross-border cooperation initiatives in South-eastern Europe, with a special emphasis on the opportunities for institutionalised cross-border cooperation efforts such as Euroregions. The conference served as a base for the exchange of best practices, experiences, ideas and opinions on European cross-border initiatives and programmes. More than 130 attendants, including representatives of various Euroregions and other regions involved in cross-border actions, governmental representatives, local governments, multilateral institutions, international organizations and foundations attended this conference.

Youth conference “Bridges to stability – the future of Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava”, Bizovac, 5-9th of May 2003

This conference was organised by the EDDS in order to discuss the situation of young people living in cross-border areas. The conference was attended by various representatives of youth organisations from B&H, Croatia, Hungary, and Serbia, by experts in various development fields and by representatives of the Council of Europe. During the conference a series of workshops were organised, and at the end the “Resolution on the position of young people in the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava” was accepted.

6th Segedin conference, Szeged, 7th of June 2004

This event was organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main topic was related to the perspectives in South-eastern Europe with an emphasis on regional and cross-border cooperation within the context of the continuation of the Szegedin process. EDDS president Mr. Imšir Imširović (from B&H) represented the Euroregion at the conference.
**Meeting between the Croatian-Hungarian workgroup for cross-border cooperation between local self-government bodies, 24th of February 2009**

Representatives of the Croatian and Hungarian members of the EDDS attended this conference, organised by the Croatian and Hungarian governments. The event’s purpose was to present cross-border development projects related to the South Transdanubian Region in the fields of spatial planning, infrastructure, and tourism. The meeting also covered questions related to the anticipated programme for cross-border cooperation between Croatia and Hungary.

**The Harkanian initiative**

The Harkanian initiative represents a parallel cooperation initiative, formed within the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava between Hungarian and Croatian members. That means it is a limited cooperation outside the focus of this case study; consequently, only a brief introduction is given here without a deeper analysis.

The initiative was established with the purpose of coordinating activities between Croatian and Hungarian partners to promote the preparation and implementation of joint cross-border activities between Croatian and Hungarian local and regional self-government bodies and other stakeholders. During the years 2000-2001 Hungarian and Croatian partners organised a series of meetings related to the continuation of the activities between Croatian and Hungarian members under the Hungary-Croatia CBC Programme.

In brief, the Harkanian initiative between Croatia and Hungary represents additional activities based on the framework established under the EDDS.

**Bilateral meetings**

The events organised under this umbrella are related to the bilateral cooperation meetings between two out of three member countries involved in the Eurozone. Some of the bilateral meetings are conducted by members from Croatia and B&H, but their majority is related to the continuation of cooperation between Croatia and Hungary.

The bilateral meetings, in addition to the “Harkanian initiative”, form another example of the continuation of cross-border efforts between some of the member states included in the EDDS. This means that the Euroregion provided a base framework for such new forms of cross-border cooperation between the partners. The case study presents the bilateral meetings between Croatian and Bosnian members of the Eurozone.

The bilateral meetings were the following:
Meeting between partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia following the establishment of the Consortium “Slavonian highway”, Osijek, 14th of October 1999

This meeting was organized by the Slavonija-Baranja County with the purpose of discussing future projects in the field of traffic infrastructure in Croatia and B&H. The Prefect of the Municipality of Osijek, Branimir Glavaš, introduced the visitors from Bosnia and Herzegovina (General Consul of the Republic of Croatia in Tuzla, Davorin Zagorsčak, and the Prefect of Posavina County). The main object of the meeting was the initiative of the new highway (so called “Slavonian highway”) that would connect the regions of Slavonia (Croatia) and Neretva (B&H). The necessity for cooperation between the involved Croatian and B&H municipalities was underlined. Moreover, the EDDS was recognised as a framework for this additional cooperation, and further possibilities about including additional municipalities in the “Slavonian highway” were discussed.

Development of the Crafts Register in Tuzla, Tuzla, 13th of April 2000

Following the invitation of the Ministry of Development and Entrepreneurship of Tuzla-Podrinj Canton in Tuzla, the representatives of Osijek-Baranja County visited Tuzla Canton in order to define future cooperation regarding the development of the Crafts Register of Tuzla Canton. Future projects in the field of economic cooperation between the two municipalities were also discussed.

Visit of the representatives of Tuzla Canton to the entrepreneurs in the area of Našice (Croatia), 20th of April 2001

A delegation of entrepreneurs and representatives of Tuzla Canton visited Osijek-Baranja County with the purpose to exchange experiences on best practices in the field of economy, tourism and culture. During the visit, future joint activities between the Croatian and Bosnian EDDS members were discussed and defined.

Cooperation between Posavina County and Vukovar-Srijem County, Orašje, 28th of February 2008

The topic of this meeting was the issue of future cross-border cooperation between the two counties. Partners from both sides agreed that the cooperation in the field of health care and culture needs to be improved, and a special emphasis was put on taking advantage over the available EU CBC programmes that support cooperation initiatives in the context of Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Other events

International regional chess league Danube-Drava-Sava

Chess players from the Eurozone initiated the organisation of the international chess league with the purpose of enhancing cooperation between chess clubs in the Euroregion, as well as other clubs in the wider area. The first Open Danube-Drava-Sava was organised in 2003, while the second one took place in 2005. The Danube-Drava-Sava chess league was recognised by FIDE, the World Chess Federation.

6.4 Development projects prepared by the members of the Euroregion

In addition to the aforementioned activities, the members of the Euroregion are engaged in the preparation and implementation of various projects funded under a number of EU programmes. Depending on their specific local and regional needs as well as prerequisites defined under specific programmes, the members of the Euroregion prepared these projects either mutually or in cooperation with partners outside the Euroregion’s membership.
Table 2: Development projects prepared and implemented by the members of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the project</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>General objective</th>
<th>Specific objectives</th>
<th>Year of implementation</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cross-border cooperation in measures management and protection against disasters  | PHARE HU      | **Lead partner:** Baranya County (Hungary)  
**Partners:** Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia)                              | To adjust the systems of protection against natural disasters to EU standards    | To establish a common system of informing and protection against natural disasters | 2005                   | 26,000 EUR   |
| and catastrophes                                                                   |               |                                                                           |                                                                                  |                                                                                     |                        |              |
| Sustainable development of small family farms in Baranya                            | CARDS 2003    | **Lead partner:** BIOPA association for organic and bio production Osijek (Croatia)  
**Partners:** Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia); Somogy Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Hungary) | To contribute to the sustainable development of rural economy in the Baranja region | To develop the programme for sustainable development of family farms in Baranja     | 2005-2006              | 140,000 EUR  |
| DIGITAL HISTORY                                                                     | 2000-2006 Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia | **Lead Partner:** Pécsi Egyházmegye  
**Partners:** Baranya Megyei Levélter; Baranya Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatósága; Gaudium Nostrum Pécsi | To increase the attractiveness of the cross-border region by promoting the applicant regions as a joint product for tourism, their | To increase the region’s competitiveness on an international level, which was achieved by processing the values hidden in shared | n/a                    | 257,090 EUR  |

17 Source: [http://www.ddseuro.org/](http://www.ddseuro.org/)
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the project</th>
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<th>Specific objectives</th>
<th>Year of implementation</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Network of plants</strong></td>
<td>INTERREG IIIA</td>
<td>Egyházmegyei Alapítvány (Hungary); Biskupski Ordinarijat; State archives Osijek, Museum of Slavonia; Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia)</td>
<td>transformation into an economic and tourist destination and an area turned towards the future</td>
<td>cultures, using 21st century technology</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>98.878 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Structured cooperation in cultural tourism**           | INTERREG IIIA | **Lead partner:** HZZ Osijek (Croatia)  
**Partner:** Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia), Employment office of Baranya County (Hungary)                                                                 | To contribute to the sustainable development of the herb market in the cross-border area                                                       | To develop a cross-border cooperation network of growers, harvesters, and resellers of herbs in order to ensure a sustainable supply chain for herb market | 2006-2007             | 432.425 EUR       |
| **Establishment of the eco network in the Podravina region** | INTERREG IIIA | **Lead partner:** Baranya county (Hungary)  
**Partners:** Osijek-Baranja County, Koprivnica-Križevci County, Virovitica-                                                                 | To ensure the sustainable development of the cross-border eco region                                                                         | To produce studies and databases which resulted from the Croatian-Hungarian cooperation and which                                          | 2006-2007             | 443.021 EUR       |
### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava**

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<th>General objective</th>
<th>Specific objectives</th>
<th>Year of implementation</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>@CCESS</strong></td>
<td>INTERREG IIIA</td>
<td>Podravina County (Croatia); Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Dél-Dunántúli Regionális Fejlesztési Ügynökség Kht; Baranya County Chamber of Commerce, University of Pannonia, (Hungary), self-government institutions in Komlo, Sellye and Barč</td>
<td>will define the current situation and offer of a complex analysis on the possibilities of sustainable development in the geographical area covered by the Ecological Region of Podravina</td>
<td>To contribute to the development of the digital society</td>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>187.300 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DONAUREGIONEN+</strong></td>
<td>INTERREG IIIC</td>
<td>Lead partner: Baranya County (Hungary) Partners: Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia), University of Pecs; regional NUTS III authorities in Pecs; Foundation for young economists (Hungary)</td>
<td>To formulate a joint spatial development strategy of the Danube region based on the results of Donaudatenkatalog (INTERREG IIC / PHARE-CBC) and</td>
<td>To strengthen the Danube as an important European corridor; to support the growth and competitiveness of functional regions;</td>
<td>2009-2012</td>
<td>2.000.000 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region**

*Case Study of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the project</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>General objective</th>
<th>Specific objectives</th>
<th>Year of implementation</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DONAUREGIONEN (INTERREG IIIB CADSES) projects</td>
<td>DONAUREGIONEN (INTERREG IIIB CADSES) projects</td>
<td>Region, Nitra Self-Governing Region, Trnava Self-Governing Region (Slovakia); Self-Government of Pest County; Pest County Regional Development Non-profit Agency, Scientific Association for Spatial Development – Gödöllő (Hungary); National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria; INCD URBAN PROJECT Bucharest; Caras-Severin County Council (Romania); Republic Agency for Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia; The Provincial Secretariat for Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government – Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Serbia); Institute for spatial</td>
<td>to develop comprehensive development strategies of the Danube area regions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the project</td>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>General objective</td>
<td>Specific objectives</td>
<td>Year of implementation</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploration of economic cooperation opportunities in Baranya County and Osijek-Baranja County</strong></td>
<td>PHARE CBC</td>
<td><strong>Partners:</strong> Baranya County (Hungary), Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the implemented projects, the members of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava were engaged in preparing other projects aimed at the development of the cross-border area. Although these projects were not implemented, they serve as additional proof of the efforts conducted by the members of the Euroregion to improve the area’s opportunities. Examples for such projects that were not implemented include:

**Education TOP & C for the Euroregion**

This project was aimed at improving cooperation and networking between young people in the Eurozone in order to enhance their mutual exchange of knowledge. The project’s goal was to improve the living conditions for young people living in the cross-border area, such as through multiculturalism, exploration and learning, organisational skills, creativity, democratic values, communication skills, etc. The target group for the project were young people from Tuzla (B&H), Osijek (Croatia), and Pécs (Hungary). The defined main output of the project was a web platform for young people that would provide the institutional sustainability of the project in long term.

During the project preparation, partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Hungary organised a series of meetings related to development of the project idea and defining project activities.

**Database for SMEs in the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava**

The purpose of this project was to create an interregional database of the small and medium enterprises operating in the EDDS, and to create a framework for their mutual future cooperation in order to catalyse economic development and improve their overall competitiveness on international markets. Enterprises from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Hungary were to be included in the entrepreneurial framework that would help them to adjust their activities in line with the demands of modern global markets. In addition to the creation of the database, joint promotional activities for SMEs were foreseen.

Project partners from all three countries were actively engaged in the preparation of this project proposal, but unfortunately the project did not reach the implementation phase.
6.5 Other activities of the edds related to project preparation and implementation

In addition to the aforementioned projects jointly prepared and implemented in the Euroregion, members are also active in the field of informing local actors in their respective regions on available funding opportunities for their projects. In addition to their direct involvement in various projects, whether as lead partners or partners, members (municipalities, cities, chambers of trade and commerce) are also active in informing the public on existing programmes.

Informing local actors is conducted in several ways. Firstly, relevant information on available funding opportunities on both national and EU level are presented to various stakeholders in the included areas via the web-sites of the Euroregion’s member organizations. Secondly, some EDDS members are involved in various publication activities (creation of brochures, guides, weekly/monthly publications and newsletters etc.) that include special columns and news related to national and EU programmes in different segments. Those publications are available online and/or are printed and distributed to stakeholders in the cross-border area. Thirdly, some of the members organize presentations and/or workshops for stakeholders in their regions in order to reach them more directly and introduce them the available funding opportunities.
7. Management & budget (income/expenses)

The Eurozone does not have its own separate budget. Since its establishment, the costs of organising various events (such as seminars, conferences, meetings etc.) have been covered directly by the participating members, and especially by the host of such events. Regarding the organisation of internal meetings (such as conferences of presidents and working boards), the Statute defines that the costs of food for participants must be covered directly by the host, while the costs related to accommodation, travel, and translation (if needed) should be covered by the participants themselves. Operational costs for the Secretariat are covered by the member organisation of the Euroregion’s President.

The annual membership fee, defined by the Assembly, would be another source for financing the activities of the Eurozone. The management of such finances is the responsibility of the President’s member organisation. However, the possibility of charging yearly membership fee has not yet been used. Regarding the financing of joint projects, the Statute defines in Article 38 that the “expenses related to joint projects should be equally divided across all participants in the projects that are to be prepared”.

Nevertheless, the EDDS has not managed to solve the problems related to the lack of a separate budget, financing, and financial planning during its existence. All initiatives related to this issue remained on a “theoretical” level and were not implemented in reality. On the other hand, while the lack of a separate budget did not prevent the Euroregion members from organising cross-border events and preparing joint projects or implementing other related activities, the unsolved budget questions did have a negative impact from the following aspects:

- the inability to plan the Euroregion’s activities from mid to long term due to ad hoc financial contribution of the members; and
- the inability to professionalise the working organ of the Euroregion.
8. SWOT analysis

During the preparation of this case study, interviews were conducted with representatives of the members from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (unfortunately, no answer was received from Hungarian representatives). During the interviewing process, we asked the representatives about their thoughts regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The author of this case study combined the results of the interview with his own insights. The results of this approach are two SWOT tables. The first table deals with the analysis of the Euroregion’s internal operation, while the second one deals with the organisation’s future development.

**SWOT 1: Operations, capacity, organisational structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• experienced and expert staff engaged in the working organs</td>
<td>• organisational structure is not professionalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• established and institutionalized cooperation</td>
<td>• no separate budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• organisation based on best practices in EU cross-border initiatives</td>
<td>• operations carried out entirely by voluntary work, which can undermine the possibility for more serious and demanding engagements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• organisational structure composed of different nationalities and backgrounds</td>
<td>• lack of initiative by certain countries (since Bosnia and Herzegovina took over the presidency, activities of the Euroregion are stagnating)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Opportunities**

- Possible inflow of new members (together with new ideas and experiences in solving operational weaknesses)
- EU programmes related to enhancing human capacities

**Threats**

- Strong cross-border initiatives in the wider region that could take some of the members due to the lack of activities of the “Danube-Drava-Sava” during the last few years
### SWOT 2: Future development of the cross-border area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Experience in the joint preparation and implementation of EU programmes</td>
<td>• Lack of initiative and engagement of some of the members of the Euroregion regarding the development of future projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developed communication channels between a wide spectre of stakeholders in the three countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Euroregion is open to new members which provides with opportunities for new partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A wide spectre of existing EU programmes (especially CBC programmes) relevant for the programmatic goals of the Euroregion are available</td>
<td>• Major CBC programmes are bilateral in nature thus opportunities are limited for trilateral projects (e.g. Hungary-Croatia, Hungary-Bosnia and Herzegovina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong cross-border initiatives in the EU context are appropriate for conducting joint activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

The future plans and goals of the Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava cross-border cooperation are represented through interviews. There is one important prerequisite to be ensured in order for the Euroregion to start working further on the achievements of the defined goals and the priorities of cooperation. That general prerequisite is the active performance and ceaseless initiative behaviour from the members and especially from the presiding member. Nevertheless, the Euroregion demonstrates a significant decrease in terms of activity and initiatives. The presidency of the Euroregion was appointed to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and subsequently the activities of the cooperation are in stagnation. The main reason for this is the lack of initiative of the partners from B&H. Since the four-year-mandate given to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010 is expected to finish soon, and the presidency over the Euroregion will be given either to Hungary or Croatia, it is expected that the activities of the cooperation will intensify in the next period.

Regarding the future goals of the cooperation, the following table combines the findings of the interviews as well as the strategic goals defined within the document “Eurozone Danube-Drava-Sava Strategy for the period 2007-2013”18.

Table 3: Strategic goals and activities for the future development of the EDDS as defined in the strategy for the 2007-2013 period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority fields</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Economy         | • stimulating research activities of the universities in the area and include them in the activities of the Euroregion  
                  • extending the field of engagement of the spin-off companies in the area  
                  • establishing new types of economic cooperation, such as clusters and innovation chains  
                  • developing new tourism offers  
                  • developing new agricultural products  
                  • developing new cultural offers  
                  • improvement of networking between institutions relevant for economy development  
                  • realisation of the V/c transport corridor  
                  • establishment of the traffic system of the Euroregion |

18 This document is the last strategic document of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava. A strategy for the next period has not been developed yet.
### Priority fields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Society</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• enhancing mutual links between various communities within the Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• networking of civil society organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• joint promotion and education related to the linguistic heritage of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• organisation of sport events and competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International promotion of the Euroregion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• international promotion of the Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• representing the Euro-region’s interests in the context of EU integrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• establishment of better connections with other Euroregions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal operations, management and structure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• institutionalisation of the administrative system of the Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• institutionalisation of the executive system of the Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improvement of the communication channels within the Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensuring better financial sustainability for the Euroregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• professionalization of the working organs, especially the secretariat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Euroregion has identified and implemented a series of strategic goals. Some of the goals were achieved via projects prepared and implemented by certain members of the Euroregion. These cover the following areas:

- protection against natural catastrophes and disasters;
- preservation of nature and biodiversity;
- rural development, with special emphasis on small farms;
- tourism, with special emphasis on diversified offers such as eco-tourism, cultural tourism, thematic tourism, and adventure tourism offers;
- development of an agricultural market;
- development of a digital society; and
- spatial planning.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that the Development strategy for the period 2007-2013 is a single document consisting of only two pages, it is not possible to review the programmatic goals of the strategy in more details. The document itself is generally written in the form of a draft. Except for the strategic goals, the strategy has not identified priorities thoroughly. Hence, neither the measures nor the activities needed for implementing the given goals were described. In addition to that, there are no indicators defined within the strategy that could serve the assessment of the realisation of the strategic goals. In short, the Development
strategy of the Euroregion lacks many elements and as a two-page-document does not sufficiently provide information. We can conclude that the strategy demonstrates the lack of a serious engagement of the Euroregion members regarding the strategic planning of the cross-border area.
10. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation Area

There are several levels of locally and regionally specific characteristics of the EDDS. These features can be divided into the following categories of features: geography, communication networks, economy, tourism, and culture.

Geography

The area of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava encompasses the southern part of Pannonia and Peripannonia. These areas represent one of the most valuable agricultural space on the European continent. The area represents a coherent physical geographical entity, and is surrounded by mountain complexes: the Alps and the Dinaric Alps). There are four important rivers in the region: the Danube, the Sava, the Drava, and the Tisza that all played an important role in the historical development of this area. Within the Pannonian Valley, there are four major sub-regions: Slavonia (Croatia), Baranya (Hungary and Croatia), and Bosnian Posavina including the Tuzla area (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Communication networks

The Euroregion’s area has a developed traffic infrastructure such as roads, rails, river traffic system, and airports. Major rivers are present in the area (especially the Danube and the Sava), the road traffic represents a special field of interest regarding the traffic connections of the EDDS with the surrounding areas. There are several river traffic routes in the Euroregion’s territory, some of which are international traffic routes. The major boat ports are stationed in Osijek, Slavonski Brod, and Belišće (Croatia), in Brčko (B&H), and in Barcs (Hungary). Regarding air-traffic, there are airports in Osijek, Pécs, and Tuzla.

Economy

The cross-border area is known for its food industry and healthy food products. The economic actors are mutually well connected within the chambers of trade and commerce. Also, there are many fairs for entrepreneurs and producers organised regularly in the area, which significantly contributes to the further enhancement of the economy and a better networking of actors in the Euroregion with other EU stakeholders and markets.

Tourism

The area is rich in diversified tourism offers such as rural, health, religion, sport, and cultural tourism. Further, the area offers unique opportunities for hunting and fishing. The EDDS is actively engaged in promoting tourism on its territory, while members of the cooperation also promote specific tourist features in their own areas. Tourism is promoted on two levels: either
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integral (inter-regional) or particular (regional/local). Moreover, the area is known for its wide valleys, preserved environment, forests with wide spectre of wildlife species and birds, picturesque wine yards, traditional basements, historical palaces, castles, and churches (especially the ones dating from the Baroque period). The cultural and historical heritage as well as the preserved folklore represents the main base for developing tourism in the area.

Online promotion of the regions of Slavonia and Baranja. The brochure presents joint cross-border promotional activities and is available in three languages (English, Croatian, and Hungarian19):

![Brochure Image]

Culture

The areas included in the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava have most of the time belonged to the central European culture, which had served as a base for the development of traditional historical ties between the cross-border areas as well as their nation-states. There are numerous joint cross-border cultural and folklore initiatives, organised especially under various EU projects. The crown of cultural achievements in the area was in 2010, when the Hungarian city of Pécs was the European Capital of Culture.

19 Source: [http://www.obz.hr/hr/pdf/baranja/baranja.swf](http://www.obz.hr/hr/pdf/baranja/baranja.swf)
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Figure 9: Tourism map of the Tuzla Canton, part of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava

Source: http://www.ddseuro.org/
11. Summary

The Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava represents an institutionalised cross-border initiative of regional self-government bodies (i.e. municipalities, cantons, and cities), their related regional economy, trade chambers, and other organisations from the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Hungary. The Euroregion is entirely open to new members and since its establishment several municipalities have been included.

The Euroregion was established in 1998 in Pécs. The Statute of the cooperation was signed by the founders: Baranja County, the City of Pécs, the Economy and industry chamber of Pécs-Baranya (on the Hungarian side), Osijek-Baranja County, the City of Osijek, HGK Osijek, the Chamber of Economy Osijek (on the Croatian side), Tuzla-Podrinj Canton, the Municipality of Tuzla and the Economy Chamber of Tuzla (on the Bosnia and Herzegovina side). At this moment, the Euroregion has 24 member organisations.

The most active period of the Euroregion was between 1998-2010, when numerous joint activities, projects and events were organized and implemented by the members. In that period, an organisational reformation was performed which improved its operational and organisational capacities. However, there are still weaknesses and problems within the Euroregion which will need to be addressed by its members in order to achieve full operational and organisational potential that are needed in order to achieve the goals.

The Euroregion is facing the following problems:

- The organisational structure is not sufficiently professionalised and relies on the voluntary work and personal engagement and enthusiasm of the staff.
- The financial sustainability of the Euroregion is challenged since it has no separate budget and no sources of income.
- There is a lack of initiatives by certain members; there is an especially low activity rate of the members from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which held the presidency of the Euroregion in the past years (2010-2014).

Nevertheless, the EDDS has achieved significant results in the areas of economy and social development of the cross-border areas. It provides institutional framework for all other cross-border initiatives between various actors in the area, thus the Euroregion has a significant potential for enhancing the development of the included areas in the future.

The organisation represents a long-lasting cross-border initiative in the region with a long history of development and activities. The Euroregion is an institutionalised cross-border initiative that has existed long enough to achieve developmental results but also shows certain weaknesses that cross-border cooperation efforts are facing today.
Both of these facts are the main reasons why the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava was chosen as an example of best practices in cross-border cooperation for this study. As new cross-border initiatives will arrive in the future and, hopefully, achieve better developmental impact in overcoming challenges and obstacles than the one shown in this case study. We hope that one of the reasons for their success will be based on the knowledge provided within the relevant knowledge bases such as this study.
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Activity report for the period 2005-2006:
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Radio-television of Tuzla Canton web site:

Information on the establishment of the Euroregional cooperation Danube-Drava-Sava Croatia:
13. Annexes

Annex 1: Outline of the Euroregion Danube-Drava-Sava²¹

The territory is divided into the following colours: blue - Bosnia and Herzegovina; brown - Croatia; Green - Hungary.

²¹ Source: [http://www.ddseuro.org/](http://www.ddseuro.org/)
Annex 2: Territory of the Euroregion on the map

Source: authors' work based on Google Maps' image
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2016

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CROSSING THE BORDERS
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border
Drina Euroregion

Written by
Regional Science Association (Serbia)
András Ricz
Imre Nagy, PhD
Anna Csiszár Molnár
# Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

## Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

### Drina Euroregion

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1. Introduction

This case study, dealing with the so-called Drina Euroregion is intended to illustrate institutionalised cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Bosnian border. It is part of the project titled “Crossing the Borders” about the geographic and structural characteristics of cross-border cooperation in the Danube Region, led by CESCI – Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives. The case study was elaborated in December 2014 and January 2015 by three researchers of the Regional Science Association (RTT) from Subotica, Serbia.

The task was the to prepare two separate case studies on cross-border cooperation (EGTC, Euroregion, twin cities etc.) which are institutionalised, have been established by cooperation between territorial administrative entities and do have development aspirations. Moreover, these examples have to present the border sections between Serbia and Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and/or Bosnia and Montenegro. The content requirements have also defined to choose such case studies that are the best examples of cooperation from a functional point of view: the collaboration intensifies cross-border relations, a kind of local identity can be dedicated to the area, the participants succeed in exploiting development funds, and their objectives contribute to the socio-economic development of the affected region.

Having in mind all these requirements, the authors of this paper have decided to find two different examples: one about regional cooperation, and another about the collaboration of two municipalities. This case study deals with the establishment and operation of the Drina Euroregion, while the other study is about the cooperation of the cities of Subotica from Serbia and Osijek from Croatia.

The reasons for choosing the Drina Euroregion as the best example of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Bosnian border are manifold. On the one hand, there were specific events in recent history taking place in the administrative units that initiated this cooperation, namely the Balkan wars of the 1990s, and on the other hand, the geographic, demographic, geopolitical and socio-economic changes resulting from setting new borders in this area. Yet there is the Drina River, which presents identical natural values on its both banks.

The Drina Euroregion is the youngest representative of this specific type of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans. It unites territorial entities of different administrative levels along the borders, which were set in the 1990s between four new countries, all of them being former member republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Among the members of the Drina Euroregion there is a town¹ from Croatia, a municipality² from

¹ Županja
² Plužine
Montenegro, three towns\(^3\) and three municipalities\(^4\) from Serbia, a canton\(^5\) of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and further eight Bosnian municipalities\(^6\) (Figure 1).

![Map of the Drina Euroregion](http://euroregijadrina.com/)

*Figure 1: Map of the Drina Euroregion*

Source: [http://euroregijadrina.com/](http://euroregijadrina.com/)

Another specific structural feature of this Euroregion comes from the fact that these four countries are at different stages in their EU accession. Namely, Croatia is the newest, 28\(^{th}\) member state of the European Union (since 1 July 2013), Montenegro and Serbia have already begun their pre-accession processes (Montenegro received official candidate status on

\(^3\) Užice, Loznica, Šabac

\(^4\) Bajina Bašta, Ljubovija, Mali Zvornik

\(^5\) Bosansko-podrinjski kanton Goražde

\(^6\) Foča, Novo Goražde, Rogatica, Višegrad, Srebrenica, Bratunac, Zvornik, Bijeljina
17 December 2010, while Serbia received full candidate status on 1 March 2013), whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina has only begun the Stabilization and Association Process (a bilateral SAA agreement has been signed in 2008, ratified in 2010, but it is still not in legal force).

The territory of the subject area lies in the Western Balkans, which is a southeastern European area including Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Albania. All of these countries are involved in the IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation
Programme\(^7\) and the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme,\(^8\) as well as five IPA cross-border programme areas of the European Territorial Cooperation (Croatia–Serbia;\(^9\) Serbia–Bosnia and Herzegovina;\(^10\) Serbia–Montenegro;\(^11\) Bosnia and Herzegovina–Montenegro;\(^12\) Croatia–Bosnia and Herzegovina\(^13\)). Figure 2 shows how these programme areas cover the territory of the Drina Euroregion.

One must take into consideration that this case remarkably differs from the other examples of cross-border cooperation from the Danube Region in many respects. The easiest way of illustrating this difference is to compare the level of cooperation and collaboration along the Iron Curtain in the early 1990s. This two-decade-long backwardness is present in all spheres of everyday life. There are too many historic wounds that cannot be healed in such a short time. Having in mind the above, the establishment of the Drina Euroregion itself is a pleasant surprise and a prospective initiative.

Therefore, if we try to prop the above mentioned content requirements concerning the best examples of cooperation from a functional point of view, the expectations should not be exaggerated.

Firstly, the collaboration within the Drina Euroregion has intensified cross-border relations, but only compared to the previous situation at the end of the 20\(^{th}\) century.

Secondly, a kind of local identity can be dedicated to the area, which is based on the Drina River and the population living along its banks. The natural, demographic and socio-economic conditions are very similar in the whole region.

Thirdly, when talking about development funds and their exploitation, it has to be stated that this is a question of the future, since there have been no considerable grants and development funds available for the actors of the observed area. In addition, even the available resources have not been exploited adequately. It is clearly visible when looking at the modest lists of projects from this area, which have been supported from EU sources.

Finally, it is also a requirement for choosing a case study that the formulated objectives should contribute to the socio-economic development of the affected region. In the case of the Drina Euroregion, even the fact of its establishment can be considered as a step forward, as the joint

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\(^7\) [http://www.adriaticipacbc.org/](http://www.adriaticipacbc.org/)

\(^8\) [http://www.southeast-europe.net/en/](http://www.southeast-europe.net/en/)


\(^10\) [http://srb-bih.org/?lang=en](http://srb-bih.org/?lang=en)


\(^12\) [http://www.cbc.bih-mne.org/](http://www.cbc.bih-mne.org/)

formulation of common goals in preserving and utilising the river as a natural resource makes a good basis for any further development initiatives.

This introductory chapter is followed by a presentation of the cross-border cooperation; the events preceding and leading up to its establishment; the organisation, the management, the functioning, and the activities of the Drina Euroregion; and finally an insight into its future pathways. In order to provide a basis for analysing and understanding the future development of the Euroregion, we carried out a SWOT analysis (see chapter VIII) and listed the main points from the development program of the Drina Euroregion (see chapter IX).

As the main source of information presented in this study, we used the website of the Drina Euroregion (www.euroregijadrina.com) and its official documents. Moreover, we conducted personal interviews with Mr. Zdravko Krsmanović, the president of the Drina Euroregion as well as with 6 municipal officials and 17 local residents from the study area.
2. The development of the cross-border cooperation

The so-called Drina Euroregion unites territorial units of different administrative levels along the Drina River, which became divided by new state borders after the civil war in Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

The Croatian municipality of Županja (now the Town of Županja) became a border municipality towards Serbia and Bosnia after Croatia had formally declared its independence in June 1991. The border between Bosnia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, though unchanged, became the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska) in 1995. According to the Dayton Agreement the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is composed of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and of Republika Srpska. Due to this division, the former settlement of Goražde has been divided, so Goražde (the Euroregion’s member) in the Bosansko-podrinjski kanton belongs to the Federation, while the municipality of Novo Goražde is in the Republika Srpska. Finally in 2006, with the dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between 1992 and 2003) the municipality of Plužine from Montenegro became a border settlement with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Presumably, there have been many injuries and huge sufferings caused by the state border changes of the past century. These events have burdened the relations between the nations living in this region; however, their common history within the same country – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from 1918, then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929, and finally the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991 – together with their similar languages, cultural and family relations may speed up the cooperation of these four countries along the Drina River, within an institutional framework based on European principles.

Since this study is focused on cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Bosnian border here follows an overview of this relation, based on the analysis of the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia published in 2011.15

As we mentioned above, the relations between the Serbian and Bosnian states were set down in the 1995 Dayton Agreement, according to which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

14 The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement, Dayton Accords, Paris Protocol or Dayton-Paris Agreement, is the peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, United States, in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. These accords put an end to the three and a half-year-long Bosnian War, one of the armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia. The agreement’s main purpose was to promote peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to endorse regional balance in and around the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

(predecessor of Serbia) could establish special relations with the Republika Srpska on the basis of mutual interests with respect to the presence of a Serb majority in both countries. Since there are special institutional co-operation agreements already in force, the authors from ISIG claim that cross-border co-operation is at a satisfactory level.

Regarding territorial and environmental planning, the Drina River that flows along the border presents considerable potentials as a water reservoir, an energy source and a touristic attraction. As examples they mention the opening of new river ports on the Serbian side and the construction of the new rail segment between Valjevo in Serbia and Zvornik in Bosnia.

The intensity of cross-border mobility is fostered by the fact that the border between Serbia and Bosnia may be crossed without a passport. Educational and cultural cooperation is more problematic because the two systems differ greatly. For example, education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is differentiated on the basis of religion. However, textbooks from Serbia are used in the Serbian schools in Republika Srpska.

The experts from ISIG have defined several obstacles to intensified cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Bosnian border. Firstly, Serbian and Bosnian institutional actors are mostly unprepared for planning and implementing cross-border cooperation projects, with serious shortcomings in their business approach and a lack of mutual trust due to recent events. Secondly, the establishment of political borders is questioned by the local population, leading to the phenomenon that the concept of “cross-border planning” is simply unclear to the inhabitants. Lastly, due to the limited knowledge of customs laws and provisions, there is virtually no concrete activity other than national and international planning, which often offers no financial contribution to local activities.

The proof of this last statement will be clear from chapter 6, which deals with the former activities of the Drina Euroregion together with some, actually quite few, other projects realised along the border; and chapter 9, which presents the future plans and goals of the cooperation, with regard to the set of goals stated in the relevant operative programmes. These operative programmes are exactly results of national and international planning without concrete plans for allocating resources and funding to the envisioned programmes.

### 2.1 Establishment of the Drina Euroregion

The idea of establishing a joint organisation of the local authorities that lie along the banks of the Drina River was a bottom-up initiative. The events preceding this initiative were related to the preservation of the Drina, since some Italian, German, and American investors wanted to utilise the hydropower of the river without any consultation with the actors of the subject area. Therefore the residents of the region formulated a 12-point list of their demands (charter) for the protection of the Drina River and its tributaries, as well as for starting organised water management activities, which had not existed along the course of the Drina beforehand. Their
aim was also to create a spatial plan of the region. Finally, another important claim of the charter referred to the protection of an endemic species of predatory fish, called *drinska mladica* (lat. Hucho hucho).

On 26 January 2012, the members of its Assembly established the Drina Euroregion as a civilian organisation, in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of BiH no. 32/01). On their first meeting they also passed their Statute and the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.

According to its Statute, the Drina Euroregion is a grouping of local governments or other sub-state entities that are situated in the basin of the Drina River in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia.

The members will strive to encourage joint actions, enhance and achieve development in the region, to create a perspective of improving the quality of life and the living standard of its population.

The members work together for the following objectives:

- Establishing and developing relations between the people and the institutions of the region as a prerequisite to better knowledge, understanding and cooperation;
- Creating the conditions for economic development that is consistent with the environment;
- Establishing common development interests, preparation, determination and harmonization of a common development strategy;
- Creating cultural exchange programs;
- Providing conditions for a successful flow of experiences and their application within EU programs.

The organisation operates under the name Drina Euroregion (Euroregija Drina). Its headquarter is located in Foča, Republika Srpska according to the seat of the President. The official languages within the Euroregion’s bodies are the official languages of its members.

The Drina Euroregion is represented by the President. The acts and work of the Euroregion are public. The publicity of its work is mainly achieved by issuing its own publications.
In order to achieve the above listed objectives, the Drina Euroregion:

- Organises joint activities to propagate the richness and diversity that make up the unique value of togetherness;
- Organises and supports the development of cooperation in the fields of preservation of the Drina River as a valuable natural resource, transport and communications, agriculture, fishery, tourism, and cultural values;
- Undertakes activities aimed at promoting and participating in joint projects.

Members of the Drina Euroregion can be either regular or honorary members. Regular member can be any unit of territorial self-government in the basin of the Drina River, which adopts the act on joining the Euroregion. Honorary members may be non-governmental organisations and citizens’ associations. Observer honorary member can be any unit of territorial self-government, which has not adopted the act on joining the Drina Euroregion.

The rights, duties and responsibilities of the members of the Drina Euroregion are:

- Participating in identifying the common policies and programs of the Euroregion;
- Deciding on the funds and property of the Euroregion and other acts;
- Cooperating to achieve common goals;
- Participating in activities of mutual interest;
- Entitled to elect and be elected in the bodies of the Euroregion;
- Rightful to be regularly and timely informed about the work of the bodies and the financial operations of the Euroregion;
- Responsible for acting in compliance with the provisions of the Statute and other acts of the Euroregion;
- Required to protect and promote the reputation of the Drina Euroregion.

The members are required to participate in the financing of the Drina Euroregion, while honorary members may do this only voluntarily and optionally.
3. Determination of geographical confines

Below follows a description of the geographic and demographic features of the region where the Drina Euroregion is situated. There is also an introduction of the member territorial units: the municipalities, towns, and the canton.

3.1 The Serbian–Bosnian border section of the Drina Euroregion

From all the border sections that are affected by the territory of the Drina Euroregion, the state border between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is the longest one, with a length of approximately 300 km from the Bosnian–Serbian–Croatian triple border point on the Sava River to the other triple border between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. Along this borderline there are ten border crossings, which enable penetrability between the countries.

“The border was established in its present form in the 19th century during the Ottoman rule. At one time, the border separated Bosnia from the principality of Serbia, and gradually evolved between 1815 and 1833. It remained unchanged after the Berlin Congress (1878) when Bosnia passed under Austrian sovereignty and Serbia was recognised as an independent state. Only the stretch south of the Lim River (towards the Tara River) was fixed after the 1912-1913 Balkan War, when Serbia expanded into the Turkish province of Novi Pazar.”

After 1995, it became the border between Bosnia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Serbian municipalities that belong to the Drina Euroregion are Užice, Loznica, Šabac, Bajina Bašta, Ljubovija and Mali Zvornik, while the Bosnian municipalities along the border and belonging to the Euroregion are Bijeljina, Zvornik, Bratunac, Srebrenica, Višegrad, Rogatica, Novo Goražde and Foča municipalities as well as Goražde canton.

It can be stated based on the census data presented in Table 1 that the number of inhabitants in the Serbian–Bosnian border region has fallen significantly since 1990.

3.2 The Serbian–Croatian border section of the Drina Euroregion

Since the territory of the Drina Euroregion covers areas both from Serbia and Croatia, we have also considered this border section. However, it has to be stated that the Croatian member of the Euroregion, the Town of Županja is not bordering with any Serbian municipalities.

“The central stretch along the Danube is the oldest border section between Serbia and Croatia: this demarcation was established in the Karlowitz Treaty between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires in 1699, while the northern stretch was set in 1954 as the border between the Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Serbia, on the basis of indications provided by a special federal committee for borders (the Đilas committee). Given its large Croatian ethnic community, the Baranja region, on the right riverbank of the Danube, was assigned to Croatia. Other deviations from the river course are based on ancient municipal rights. The committee also proposed to trace a border line between the Danube and the Sava rivers; as a result, the region of Srijem, once Croatian, was divided according to the ethnic distribution of Serbs and Croats.”

The state border between Serbia and Croatia was defined in 1992 after the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Between two countries and their border regions the main transport axis represents the E-70 motorway, which is a road axis that is utilised daily by thousands of passengers who travel between the Middle East and Western Europe. The E-70 motorway is part of the backbone of the Pan-European transport corridor X.

3.3 The Croatian–Bosnian border section of the Drina Euroregion

The border section between the Croatian and the Bosnian parts of the Euroregion is quite short. There are only two neighbouring settlements, the towns of Županja in Croatia and Bjeljina in Bosnia. This border has also evolved in the past.

“The northern demarcation was established following the Karlowitz Treaty in 1699, with two subsections drawn up later in the Passarowitz Treaty. (…) Throughout the 18th century until 1918, this demarcation traced the border of the Austrian provinces of Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia-
Herzegovina, which joined the empire in 1878 after a long period of Ottoman rule.

In 1945, this border divided the Socialist Republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the only change involving a group of Croatian villages which were handed over to Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus bringing the borderline to Mount Plješevica near Bihać. Apart from a few minor changes in the 1950s, the border remained the same until 1991, when it became an international border (no longer an administrative division) between the two post-Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the border was internationally recognised in 1992 there have been serious objections since the early 1990s, beginning with the establishment of two independent Serbian states on both sides of the border that basically controlled the entire border area: the Serb Republic of Krajina (Srpska Krajina, dissolved in 1995) and the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska). Both republics made a clear attempt to merge into one single state. On the Croatian side, the border area was under UN control as a protected zone from 1992 to 1998 (UNPA). Afterwards, Croatia gained full territorial sovereignty and today the border area on the Croatian side is divided into nine administrative unions called županja.18

3.4 The Montenegrin–Bosnian border section of the Drina Euroregion

The Drina Euroregion also includes a municipality from Montenegro (Plužine), bordering with Foča from Bosnia and Herzegovina, so this border section also needs to be presented.

The area was initially inhabited by the Illyrians; then the period between the 5th and 7th centuries saw the occupation of Slavic tribes that dominated the area until the 14th century when the Turkish Empire overruled the Serbian power over the Balkan territory.

After the Balkan Wars, the new territorial map of the Balkans was drawn up and after 1945, Bosnia and Montenegro were parts of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, enjoying the status of a Republic. As a result of the internal and external political situation, in 1989, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia dissolved. The Bosnian War of 1992 led to the creation of the new multi-ethnic state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Montenegro became part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 3 June 2006, when it declared its independence (thus becoming the 192nd member of the United Nations on 26 June). Bosnia and Herzegovina recognised Montenegro as an independent state on 21 June 2006, and diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level were established as of 14 September 2006.

The cross-border area between Montenegro and Bosnia is located in the southeastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the northwestern part of the Republic of Montenegro. The area is mostly mountainous, with an average altitude of more than 2,000 m. The rivers flow into either the Adriatic Sea or the Black Sea basin. In the mountains, the rivers flow in deep canyons, such as the Tara River Canyon, the deepest one in Europe, 78 km long and 1,300 m high. Infrastructure in the border area is in poor condition as a result of the lack of investments, which were directed instead towards the development of the more industrial regions of the two countries. The roads and the railways are also in very poor condition as a result of a low level of investment for maintenance and expansion during the period of crisis, as well as due to the overall distance of the cross-border area from the strategic national axes and corridors of both countries. No highway passes through the border area.\(^{19}\)

### 3.5 The Montenegrin–Serbian border section of the Drina Euroregion

The Drina Euroregion includes one municipality from Montenegro (Plužine), though it is not bordering with Serbia.

Montenegro and Serbia had been under a common state since the First World War. After the Second World War, Serbia and Montenegro were both member states of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which ceased to exist in 1992. From 1992 to 2002, Serbia and Montenegro created the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 2002, an agreement was reached to redefine the relations between the two republics, so the Belgrade Declaration was signed and a new Constitution was adopted, establishing the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Montenegro held a referendum seeking its full independence on 21 May 2006. The State Union effectively came to an end after Montenegro’s declaration of independence on 3 June 2006 (recognised on 8 June 2006). On 6 June 2006, the Parliament of Serbia declared Serbia as the successor of the State Union. After the end of the State Union, Montenegro and Serbia established the policy of good and open neighbourly collaboration.

This area is one of the most culturally diverse in Europe. It is both ethnically (Serbs, Montenegrins, Bosnians, Albanians) and religiously (Christians, Muslims) mixed, but at the same time, as a result of the similarity of administrative and political systems, it has been very homogeneous throughout history. Cross-border relations are therefore closer and the cultural unity is stronger than on many other borders of the former Yugoslavia. There are no linguistic barriers in the area, despite the presence of different religious beliefs and traditions.

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Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

Drina Euroregion

Both countries are characterised by an unbalanced regional development, and the economic status in the border area is much lower than in the rest of the countries. There are significant differences between urban centres and rural areas, between different geographical locations, as well as between the centre and the outskirts. The border area has abundant natural resources such as vast forests, ski resorts, and a large number of spas. This makes it one of the most important tourism areas for Serbia, as well as an important inland tourist area for Montenegro – even if the latter has a more developed and focused tourism industry along the Adriatic coast.  

3.6 Geographic features of the Drina Euroregion area

The Drina Euroregion has 17 administrative units among its members, which lie in four different countries, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (see Table 1). All of them are situated in the basin of the Drina River. The total area of the Euroregion (as the sum of the members’ area) is 7,907 km², while according to the latest census (from 2011 in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, and from 2013 in Bosnia) the total population of the Euroregion counts 628,685 people.

Table 1: Members of the Drina Euroregion, their area and population number

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Županja – town</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14,435</td>
<td>16,383</td>
<td>12,090</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plužine – municipality</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4,272</td>
<td>3,246</td>
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<td>Užice – town</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>82,723</td>
<td>83,022</td>
<td>78,040</td>
</tr>
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<td>Serbia</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>86,875</td>
<td>86,413</td>
<td>79,327</td>
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<td>Serbia</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>123,633</td>
<td>122,893</td>
<td>115,884</td>
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<td>Bajina Bašta – municipality</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>673</td>
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<td>26,022</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ljubovija – municipality</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>18,391</td>
<td>17,052</td>
<td>14,469</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mali Zvornik – municipality</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>184</td>
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<td>Goražde – canton</td>
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<td>645</td>
<td>21,881</td>
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<td>11,603</td>
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<td>Višegrad – municipality</td>
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<td>Srebrenica – municipality</td>
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<td>527</td>
<td>36,666</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border
Drina Euroregion

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bratunac – municipality</td>
<td>Republika Srpska</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>33 619</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>21 619</td>
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<td>Zvornik – municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bijeljina – municipality</td>
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<td>734</td>
<td>96 988</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>114 663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The are no census data for Bosnia and Herzegovina from the beginning of 2000s, only from 1991 and from 2013. Source of data: official statistics of the countries*

Features of the terrain:

Situated in the south-eastern part of Europe, the area of the Drina Euroregion consists of three highly diverse geographic parts: the northern part is a plain area along the rivers Sava and Drina; the central part of the area is a hilly landscape, while the southern part is mountainous.

The northern part of the region is covered by lowlands in the basin of the Sava River, with fertile agricultural lands and low hills.

To the south the altitude above sea level increases and the area becomes a hilly landscape with low hills, valleys and ravines, ranging from about 200-350 metres to 350-600 metres. The upper regions in Bosnia are located below the eastern slopes of Jahorina at an altitude between 335-1 300 meters.

Further south the terrain becomes rather mountainous in the region of Divčibare, Golija, Zlatar, and the Tara Mountains, which are potential areas for economic development due to the presence of natural resources and expanding opportunities for tourism.

On the northern Bosnian side are lowlands (300 metres above sea level) with the basins of the Sava and Drina rivers, with the valleys of the rivers Tolisa, Tinja, Brka, Gnjica and Janja, offering the most favourable conditions for agricultural production. This is the most important Bosnian area for grain production.

In a morphological sense, the southern part of the Euroregion, in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, has a diverse relief with high mountains and canyons, deep valleys and river fields. The terrain is mostly mountainous including some of the most rugged landscapes in Europe. The average altitude is above 2 000 meters.

The most of the municipalities are located in the middle, hilly part of the Euroregion with an average height above sea level between 300 and 700 meters. This part is very rich in various minerals and hydro-electric potential as important resources for industrial production. Due to the configuration of the terrain the most of the arable land in this area is on slopes, subject to erosion, impeding the use of agricultural mechanisation. This land is climatically and physically more suitable for fruit growing and pasture.
Climate:

The climate in the Euroregion is continental, defined by hot, dry summers and autumns as well as cold winters with heavy snowfall due to the presence of the mountains.

In the north of the Euroregion, in the Sava River Valley there is a temperate continental climate. Due to the openness of the Pannonian Plain, its lowland parts in the north are under the influence of the Pannonian continental climate, while the hilly mountainous regions to the south at 700 meters above sea level are under the influence of the mountainous climate. Precipitation is a very important climatic element. Apart of the air temperature, it is of great importance for the survival of flora. The quantity and the annual and territorial distribution of precipitation are different. The amount of rainfall increases from the northeast to the south and southwest. The middle part of the Euroregion is characterised by significant rainfall, rains are frequent, as well as floods. Around Užice the climate is mostly mountainous in the higher and moderate-continental in the lower regions.

On the south the climate varies, but in general it is characterised by the continental climate, with cold winters and hot, humid summers together with well distributed rainfall patterns and heavy inland snowfall. The mean annual temperature ranges between 2 and 8°C. Going towards the valleys of the Piva, Tara, and Komarnica rivers the temperature increases, and the average temperature reaches about 8°C in the valleys of these rivers.

Climatic conditions along the Drina River are defined by its north–south direction with decreasing altitude from high through medium to low, from the mountains towards the Pannonian Plain. The source and the highest area of the basin are influenced by the Mediterranean climate. Its influence gets weaker in the upper part of the basin, towards Foča, where tempered continental climate becomes more prevalent. Finally, in the lower basin of the Drina River, downstream from Zvornik, the climate passes into continental.

The precipitation amounts decrease with the flow, but not proportionally. High mountain regions of the basin over 2 000 meter above sea level receive 2 000-3 000 mm atmospheric precipitation annually. In the moderately mountainous middle region, the precipitation varies from about 1 400 mm in Foča to 890 mm in Ljubovija, while around the mouth of the Drina it is only 700 mm. Considered as a whole, the basin of the Drina River on average receives 1 030 mm of rainfall a year, based on which it is rich in water. Therefore, the Drina and its larger tributaries (Tara, Piva, Lim) possess large flow rates.

Hydrography:

The Drina River, with several high dams, forms 185,3 km of the border between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It joins the Sava River in the north. Both rivers are rich in natural resources, various species of fish, and other fauna. This area involves the Tara National Park and Lake Perućac.
The rivers in the south of the Euroregion flow in the mountains along deep canyons such as the Tara River Canyon, which is the deepest canyon in Montenegro and in Europe with 78 km in length and 1 300 meters at its deepest point. There are around forty natural and seven artificial lakes in the area. This region is rich in water and forests that cover 32% of the territory of the border region.

The hydropower potential of the Drina River and its tributaries has long been recognised. Great water resources, uniform annual and perennial flow, a significant decline in the longitudinal river profiles and canyon – gorge structure of some river valleys make the Drina suitable for building powerful concrete dams, to form artificial lakes. In addition to those already built, there are some projects for constructing new ones. Regarding its hydropower potential the Drina has no equal in the Balkans, but at the same time its hydropower is the least utilised. The economically exploitable water power of the river is estimated at 14,4 billion kWh, while there has been used less than 5 billion kWh so far, which is about 35%. From the possible 40, only nine large hydropower plants have been built on the Drina, Piva, Lim and Uvac rivers.

**Nature:**

The Drina and its tributaries are rich in fish. In its upper course it has the characteristics of a mountain river, while downstream from Loznica the Drina is a lowland river. Therefore it has various types of fishes typical either to mountain or to lowland rivers. In its upper flow there are species like salmon, trout, barbel, nase, gudgeon, chub, and grayling. Downstream from Višegrad one can find pike, catfish, burbot, and roach. In its lower course, there is bream, tench, crucian carp etc.

There are thick forests along the Drina River and its tributaries in the Tara, Zlatibor, Jahorina and Zelengora Mountains. The southern mountainous area in both countries is characterised by a very well preserved natural environment offering natural resources and biodiversity, suggesting a high potential for the development of agriculture, power generation, and tourism.

**Population:**

Ethnicity has played an important role in the recent history of the region and is reflected in the current profile of the Euroregion. In the 1990s extensive migrations of inhabitants took place between these countries on all sides of the borders. As a result, today’s demographic picture in the border areas is significantly different from the one before the war. These changes seem irreversible given the slow and difficult return of refugees. Most of the population decline is visible in the rural areas along the borders.

The biggest minority group in Croatia is the Serbian minority. Relations between Croats and Serbs have been tense and difficult during the nineties, but the situation has somewhat improved since the beginning of the new century. The ethnic structure in BiH is complex. BiH
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consists of three constituent nations: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. Relations of those constituent nations have been, and continue to be a main challenge for the stability and development of the country. The biggest national minority in BiH is the Roma minority. In Serbia the ethnic majority of the Euroregion’s population is Serbian, while the largest ethnic group is that of the Bosniaks.

Today, all inhabitants in the Euroregion enjoy full equality in each country, ensured by the constitutions of the countries strongly guaranteeing minority rights.

Economy:

Thanks to the fertile soil in the valley basin, the main economic resource in the north of the Euroregion is good quality land suitable for all types of agricultural production. There are landscapes of intensive agriculture with the production of cereals and vegetable crops, as well as fruits. Bijeljina (BiH), Županja (Croatia) and Šabac (Serbia) are large centres for production and trade of food. The rivers Sava and Drina contribute to the development of many branches of industry – metal industry, water management, agriculture, river transport, and tourism. Therefore the key industrial activities within the Euroregion are food-processing, wood-processing and furniture manufacturing, chemical and light metal industry, and textile industry.

The western and southern parts of the region are favorable for tourism in the summer (canyons of Piva, Sutjeska, Tara and Zlatibor mountains) and winter (Jahorina, etc.). The surrounding countryside, the environment and the abundant natural beauty make good preconditions for the development of mountain sports and recreation, religious, rural and hunting tourism.

Transport:

The region has a connection with the Belgrade–Zagreb motorway in its northern part. Furthermore, a section of the Belgrade–Podgorica main road is passing through it in the east, while the Foča–Goražde–Višegrad–Užice road and the Nikšić–Plužine–Foča–Sarajevo route also cross the area of the Euroregion.

The above indicates that the entire region has a connection only with the E-70 international road in the north, while in all other directions it is far away from all the important European corridors. No highway passes through this area. The largest part of the road network consists of class 1 roads and local, class 2 roads.

Concerning the railroads, the Belgrade–Bar railway line passes through Užice, however it is in a very bad condition. Practically, all other forms of transport within the Euroregion, so railway, air and water transport are at a negligible level.
3.7 Administrative units – members

As it is shown in Table 1, there are seventeen members of the Drina Euroregion, which represent different levels of self-government, from municipality through town to canton level. Figure 4 presents and the text below describes these administrative units.

![Administrative structure of the Drina Euroregion](image)

**Figure 4: The administrative structure of the Drina Euroregion**
*Source: RTT’s own construction*

**Županja (Croatia)**

Županja is located in Slavonia, Eastern Croatia. The town, which in 2011 counted 12 090 inhabitants (in 1991 14 435 and in 2001 16 383), lies in an area of 50 km² along the Sava River and it is the centre of the Županja Microregion. The majority of its population is Croat (96,72%), but there are also Serbs, Bosniaks, Albanians, Hungarians, and others nationalities.
This town is an important junction of major road routes in east-west and north-south directions. The Belgrade–Zagreb motorway passes next to Županja, which is the main connection between Bosnia and other parts of Europe.

Concerning industrial production, there are food processing companies, a factory of agricultural machines and a wood processing firm. The surrounding forests are rich in many kinds of wildlife, and the waters of Županja region offer a rich fishery potential. During the year there are traditional cultural events such as harvest feast and actors' festival, and the town is known for its gastronomy as well.

**Bijeljina (Republika Srpska)**

The town of Bijeljina is the centre of the municipality located in the northeastern part of Republika Srpska in Bosnia, at the confluence of the Sava and the Drina. These two rivers represent the border with Croatia in the north and Serbia across the Drina. The town has an attractive geo-strategic position: it lies along the borders of Serbia, Croatia and Republika Srpska; here are the crossroads of the major urban and industrial centers – Belgrade, Novi Sad, Banja Luka, Šabac, Tuzla, and Sarajevo; moreover, it is at the edge of the Pannonian Plain and the Balkan Peninsula.

Bijeljina municipality covers an area of 734 km². The estimated number of inhabitants in the municipality of Bijeljina, according to the 2013 census is 114,663 (in 1991 it was 96,988). This is the second most populous municipality in Republika Srpska, right after Banja Luka.

Thanks to the fertile soil, Bijeljina is one of the centres for the production and trade of food, mostly cereals and vegetable crops. It lies on a vast underground lake of thermal water used for spa treatment in the famous Banja Dvorovi, six kilometers from the town of Bijeljina. The municipality has become an attractive tourist destination visited by more and more domestic and foreign tourists.

**Zvornik (Republika Srpska)**

The territory of the municipality of Zvornik covers an area of 376 km², and it is located in northeastern Bosnia. Zvornik lies on the eastern slopes of Majevica at an altitude of 146 m. The town has a favorable geographical position and is located in the middle of the road towards three major urban centers: Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Sarajevo. The municipality of Zvornik has 63,686 inhabitants according to the 2013 census (67,795 in 1991).

The municipality has 61 settlements. The Drina River with its tributaries provides a significant hydroelectric potential. Zvornik is one of the nine most developed municipalities of the Republika Srpska. It is rightly considered as an urban, commercial, communications, industrial, medical, educational, sports, cultural and tourist centre of the wider region. For its great strategic importance Zvornik is considered for the „key to Bosnia“.
The Drina River and the Lake Zvornik are rich in trout and suitable for fishing, water sports and vacation, which presents a solid base for the development of tourism.

**Bratunac (Republika Srpska)**

The territory of the municipality of Bratunac is located in the eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as part of the Republika Srpska, and it covers an area of over 293 km² with 21 619 inhabitants (2013 census, 33 619 in 1991). The Drina River forms the border with Serbia (municipalities of Ljubovija and Bajina Bašta). The town itself is situated 3 km from the border with Serbia, 140 km from Sarajevo, and 210 km from Belgrade. The municipality covers a large lowland belt on the left bank of the Drina River.

The economic activity in the municipality takes place within shops, construction, industrial and transport companies and two farms.

The rapid flow of the Drina River offers possibility of drifting, and the municipality of Bratunac used it in promoting its tourism potential. The development of agriculture can be based on favourable climate, altitude, hydropotential and traditions.

**Srebrenica (Republika Srpska)**

The municipality of Srebrenica lies in the eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Republika Srpska. It is a small mountain town of 527 km². The current population counts 15 242 people (according to 2013 census). However, before the war in Bosnia Srebrenica had 36 666 inhabitants (1991 census), with an ethnic structure of about 75% Muslims (about 27 500 people), 22,7% Serbs (about 8 300 people) and 2,3% other nationalities at that time. The current composition of the population is quite different. Based on the preliminary results of the census from 2013, the share of Muslims fell to 44,8% (about 7 000 people), while the share of Serbs has more than doubled to 54,5% with slight rise in absolute numbers (about 8 500 people).

Under the 1995 Dayton Agreement that ended the Bosnian War, Srebrenica was included in the territory assigned to Bosnian Serb control as part of the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although guaranteed under the provisions of the Dayton Agreement, the return of survivors was repeatedly obstructed. In 2007, verbal and physical attacks on returning refugees continued to be reported in the region around Srebrenica.

Before 1992, there was a metal factory in the town, as well as lead, zinc, and gold mines nearby. The town's name (Srebrenica) means "silver mine", the same meaning as its old Latin name Argentaria. Before the war, Srebrenica also had a big spa and the town prospered from tourism and salt mining, too.
Višegrad (Republika Srpska)

The municipality of Višegrad is located in the east of the Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 16 km from the border with Serbia. The municipality with its 448 km² is among the smaller ones in Bosnia, with 11 774 inhabitants according to the last census of 2013 (21 199 in 1991).

Until 1970, the narrow gauge railway Belgrade–Sarajevo passed through Višegrad. Today a part of it is renewed for tourism purposes, the famous Šargan Eight between Mokra Gora and Kremani in Serbia, and the reconstruction works on the railway line from Mokra Gora to Višegrad are in progress. The Drina River also provides great opportunities for tourism development.

Until the war Višegrad had a dynamic socio-economic development with an extremely developed metal, chemical, textile and wood processing industry. Today there is a hydropower plant, a company for producing steel ropes, a textile firm, a rehabilitation centre, and a commercial company. Three hydropower stations have been built on the Drina River so far, which has turned a greater part of its course into a quiet lake surface.

Rogatica (Republika Srpska)

Rogatica spreads in the mid-eastern part of the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It covers an area of 645 km² with a population of 11 603 inhabitants according to the preliminary results of the 2013 census (almost half than twenty years ago; 21 881 in 1991).

Rogatica is an area of outstanding natural beauty, with clear mountain rivers, dense deciduous and coniferous forests, blossoming pastures and meadows, rich cultural and historical heritage, clean air and healthy homemade food.

Widely famous Borike are a paradise for those who want to enjoy nature walks, collecting medicinal herbs, berries and mushrooms; or to engage in hunting, biking or horseback riding.

Novo Goražde (Republika Srpska)

The municipality of Novo Goražde, previously called Srpsko Goražde, was established with the division of the prewar municipality of Goražde in 1994, and verified after the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. It is bordered by Goražde, Čajniče, Rogatica, Višegrad and Foča.

Novo Goražde is a place where many important roads and rivers cross, civilisations meet, nations, religions and customs get mixed. The municipality covers 119 km², the population after the 2013 census was 3 391. It is located in the heart of Upper Drina Region and below the eastern slopes of Mount Jahorina.
Within its industrial zone there is a wire factory, machine works, a refrigerator factory, and several private firms and small private companies.

**Foča (Republika Srpska)**

The municipality of Foča is a spatial unit occupying an area of 1 135 km², along the upper part of the basin of the Drina River. Located in the southeastern part of Bosnia, respectively the Republika Srpska, the eastern and southern boundaries of the municipality are also the borders with Montenegro, while in the north it borders with the Federation of BiH. Foča has a favorable geographical position, at the intersection of the roads towards Sarajevo and Nikšić.

Foča had 19 811 inhabitants at the last census in 2013, so the number of people has almost halved in the last two decades (in 1991 there were 35 491 inhabitants).

This area includes the Sutjeska National Park with the Perućica forest, the Zelengora and Maglić Mountains; the deepest canyon in Europe, the Tara River Canyon shared by this municipality and its Montenegrin neighbours, a number of lakes teeming with fish, as well as important natural reserves. All these attractions are awaiting lovers of unspoilt nature.

Many streams are crossing this area, which is thus rich in water. Therefore it would only be necessary to introduce certain technical procedures in order to ensure the benefit of the wider community.

**Bosansko-podrinjski kanton Goražde (Federation BiH)**

Goražde is the smallest canton in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It covers an area of 573 km² and has a very favorable geographic position, extending to the eastern slopes of Jahorina, Borovac and Klek.

Within the canton there are the municipalities of Goražde, Foča-Ustikolina and Pale-Prača. The current population of the whole canton is 25 336 (2013), while the same area had 40 205 inhabitants in 1991. Goražde is the administrative, political, educational, and cultural centre of the canton.

This canton has always been a link between the East and West. It is bordering with Serbia and Montenegro, and the routes to Dubrovnik in Croatia as well as to central Bosnia are passing through it. Goražde is rich in natural beauty. There are excellent conditions for tourism development, especially rural, but also adventure tourism, attractive to people who like untouched nature and camping.
Šabac (Serbia)

The town of Šabac lies in the northern part of western Serbia and represents the economic and cultural centre of Podrinje and the wider area. The geographical position of the municipality is very convenient because it is located on important traffic routes, passing towards Belgrade, Novi Sad, Loznica, Valjevo and Bijeljina.

The municipality of Šabac covers an area of 795 km² and has 115,884 inhabitants (in 2011, 123,633 in 1991, and 122,893 in 2002). The town itself has 52,822 inhabitants according to the census of 2011 (53,919 in 2002), with about 70,000 people living in its suburbs.

The basic economic potentials are in high quality land suitable for all types of agricultural production and the water of the rivers Sava and Drina suitable for the development of many branches of industry, water management, agriculture, river transport, and tourism.

The dominant industries in the town are chemical, pharmaceutical, metal, mechanical, food and construction material industry. There are nearly 4,200 companies (about 2,800 entrepreneurs) operating in Šabac.

Loznica (Serbia)

Loznica is located at the foot of the northern slopes of the Gučevo Mountain, at an altitude of 142 m. The municipality of Loznica extends to 612 km², lying between the Cer Mountain, the southern parts of Mačva, the Drina River to the west, and Gučevo and Boranja Mountains to the south. According to the 2011 census it has 79,327 inhabitants (86,875 in 1991 and 86,413 in 2002), while in the town of Loznica there are 18,714 people.

Loznica has a good geographic and traffic position. The main roads Belgrade–Šabac–Loznica–Zvornik–Tuzla–Sarajevo, and Bijeljina–Loznica–Mali Zvornik–Bajina Bašta–Užice and further to the Montenegrin coast are passing through Loznica. The road through Loznica–Osečina–Valjevo–Lajkovac connects to the Ibar highway. The Šabac–Zvornik railroad is also passing through Loznica.

Loznica is the natural, economic, transport and cultural centre of this part of Podrinje.

Ljubovija (Serbia)

Ljubovija is a municipality located on the road Šabac–Bajina Bašta. It is a mountainous area in western Serbia along the border with the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ljubovija covers an area of 356 km² and has 14,469 inhabitants according to the 2011 census (formerly 18,391 in 1991 and 17,052 in 2002). The municipality consists of the settlement of Ljubovija with 3,946 inhabitants, and another 27, mostly smaller villages.
Agricultural land in the municipality of Ljubovija occupies 57.5% of its surface, and beside mining and industry agricultural production is the largest source of income.

From the branches of industry, there is mining, metal processing as well as chemical, building materials, food and tobacco industry in Ljubivija. Despite its relatively satisfactory growth rates, the degree of industrialisation of the area is below the level of similar municipalities in Serbia.

Ljubovija with its environment is involved in the tourism offers of Serbia. The surrounding villages of Azbukovica are abundant in natural beauty and conditions for the development of mountain sports and recreational, religious, rural and hunting tourism. The Drina Regatta in Ljubovija has a tradition of almost a decade.

**Mali Zvornik (Serbia)**

The municipality of Mali Zvornik is located in the western part of Serbia, in the Middle Drina Valley. The western boundary of the municipality to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska is the Drina River. On the opposite bank of the river, there is the Bosnian municipality of Zvornik.

The area of the municipality is 184 km², which is the smallest one in Mačvanski District and one of the smallest municipalities in Serbia. The total population according to the census of 2011 is 12,482 (it was 14,029 in 1991 and 14,076 in 2002). The settlement Mali Zvornik itself has 4,384 inhabitants, while the whole municipality has 11 local governments on its territory.

The only economic organization is the hydropower plant Zvornik, employing 80 workers and producing more than 22 billion KWh of electricity.

Mali Zvornik, which is outstanding primarily in the preserved nature of the surrounding mountain landscape and water resources of the Drina River, provides ideal conditions for rural tourism and tourism with special interests, primarily fishing and hunting.

**Bajina Bašta (Serbia)**

Bajina Bašta is a town in western Serbia, on the right bank of the Drina River, below the Tara Mountains. The whole municipality, lying on 673 km² has 26,022 inhabitants according to 2011 census (29,747 in 1991, 29,151 in 2002). The town itself has 9,323 inhabitants.

The once peripheral and quite closed region in Serbia has gradually become an important centre of forestry, energy industry, and tourism. Hydropower plants with artificial lakes on the Drina and the Tara river have supplemented and embellished the tourist card of Račanski district. Tara is a national park with an area of 19,200 hectares and covers the largest part of this mountain.
Užice (Serbia)

The town of Užice is the seat of the Zlatibor District, located on the banks of the Đetinja River in Serbia. Its area is 667 km². The highway to the Adriatic coast and the railway between Belgrade, Serbia and Bar, Montenegro pass through Užice. There is the state border with Bosnia and Herzegovina in Mokra Gora and the Ponikve airfield is qualified for civilian air traffic.

According to the census of 2011 the whole municipality had a population of 78 040 (82 723 in 1991 and 83 022 in 2002) and the town itself has 52 199 inhabitants (54 717 in 2002).

The town is a centre of metal and machine industry and fruit-growing. Užice, as the economic centre of western Serbia, is one of the few cities in Serbia with a surplus in foreign trade. This fact confirms that the economy of Užice is healthy, competitive and export-oriented.

Companies from the manufacturing and coloured metal industry, construction, trade, textile and wood industry and other branches of tertiary activity have the greatest impact on the local economy.

The potentials of the rivers Drina, Lim, Uvac, and Đetinja are used to raise five hydroelectric power plants. Zlatibor and Tara are the leading centres of mountain tourism, while Zlatar, Golija and Javor mountains are also popular.

Plužine (Montenegro)

The municipality of Plužine is located in northern Montenegro and covers an area of 854 km². This is an extremely high land, with peaks over 2 300 m. It is a historical territory since it has been one of the most important desinations of migration; it took namely quite a long time for the population to descend from the high mountains to relatively lower lands. Currently the municipality has 3 246 inhabitants, while a decade ago there were a thousand more people living in these settlements.

In the municipality of Plužine there is no industry that could undermine the purity of air, while the meteorological conditions are favorable for the dispersion and diffusion of polluants.

Although most of the inhabitants of Plužine live from agriculture and animal husbandry, this area has great potentials for tourism development. Huge canyons of the Tara, Piva, Komarnica, and Sušica, Piva Lake, alpine massifs with transparent lakes, idyllic villages in the Piva Mountains could be ideal scenes for adventure and holiday. Unfortunately, most of this natural wealth is not valued in the right way.

In the municipality of Plužine there are some industrial, forestry, agricultural and commercial enterprises, with a high proportion of micro-enterprises making up 71% of all businesses.
4. Organisational and institutional structure, operation

The bodies of the Drina Euroregion are:

1. Assembly
2. President
3. Executive Board
4. Supervisory Board

Assembly

The Assembly is the representative and the highest body of the Drina Euroregion. The Assembly is formed by the legal representatives of the member territorial self-governments. Each member’s representative is entitled to one vote in the Drina Euroregion. Each member appoints one representative and his/her deputy.

The Assembly of the Drina Euroregion decides on the number of representatives and its structure. The status of the representative of a member in the Euroregion is acquired by submitting a written decision on the appointment, issued by an authorised body of the respective member.

Concerning its scope of work and competence, the Assembly of the Euroregion:

a) Passes the amendments to the Statute of the Drina Euroregion, the internal rules of procedure, the annual program of the Euroregion, the financial plan and annual financial statements, decisions on admitting new members and awarding the observer or contributing institutions status, the decision on the award of public recognition of the Euroregion, as well as any other activities that the Statute has not explicitly delegated to other bodies;

b) Selects the President and Vice-President of the Drina Euroregion, as well as its Supervisory Board, the members of the commissions and the members of the Executive Board;

c) Considers the realisation of program activities and other acts of the Euroregion, the reports on the work of the Euroregion’s bodies, and other issues of importance to the operation of the Euroregion;

d) States the basic elements of the policies of the Euroregion contained in its programs, and the methods of ensuring, distributing and using the resources available to the Drina Euroregion for achieving its objectives.

The Assembly holds regular sessions at least once a year, as a rule every time in another member state. The Assembly sessions are convened by the President of the Drina Euroregion on his/her own initiative, by a reasoned decision of the Executive Board or the Supervisory
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Board, or if the majority of the members require it. The Assembly can elect a working presidency and entrust it to conduct the session. The Assembly generally makes decisions by unanimous vote of the members present, except in cases when the Statute and the Rules of Procedure prescribe a different majority.

President

The Drina Euroregion has a president and a vice-president. They are elected by the Assembly for a two-year mandate with the possibility of re-election, so that the president and the vice-president are from different countries.

The President convenes and presides over the meetings of the Assembly and the Executive Board, signs their acts, adjusts the work of the bodies, presents and represents the Euroregion, and performs other duties provided for in the Statute.

Executive Board

The Executive Board is the executive body of the Drina Euroregion and it has 17 members. The Executive Board is elected by the Assembly for a term of two years, in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure. Of these 17 members, the president of the Drina Euroregion and the vice-president are ex officio members of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board is accountable to the Assembly within the limits of the powers and duties entrusted to them. The Executive Committee or any of its members can be revoked if they do not meet the obligations laid down in the Statute, or act contrary to the provisions of the Statute and the guidelines established by the Assembly.

The duties of the Executive Board are that it ensures the implementation of the Statute, other acts and guidelines established by the Assembly; performs financial plan, cares about the proper use of funds and making of implementation decisions; organises and coordinates cooperation with other organisations; follows the work of commissions and considers their proposals; regulates and organises publishing and information activities of the Drina Euroregion; appoints the secretary of the Executive Board; determines the organisation to perform professional duties of the Euroregion and adopts the respective acts; and performs tasks entrusted to it by the Assembly necessary for the normal functioning of the Drina Euroregion, using already existing structures that work in the field of cross-border cooperation.

The Executive Board meets regularly at least once every six months, each time in another member state. The decisions of the Executive Board are valid if the majority of its members support them. The Executive Board shall be convened by the President of the Drina Euroregion at its discretion, at the request of one third of the members of the Executive Board or by the Supervisory Board.
Supervisory Board

To protect the regularity of its operations, the Drina Euroregion established the Supervisory Board. It has a president and four members elected by the Assembly for a term of two years. Members of the Supervisory Board may not be members of the Executive Board. The president and the members of the Supervisory Board may be revoked under the conditions and in the manner prescribed by the Executive Board and its members. The Supervisory Board supervises the implementation of acts adopted by the bodies of the Drina Euroregion, as well as the regularity of material and financial operations. It submits a report to the Assembly about its work and the results of the supervision.
5. Composition of the working organ

Since its establishment in January 2012 the Drina Euroregion has its headquarters in Foča, which is a Bosnian member municipality situated in the Republika Srpska. It has an office, the address of which is 77 Cara Dušana Street, 73300 Foča, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. This office is the seat of the President and the Secretariat.

There are commissions established by the Executive Board made up of experts and professionals from the member municipalities, responsible for different areas such as:

- **Hydropower**: for example, the Drina Euroregion has managed to ban the construction of hydropower plants on the Sutjeska River, a tributary of the Drina;
- **Water quality**: working for preserving the quality of the Drina River from its source to its mouth;
- **Tourism in protected areas**: responsible for the activities on preparing and implementing the project titled “Drina ecological region of Europe”;
- **Waste water management**: dealing with the construction of sewage plants;
- **Agriculture**: coordinating activities for developing regional products.

According to the Statue and the rules of procedure, these bodies have regular meetings in order to resolve the important questions for the operation of the Drina Euroregion.
6. Main activity areas, profile

The activities performed by the Drina Euroregion since its establishment can be followed on their official website at www.euroregijadrina.com. In the first part of this chapter, we give an overview of these activities, followed by a description of the residents’ view on the Euroregion, while in the third part we give an insight into all the cross-border projects realised within the area of the Drina Euroregion and between the states of its members.

6.1 Activities of the Drina Euroregion

The following list summarises all the activities realised within the past three years of operation of the Drina Euroregion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td>The Initiative Committee of the Drina Euroregion was founded on a meeting held in Foča, and the decision was made to establish the Preparatory Committee of the Drina Euroregion which included representatives of the municipalities of Foča, Goražde, Bijeljina, Novo Goražde, Bajina Bašta, Loznica, Bratunac and Ljubovija.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 January 2012</td>
<td>Constitutional Assembly of the Drina Euroregion in Foča, Republika Srpska with the participation of 17 administrative units from the basin of the Drina River, coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>A delegation of the Drina Euroregion visited the County of Istria in Croatia. The seat of the Adriatic Euroregion is in Pula. In the delegation there were representatives of the municipalities of Foča and Bratunac from BiH, and Bajina Bašta from Serbia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 March 2012</td>
<td>Celebration of World Water Day. At a meeting of the Executive Board of the Drina Euroregion in its extended composition, held in Bajina Bašta, it was concluded that all 17 towns / municipalities that make up the Euroregion would celebrate the World Water Day on 22 March to call attention to the importance of water and to promote sustainable water management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 May 2012</td>
<td>The president of the Drina Euroregion, Zdravko Krstmanović participated at the International Conference titled Ecotourism in protected areas, held in St. Petersburg, Russia. He presented the potential that encompasses the area of the Drina Euroregion, indicating three protected areas: national parks Durmitor, Sutjeska and Tara, Nature Park Mokra Gora with the ethno village of Drvengrad and the town of Višegrad with the old bridge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region**

**Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border**

**Drina Euroregion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Višegrad faced environmental incident. A large amount of floating waste came into Drina Lake with the Lim River from Serbia and Montenegro. The waste originated from the hydroelectric power plant Potpeć in Serbia, because during its recent maintenance and cleaning, they let trash and floating waste into the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>President of the Drina Euroregion expressed his objection to working on projects of hydropower plants on an ad hoc and profit oriented basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 December 2012</td>
<td>US Ambassador to BiH Patrick Moon began his visit in Foča with a meeting with the president of the Drina Euroregion, Zdravko Krsmanović.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 February 2013</td>
<td>An expert conference titled Water potential of the Drina River Basin and the integral development of the region, was organised by the Drina Euroregion, Italian OXFAM and Kaliopolis, and held in Bijeljina. The participants concluded on the following: “The construction of hydropower plants on the Drina with the majority share of foreign capital in the ownership and control structure would be national treason.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>There was a repeated environmental incident in Višegrad, when hundreds of cubic meters of waste material were released over the Višegrad Hydroelectric Power Station. The waste material arrived with the Lim River from Serbia and Montenegro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2013</td>
<td>The World Day for the protection of rivers from high dams was celebrated on 15 March in Kumanica on the border of Serbia and Montenegro, where representatives of the Environmental Movement Lim from Priboj expressed once again their disagreement with the construction of hydropower plants on the Lim River. They also requested to declare the Lim a protected natural resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>Professors and students from the Technical University of Vienna, Department of Spatial Planning, stayed in Goražde from 22 to 24 April. The visit was organised as part of the preliminary project entitled Prospects for development in Goražde Canton, which would be realised in the framework of master studies at the University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

### Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

**Drina Euroregion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 May 2013</td>
<td>Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to BiH Renzo Davidi, Spanish Ambassador to BiH Maria Aurora Mejia Eraskvin and Bulgarian Ambassador to BiH Angel Angelov, together with the head of the Belgian diplomatic mission in BiH Jean-Pierre Bibek, deputy Slovenian ambassador David Brozina and Second Secretary of the Italian Embassy Ilaria Ragnoni visited the municipality of Foća. They also met the president of the Drina Euroregion. The main subject of the discussion was the integral development of the area in the basin of the Drina River, and the current activities of the Euroregion, as well as the potentials for cooperation of the Drina Euroregion with other regions in Europe, especially with the Danube Region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 November 2013</td>
<td>Euroregion Drina and OXFAM Italia in collaboration with the municipality of Bratunac organised a panel discussion titled The hydropower project Central Drina and its impact on the environment. The participating representatives of the designer from the Institute Jaroslav Černi from Belgrade and of the reviewer of the Institute for Water Engineering from Sarajevo have discussed the current state of the technical documentation. On the basis of all the parameters that have so far related to this project, the story of the construction of three hydroelectric power plants on the Drina River stretching from Zvornik to Bajina Bašta would be totally unrealistic in the near future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During 2014</td>
<td>The list of activities of the Drina Euroregion in 2014 is based on an interview with its president conducted on 03/02/2015: 1. Consideration and evaluation of the impacts of large hydro plants on the environment in the area of the Euroregion 2. Consideration of the possibilities of utilising hydro potential on the middle flow of the Drina River between hydropower plants in Zvornik and Visegrad, in the area of Bratunac and Srebrenica 3. Activities related to the construction of small hydropower plants in the Sutjeska National Park Members of the Euroregion are of the opinion that they should not allow the construction of small hydropower plants on the territory of the National Park. Despite this opinion, there have already been made all plans, contracts have been signed, and the foreign investors are only waiting for the building permit. The Euroregion members’ opinion is to make zoning within the National Park area in order to define different categories of protection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2 The residents’ opinion of the Drina Euroregion

The activities of the Drina Euroregion are primarily intended for developing the Drina River as a natural resource. The Drina is the river of all the people and the settlements along its banks, having numerous ties with the population. Thus the future of the Drina is an important question to all.

In order to reveal the opinion of the residents and the administrative workers or representatives of the member local governments about the Drina Euroregion, we made interviews with a random sample of interviewees from the riverside settlements. The aim of this non-representative survey was to ask people what the river meant in their lives, how they felt about it, and what type of cooperation they had with people and institutions from the other side of the Drina. They were also asked about the Drina Euroregion, whether they knew it, its operation, and if there was a need for such cooperation in their region. Finally, they were asked to name some activities related to the Drina Euroregion.

The interviews were conducted partly in person, partly by phone, and we managed to speak to 23 respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro.

The answers concerning the Drina Euroregion can be divided into two groups. The majority of the residents had never heard about the Euroregion or cannot evoke the context of mentioning it, while a few younger respondents knew about it in relation with environmental protection. Most of the interviewees agreed that the river was both dividing and connecting the region. As this area had belonged to the same country before the 1990’s wars, the Drina had not been a border river. However, according to the respondents, this border is only administrative, symbolic for them even today. Most of the inhabitants are Serbians on both sides of the border; therefore they do not see the river as an obstacle that could divide them. Furthermore, they are allowed to cross this border without a passport, just as before in former Yugoslavia.

The Drina River is of great importance to all of them. Some earn living from it, others have emotional ties with it, and certain respondents see the symbol of the unity of the Serbian nation in it. Young respondents expressed the importance of environmental protection, without which the future of the river would not be ensured. The Drina Euroregion as an institution was known only among these younger people, due to some environmental activities.

The other group of interviewees consists of the representatives of local governments, members of the Euroregion. Their answers were quite different and varying. Most of them considered the initiative of establishing the Drina Euroregion for being important, however the foundation and the operation of this institution was said to be non-professional. The elected president of the Euroregion is not the mayor of his settlement anymore; therefore the legitimacy of his presidency is also problematic. However, some respondents expressed that the cooperation should be continued, on a new and revised basis, with new goals.
6.3 Cross-border cooperation projects in the study area

The neighborhood programs of the European Union offer a significant amount of funding for the cooperation projects of the partners from the Western Balkan countries. However, the real effects of these projects are questionable as the eligible areas cover the inner municipalities of these countries as well, and the majority of cross-border cooperation projects is not realised right along the state borders.

There are strong relations between these areas due to the region’s unique historical heritage, though there was some reduction in cooperation intensity during the period of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The territory of the Drina Euroregion is located within the eligible area of five cross-border cooperation programs: Croatia–Serbia;21 Serbia–Bosnia and Herzegovina;22 Serbia–Montenegro;23 Bosnia and Herzegovina–Montenegro;24 and Croatia–Bosnia and Herzegovina.25 All of these programmes have become open to potential partners and applicants since the middle of the 2000s with a common aim of increasing the development status of border regions.

Analysing the program documents of the above CBC programs, it can be concluded that most of them are targeting three different priorities:

- contribution to economic development in the eligible areas;
- supporting environmental projects;
- improving people-to-people relations in the border areas.

According to the available data on the finalised projects implemented by project partners from the area of the Drina Euroregion, most projects were realised along the Serbian–Bosnian border, fewer on the Montenegrin–Bosnian border, while we could not identify any Serbian–Croatian and Bosnian–Croatian CBC projects implemented within the member municipalities of the Drina Euroregion.

There had already been some calls for proposals and project implementations even in the years before the establishment of the Drina Euroregion. This fact proves that the relations created during those projects, the experience of those co-operations, and the results of former projects have been fruitfully utilised during the establishment of the Drina Euroregion.
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

Drina Euroregion

On the other hand, this Euroregion may be an important actor in generating and implementing future cross-border cooperation projects along the borders between the member countries. Thus it may contribute to economic development in this region.

Below follows an overview of the cross-border projects implemented within the area of the Drina Euroregion, meaning that any of the project partners have a seat on the territory of the Euroregion.

**Cross-border Programme Serbia–Bosnia and Herzegovina**

1st Call for Proposals – application deadline by 6 October 2009

(7 relevant projects from the area of the Drina Euroregion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>THE BRIDGE ON THE DRINA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Association “Natan”, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount of the project:</strong></td>
<td>EUR 111 352,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>The objective of the project is to strengthen cross-border people-to-people interaction through joint cultural activities in the field of music. Activities: The string orchestra Kraljevski Gudači Svetog Đorđa from Serbia and choir Srbadija from Bosnia and Herzegovina rehearsed together, made new music pieces, and organised 22 concerts of classical music with ethno elements, 10 in Serbia (Irig, Sremška Mitrovica, Bogatić, Šabac, Šid, Loznica, Valjevo, Užice, Prijeplje and Priboj) and 12 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Brčko, Ugljevik, Tuzla, Foča, Zvornik, Doboj, Goražde, Lopare, Sarajevo, Bijeljina twice and Višegrad).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>BALKAN – HOUSE OF DIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Grupa 484, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount of the project:</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>The aim of the project was to contribute to the development of social cohesion in the region by promoting ethnic and cultural diversity in the border region. Activities: Being aware of the multi-ethnic and multicultural identities in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was a way to strengthen the ability of young people to adopt new social experience and reach an understanding. A group of local mentors worked with young participants who gathered material for a tourist tour, which will be a tool for promoting interculturalism and interethnicity. With the help of a mentor, ninety young people from Tuzla, Bijeljina, Brčko, Užice, Kosjerić and Požega explored the daily life of writers who live in these municipalities, as well as the places and events that inspired them to create the characters of their novels. Then they created a tourist tour &quot;through the eyes of writers&quot; in order to promote intercultural and inter-ethnic diversity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

### Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

**Drina Euroregion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL COHESION AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Užice Child Rights Centre, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount of the project:</strong></td>
<td>EUR 124 835,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>The project’s objective was to strengthen leadership capacities of young people from targeted areas in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to help them becoming leaders in community actions and promote youth cooperation. Activities: The project has been successfully implemented through training, cross-border study visits, platforms, workshops and cultural events for young people aged 15-27 from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during which they had a chance to meet and exchange experiences and widen their understanding of other cultures, traditions and customs. The greatest challenge was to overcome prejudices and stereotypes that young people had in relation to other countries, cultures and their peers. This was expected, given that in recent years the young people had no opportunity to learn about other cultures and that relations between them have been broken off during the past two decades. This challenge was successfully overcome by organizing preparatory workshops with youth groups before each travel to the partner country. Young people from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina showed that existing differences between them do not pose an obstacle to understanding and cooperation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>NEW RELATIONS IN THE BORDERING REGION OF SERBIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Beograd, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount of the project:</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>The overall goal of the project is to inspire young people to embrace multiethnic values and develop friendly relations and closer ties with their peers across the border. Activities: Forty young people were educated on cross-border relations, human and minority rights and multiethnic and civil society principles through seminars, exchange visits, street actions and a festival. At those events they learned about the basics of democracy, human rights, EU integration. The “New Ties” Festival was the final and the most visible activity within the project during which a group of 40 high school students from Užice, Požega, Priboj, Prijepolje, Višegrad, Goražde, Srebrenica and Bratunac presented the touristic, cultural and economic potentials of this region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Project title: INTRODUCTION OF SUSTAINABLE MODELS OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WESTERN SERBIA AND EASTERN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**Project partners:**
- Forum of Civic Action FORCA, Požega, Serbia
- Prijatelji Srebrenice, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Total amount of the project:** EUR 77,364,55

**Description:**
The project objective is to develop personal skills and abilities of young people which will help them embrace future challenges and overcome professional and private obstacles. Activities: The project directly targeted 250 high school students from Požega, Užice, Arilje, Bratunac, Srebrenica and Milići who explored the following themes: self-initiative, self-confidence, creativity, teamwork, reliability, responsibility, honesty, determination, knowledge of market mechanisms and the process of decision making. Through project activities the students learned how to put their knowledge into practical use after graduating. The project also promoted youth entrepreneurship through various education activities and provision of business counselling services, as well as through creation of a competitive business environment in the underdeveloped municipalities of Zlatibor County and North-Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### Project title: SUPPORT TO ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

**Project partners:**
- Business Incubator of Technical Faculties from Belgrade, Serbia
- Business Incubator Centre Užice, Serbia
- Innovation and Serbia and Innovation and Technology Foundation from Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Total amount of the project:** n/a

**Description:**
The project aims to enable the exchange of experiences, build capacity and enable young people to realise their entrepreneurial ideas, as well as to promote entrepreneurial initiatives for cross-border cooperation between existing businesses. Activities: The activities target final year technical faculty students and young people with formal education in technical studies with no working experience or relevant practical skills. In order to raise awareness about the importance of entrepreneurship and motivate young people to participate in project activities, 255 young people were interviewed on both sides of the border and a range of information and motivation workshops were held. Over 60 young persons, on both sides of the border, were trained on entrepreneurship and acquired skills that will help them start their own businesses.
### Project title:
**DEVELOPMENT OF TYPICAL PRODUCTS IN NORTH-EASTERN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND ZLATIBOR COUNTY IN SERBIA**

### Project partners:
- Regional Development Agency Zlatibor from Užice, Serbia
- Association Independent Development Office from Gradačac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Total amount of the project:
EUR 211 420,25

### Description:
The overall objective of the project is the protection of traditional food and handicrafts in accordance with EU standards and their wider regional visibility. The project aims to renew old customs and traditions in the targeted cross-border area, increase sales, provide possibilities for access to new markets and develop an attractive tourist offer.

Activities: The project involves four main groups of activities: mapping and analysis of traditional products and key stakeholders that could support the development of typical products; support to producers of traditional products via trainings, a study trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina, creation of a touristic guide, workshops, creation of an action and marketing plan; and promotional activities including a final conference and an exhibition of traditional products. Trainings emphasizing the significance of protected geographical origin and benefits of marketing and promotion contribute to the increased capacities of producers and their associations, and may also define common objectives and strategic directions for further development of selected products.

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**Cross-border Programme Serbia–Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**2nd Call for Proposals – application deadline by 5 December 2011**

(11 relevant projects from the area of the Drina Euroregion)

### Project title:
**Agriculture Forecast-Reporting System (AFRS) in the Cross Border Region**

### Project partners:
- Agricultural Extension Service Užice – Užice, Serbia
- Regional Development Agency Zlatibor
- Federal Institute for Agriculture Ilići – Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency

### Budget (EUR):
- 160 234,40
- 137 645,00

### Description:
Overall objective: To contribute to the improvement of the competitiveness of stakeholders in agriculture sector within the project area in using land as economic, rural and environmental resource

Specific objective: Establishment of the innovative concept of integrated agricultural production based on IT forecasting and reporting between agriculture extension service providers and production sector within the project area
## Agriculture Forecast-Reporting System (AFRS) in the Cross Border Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Estimated results of the action:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. EU best practice models in forecast-reporting system introduced among project stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. System for agriculture reporting and forecasting established;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Agricultural producers’ awareness raised for using information from forecast-reporting systems;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Project objectives and results promoted and disseminated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Beekeeping – Activity for Future (BAF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Beekeeping – Activity for Future (BAF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget (EUR):</td>
<td>87 168,41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Overall objective: The overall objective is to promote rural development of the border areas of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specific objectives: The specific objective is to improve the conditions for the development of beekeeping in the border communities of Prijepolje and Gorazde municipalities. Target groups: Target group in this Project are members of the associations of beekeepers and fruit producers. Final beneficiaries: Indirect target groups are: families of the members of the associations of beekeepers and fruit producers, persons involved in beekeeping and fruit growing that are not members of the associations. End-users are local population in the cross-border region of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as foreign market users. Estimated results of the action: 1. Improved institutional – managerial and productive capacities of active beekeepers; 2. Promoted beekeeping at the local, regional and national level 3. Improved competitiveness of bee products and market access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Increasing competitiveness of SMEs and enhancement of cross border links in metal industry – EUMETAL2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Increasing competitiveness of SMEs and enhancement of cross border links in metal industry – EUMETAL2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project partners:</td>
<td>Regional Development Agency “Zlatibor” Ltd – Užice, Serbia National Agency for Regional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget (EUR):</td>
<td>181 320,48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Project title: Increasing competitiveness of SMEs and enhancement of cross border links in metal industry – EUMETAL2

**Description:**
- **Overall objective:** Improve SME development in metal processing sector in the border area in order to improve their competitiveness
- **Specific objectives:** Support provided to 20 SMEs selected in the metal sector in the project area to develop their export potential.
- **Target groups:** SME/SMI; Professional category
- **Final beneficiaries:** FB1: Other companies from project region not covered by project activities; FB2: Associations of entrepreneurs; FB3: 50 unemployed persons; FB4: Inhabitants of project region
- **Estimated results of the action:**
  1. Lessons learned during EU Metal project in Bosnia presented and promoted to stakeholders within the project area;
  2. Skills and knowledge of staff from SMEs from border area improved;
  3. Targeted SMEs from border area met formal requirements for export on EU markets;
  4. Targeted SMEs promoted on regional and international level

### Project title: Development and Promotion of Health Tourism Spas in Cross-border Area of B&H-Serbia – CROSS SPA

**Project partners:**
- Tourism Organization of Western Serbia – Užice, Serbia
- Regional Development Agency Zlatibor
- Sarajevo Economic Region Development Agency SERDA
- Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina

**Budget (EUR):**
- 183 031,32
- 269 121,90

**Description:**
- **Overall objective:** Enhancing the regional cooperation and the sustainable economic development of the cross-border area (BiH-Serbia) through the development of new tourism forms. The action aiming to contribute towards to improving the regional cooperation and economic development of the border areas through the establishment of specific cross-border joint tourist offers, whereby offers will be treated as a segment of the development of new health tourism product.
- **Specific objectives:** Development and Placement of a new joint health tourism product – integrated unified tourist offer of health tourism within the cross-border region. Increasing the capacity of offering healthcare tourism in the cross-border region through expanding the assortment of tourism services in segments that promote healthy living and responsibility for own health. The action is intended to achieve the mentioned specific objectives contributing to the overall objectives.
# Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
## Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border
### Drina Euroregion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Safe Food Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project partners:</td>
<td>Regional Chamber of Commerce Valjevo – Valjevo, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget (EUR):</td>
<td>53 309,38</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Schools Waste Less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget (EUR):</td>
<td>190 168,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Overall objective: To contribute to the maintaining of the high quality of the border area environment by cooperating in joint initiatives Specific objectives: Establishing the concept of primary waste selection in 28 schools in Užice and Tuzla. Estimated results of the action: R1: Technical framework for primary waste selection created in 28 schools in Užice and Tuzla; R2: Technical and human capacities of 2 Public Utility Companies for collecting, transport and primary waste selection increased; R3: 112 employees in 28 schools prepared for primary waste selection management and support in schools; R4: Primary waste selection concept implemented and promoted in schools in Užice and Tuzla; R5: Local and wider communities introduced with examples of good practice in primary waste selection in schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Project title: Strengthening professional adult education in rural areas

| Project partners: | Caritas Šabac – Šabac, Serbia  
| | Caritas Serbia, City of Šabac  
| Budget (EUR): | 124 540,00  
| | 103 610,00  
| Description: | Overall objectives:  
1. Reinforcing social links in rural areas  
2. Preventing social isolation of marginalized rural groups: women, youth, the elderly  
3. Revitalization and development of rural areas  
4. Fighting rural exodus in the cross border area  
Specific objective: Offering new employment opportunities to rural families in Central Bosnia and Macvanski County through professional adult education. We strive to upgrade technical skills of rural vulnerable groups by provision of tailor made trainings, better access to market information and regional networking.  
Estimated results of the action: 1. Offering new professional skills to rural families through tailor made assistance; 2. Rural families linked to professional and social network in respective areas by regional exchanges and better access to information; 3. Local decision makers/public stakeholders better informed about innovative tools for fighting against social exclusion. | Caritas of Bishops Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
| | Municipality of Kiseljak  
| | Municipality of Kresevo  
| | Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Republika Srpska – Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
| | Center for Equitable Regional Development- CenTriR – Belgrade, Serbia  
| | 47 085,00  
| | 42 355,95  
| Description: | Overall objective: The project’s overall objective is creating the preconditions for the sustainable development of the cross-border region between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) through the means of strengthening institutional, human and civil mechanisms for the promotion of the position of young people who are the bearers of development in both countries.  
Specific objectives: 1) Analyzing the work of local youth commissions/offices in 16 target municipalities in B&H and Serbia by means of conducting research on their performance over the previous period; 2) Improving capacities and skills of young people for advocating changes which will improve their current position in 16 target municipalities; 3) Establishing an informal network of young people who will be focal points in promoting cross-border cooperation and youth activism in these regions. |
### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

**Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border**

**Drina Euroregion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Youth – Most Important Driving Engine of Our Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated results of the action:</td>
<td>Result 1 – Completed preparatory activities as step one towards successful implementation of subsequent project activities; Result 2 - Conducted research on the achievements of youth offices in 16 municipalities of the cross-border region between Serbia and B&amp;H; Result 3 – Printed publication on the work of local youth offices in the cross-border region between Serbia and B&amp;H; Result 4 – Media promotion of the Project and findings of research on work of youth offices/commissions; Result 5 – Strengthened youth capacities to actively address problems in local communities; Result 6 – Local actions carried out by the youth in 16 municipalities of B&amp;H and Serbia; Result 7 - Organized regional cross-border youth conference – “Do You Really Hear What We Say?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Wise use of common natural resources – road to sustainability of the Serbia/BiH cross-border region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Project partners: | Uneco – Belgrade, Serbia  
Municipality of Bogatić  
Municipality of Mali Zvornik  
Center for Environmentally Sustainable Development (CESD) – Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina  
Public Utility Company Directorate of Construction and Development, Bijeljina  
Municipality of Zvornik |
| Budget (EUR): | 134 958,35  
121 072,25 |
| Description: | Overall objective: Overall objective of the Action is to contribute to the sustainable development of the Serbia-BiH cross-border region by fostering cooperation and multi stakeholders approach in the integrated natural resources  
Specific objectives:  
1. To increase the capacities of local stakeholders to actively operate in environmental management in cross-border area.  
2. To foster cross-border institutional partnerships through developing joint actions for the protection and efficient utilization of the regional resources.  
3. To increase public awareness and public support for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources in the cross – border region.  
Estimated results of the action:  
(1) Increased capacities of local stakeholders in 6 target municipalities (3 in BiH, 3 in Serbia) to actively operate in environmental management in the cross-border area.  
(2) Developed the Action plan for the wise use and protection of natural resources in 6 municipalities in the Drina River Basin.  
(3) Increased public participation in environmental decision making through active involvement in the action plan’s drafting.  
(4) Increased public awareness for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources by implementing public outreach activities. |
### Project title: SA-ŠA Support to cooperation, inclusion, education and promotion of Roma culture in BiH and Serbia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners:</th>
<th>National Council of Roma in Serbia – Regional office Šabac – Šabac, Serbia</th>
<th>City of Sarajevo – Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina SERDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget (EUR):</td>
<td>155 052,17</td>
<td>140 082,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description:**
- **Overall objectives:**
  The overall objective is to support the social inclusion of Roma population in the border area of Bosnia and Serbia.
  Specific objective: Project partners will seek to influence the situation of Roma in the border area of the two countries in terms of reducing the differences between Roma and other citizens; will treat the vital areas that are of particular importance for the inclusion in the social trends and improving the economic and social status of Roma such as education, health care, the status of women, better informing, developing of Roma cultural identity, cooperation and experience exchange with neighboring organizations dealing with Roma issues, discrimination and raising awareness about necessary inclusion of Roma in all social processes, which is aligned with strategies relating to improving the situation of Roma in both countries.
- **Estimated results of the action:**
  1. Established cross-border cooperation through an informal network of NGOs;
  2. Promoted the culture and traditions of Roma in the cross border region of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia with the aims of: preserving their identity; raising public awareness about the need of breaking prejudices about Roma; and promoting their integration into social life in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; 3. Developed educational modules for the Roma population with the aim of their social inclusion.

### Project title: Bijeljina and Bogatić-together on the way towards energy sustainability through increasing energy efficiency and promotion of renewable energy sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners:</th>
<th>Municipality of Bogatić – Bogatić, Serbia Europäisches Zentrum für Erneuerbare Energie Güssing Austria</th>
<th>Municipality of Bijeljina – Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget (EUR):</td>
<td>262 948,74</td>
<td>317 529,25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description:**
- **Overall objectives:**
  1. To contribute to maintaining the high quality of environment in the region Bijeljina-Bogatić using RES (Renewable Energy Sources) and raising energy efficiency;
  2. To improve the competitiveness of local economy by creating conditions for the use of RES
- The project contributes to providing an optimal and safe energy supply for the municipalities of Bijeljina and Bogatić; improving the level of
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border
Drina Euroregion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Bijeljina and Bogatić-together on the way towards energy sustainability through increasing energy efficiency and promotion of renewable energy sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>services that municipalities provide to their citizens and the economy, reducing energy consumption in private and commercial sector, reducing energy consumption and energy costs in public utilities. Completion of this project will create conditions for a minimum investment of 10 million Euros in renewable energy sources and open 200 new jobs by 2017. The potential of two municipalities in biomass is equivalent for the investment of 130 million Euros in power-plant on biomass. This project contributes to the use of 3 % of the potential that could create 200 new jobs. This action creates a base for the reduction of CO₂ emission that could be by 20% until 2020.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-border Programme Bosnia and Herzegovina–Montenegro
1st Call for Proposals – application deadline by 9 October 2009
(6 relevant projects from the area of the Drina Euroregion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Sustainable waste management in border region of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project partners:</td>
<td>Municipality Kotor (MNE) Arbiter – Samariter – Bund (BiH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant amount:</td>
<td>109 751,60 EUR 138 006,85 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>To foster joint sustainable development and to increase the effectiveness of waste management of the cross-border area by strengthening capacities of joint institutional networks among private, public and civil society sectors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Sustainable tourism development and natural environment protection in Northern Montenegro and Southern Bosnia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project partners:</td>
<td>Comitato do Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni per il Servizio Volontario – COSV (MNE) “SUTJESKA” NATIONAL PARK (BiH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant amount:</td>
<td>274 869,31 EUR 226 008,58 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Support the creation of the common socio-economic environment for people, communities and economies in the cross-border rural areas in and around the two national Parks of Durmitor (MNE) and Sutjeska (BiH).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

#### Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

**Drina Euroregion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Cross-Bordering by book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Centre for culture Plužine (MNE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant amount:</strong></td>
<td>49 711,60 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>Improved exchange of cultural goods, ideas and people between Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (renewal of cultural, educational and commercial bounds between the northwestern part of MNE and the southeastern part of BiH).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Establishing Via Dinarica – a Preface to Regional Cooperation Platform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Centre for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives (MNE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant amount:</strong></td>
<td>103 093,75 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>Enhanced tourism valorisation and rural development of the trans-boundary region, economic diversification and revitalisation, as well as social cohesion in the communities along the initial Via Dinarica Route.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Better Opportunities for Youth Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>TE MONITORING CENTAR – CEMI (MNE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant amount:</strong></td>
<td>46 120,14 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>To contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic situation in the cross border region of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The specific objective is to support youth employment in the cross-border area of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Active involvement of young people in process of reaching social cohesion in Cross Border Region: Young people in joint action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>Omladinski kulturni centar &quot;Juventas&quot; (MNE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant amount:</strong></td>
<td>38 430,11 EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong></td>
<td>Enhancing social cohesion between the Montenegrin and Bosnian youth through people-to-people actions. To encourage MNE and BiH youth from the border region to get involved in joint initiatives which will promote cooperation between these groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-border Programme Bosnia and Herzegovina–Montenegro
2nd Call for Proposals – application deadline by 1 July 2011

(1 relevant project from the area of the Drina Euroregion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Sustainable Cross-Border Development of Foča and Plužine Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project partners:</td>
<td>Municipality of Plužine (MNE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant amount:</td>
<td>165 108,74 EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description:
InTER provides support to the Municipality of Plužine and the Municipality of Foča to implement the project "Sustainable Cross-Border Development of Foča and Plužine Municipalities", funded within the scheme of EU IPA CBC BiH-MNE Programme. Implementation of the project has started on 1 March 2013 and it will last for 24 months. This project initiative has been developed through capacity building, training modules for writing grant applications, that InTER held to representatives of two municipalities back in 2010, and it is in line with the Foča-Plužine Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy that has been designed through technical assistance provided also by InTER. InTER's role within this project will be to provide support in project management and to monitor the results of the intervention.
7. Management

The legal representative of the Drina Euroregion is its President. Since its establishment, the President of this Euroregion is Mr Zdravko Krsmanović. He has his deputy, the Vice-president, who comes from Bajina Bašta, Serbia.

The headquarters of the Euroregion are located in Foča, Republika Srpska, and here is the seat of the Secretariat as well. The Secretariat of the Drina Euroregion helps the work of the Euroregion and its organs, and it performs only professional, administrative and technical tasks for the needs of the Drina Euroregion.

To achieve the objectives set in its Statutes, the Drina Euroregion obtains funds from the following sources:

- from the fee of each member, in a manner defined by the Assembly,
- from international and other funds intended for financing projects and other activities,
- from grants, donations and other voluntary or optional contributions,
- from other sources.

For its three years of operation, the Drina Euroregion obtained funds from its members, each of which pays 1 000 euros per year as membership fee, as well as through donations from Telekom, banks, other sponsors, and from European sources.
8. SWOT-analysis

The situation analysis and the interviews with the leader of the Drina Euroregion led to the preparation of a SWOT analysis for all thematic priorities, which is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• presence of hydroenergy</td>
<td>• problematic navigation of the Drina River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rich biodiversity of the area</td>
<td>• the area is located in a place which is difficult to reach from the major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• natural resources (Tara and Durmitor National Parks are on the list</td>
<td>economic centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of UNESCO World Heritage Sites)</td>
<td>• distance from main transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• production of healthy food products based on extensive agriculture</td>
<td>corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fishery</td>
<td>• quality of transport in general is low and there is poor planning and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fifteen border-crossings in the Drina Euroregion</td>
<td>maintenance of the road network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• former existing relations (economic, cultural, family relations)</td>
<td>• the topography of the region hampers the development of transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• similar language and ethnic structure of the population</td>
<td>infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cultural similarities</td>
<td>• unindustrialised area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• absence of language barriers</td>
<td>• danger of the still not eliminated land mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• shared history</td>
<td>• unfavourable demographic trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• low living standards and an aging rural population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• migration of young people and the skilled workforce to urban centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and foreign countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• inadequate communal infrastructures and public utility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opportunities | Threats
--- | ---
• construction of small hydropower plants (on the upper, middle and lower Drina) | • unstable political situation
• joint flood protection and drought | • lack of development funds
• sustainable utilisation of natural endowments (extreme sports - rafting, tourism) | • lack of state-level regulation for the stabilisation of the riverbed
• coordinated activites for preserving water quality | • poor quality of waste water treatment, sewage and solid waste disposal facilities
• treating the area as unique tourist site with common tourism products and accompanying infrastructure objects with all facilities necessary for a serious and long-term work of a tourist region | • high turnover of administration staff due to political changes
• implementing the project titled “Drina ecological region of Europe” | • different speed of the EU accession processes of the member countries

Based on the above, we could make the following conclusions:

• The major part of the Drina Euroregion registers above average unemployment rates. A high number of redundant workers from large industrial complexes and poor economic prospects cause negative migration trends from the area, in particular among the educated youth. The poor socio-economic situation negatively influences the position of vulnerable groups, like national minorities, women and disabled people, whose integration and inclusion are still limited.

• The environmental potentials and availability of alternative energy sources represent a strong competitive advantage of the subject area. However, the limited infrastructure and the low level of investments, on the one hand, directly endanger the environment, and on the other hand, prevent the efficient use of available resources.

• The tourist potential of the Drina Euroregion lies primarily in its natural resources of mountainous areas (Tara and Zlatibor in Serbia, Jahorina in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sutjeska, Tara and Piva rivers in Montenegro). However, the potentials of gastro- and cultural tourism of the northern plain area (Bijeljina in Bosnia, Županja in Croatia and Šabac in Serbia) are also considerable.
Taking into account the overall economic situation of the region, tourism represents one of the few realistic and immediate opportunities for improvement. The available natural resources, potentials for development of niche tourism (for instance adventure sports, rafting along the Drina River and its tributaries, rural tourism in mountain villages) and connectivity with other economic branches (food processing, bioagriculture) represent solid bases for tourism efforts, with the potential of considerable economic effects.
9. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

The pace of change in the study area, namely along the Drina River – a bordering waterflow between four member countries of the Drina Euroregion (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro) – is very explicit. To illustrate this statement, we will deal with the future plans and goals of the cooperation. The founders of the Drina Euroregion have formulated their strategic goals in a separate document called the Development Programme of the Drina Euroregion for 2012-2014. Based on that, we can enumerate the following future plans of the cooperation:

- “Joint and coordinated use of major development and ecological potentials of the Drina River and its tributaries, preserving the area as a unique hydrological unit;
- Strengthening joint cross-border cooperation activities with coordination in projects of mutual interest within the unique structure of European regions and European funds for projects aimed at strengthening regional cooperation;
- Activities of relevant municipal and state authorities to implement jointly harmonized and coordinated development and protection projects in all coastal municipalities along the Drina River;
- Joint and coordinated development of spatial planning documents with studies of environmental impacts within large joint hydropower projects (on the upper, middle and lower Drina) as well as in areas of flood protection and drought, water quality, as well as the regulation and stabilisation of the riverbed to the Drina River basic flow and its tributaries.
- The Drina River has remarkable water and ecological potentials that allow the development of tourism in riparian areas. For the best utilisation of this potential, there should be identified unique tourist sites with common tourism products and accompanying infrastructure objects with all facilities necessary for a serious and long-term work of a tourist region.”

A key prerequisite for the realisation on the aforementioned basic targets of the Drina Euroregion is to consider the problem of constructing hydraulic structures in an appropriate way, because the confluence of the Drina River is the largest unused hydropower (green energy) potential in Europe. Therefore it is necessary to implement the project titled “Drina ecological region of Europe”, which must be done by the highest international standards with the involvement of all scientific and social resources of the stakeholders.

This strategic document was prepared in early 2012, for a three year period. However, most of these questions were not treated in the meanwhile, the goals have not been reached, and there was no rethinking of the development programme either. What is more, according to a recent interview with the former president of the Drina Euroregion, this institution is not operating any more. This is the consequence of local elections and political changes in the member local governments.

Thus the future of this bright initiative of cross-border cooperation has become questionable. Hopefully, this situation will be resolved soon and the original ideas of the founders will come into being.
10. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation

The Drina Euroregion is not unique if considered by the core of its organisation: the presence of a river that crosses the area. There are other examples of such cooperation in Europe, like the Euroregion Dniester, the Danube–Cris–Mures–Tisa Euroregion, the Euro-region “Middle Danube–Iron Gate”, the Euroregion Silesia and many others.

However, there were specific events in recent history taking place in the administrative units that initiated this cooperation, namely the Balkan Wars of the 1990s that are indeed unique to the Drina Euroregion. On the other hand, the geographic, demographic, geopolitical, and socio-economic changes resulting from the drawing of new borders in this area have created specific situations in this region. Yet there is the Drina River, which presents identical natural values on its both banks.

Presumably, there have been many injuries and huge sufferings caused by state border changes in the past century. These events have burdened the relations between the nations living in this region; however, their common history within the same country, together with their language, cultural and family relations may speed up the cooperation of these four countries along the Drina River, based on the European principles of independence, equality and tolerance.

The fact itself that these municipalities, now lying in four different countries of the Balkans are ready and willing to cooperate, to set their common objectives and to operate jointly makes the most important feature of the Drina Euroregion.

The involved countries have many unfavourable features that are common to all of them, which should be targeted jointly and thus the overall backwardness of the area could be eliminated in the long run. All four countries are characterised by unbalanced regional development, which is lower in the border area than in the rest of the country. There are significant differences between urban centres and rural areas, between different geographical locations, as well as between the centre and the outskirts. The border area, which is in fact the area of the Drina Euroregion, has abundant, but mostly unused natural resources. The infrastructure is in a poor condition as a result of lack of investments, which were directed towards the development of the more industrial regions of the countries. The roads and the railways are in very poor condition as a result of a low level of investment for maintenance and a lack of construction during the period of crisis, as well as due to the overall distance of the area from the strategic national axes and corridors of the involved countries.
11. Summary

This case study, dealing with the so-called Drina Euroregion was intended to illustrate an institutionalised cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Bosnian border. The Drina Euroregion is the youngest representative of such cooperation in the Western Balkans. It unites territorial units of different administrative levels along the borders, which were set in the 1990s between four new countries, all of them former member republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The idea of establishing a joint organisation of the local authorities that lie along the banks of the Drina River was a bottom-up initiative. The events preceding this initiative were related to preserving the Drina, preferring sustainable economy in the region, developing ecologic tourism, while denying some foreign investors who wanted to utilise the hydropower of the river.

Therefore the residents of the region formulated a list of their demands for the protection of the Drina River and its tributaries, for developing mountain and river tourism, as well as for starting organised water management activities, as there had been no harmonized water management along the course of the Drina before. For this purpose, there arose the idea of creating a spatial plan of the region, which could ensure the sustainable utilisation of the Drina Basin and have an expressed strategic goal of protecting an endemic species of predatory fish, called *drinska mladica* (lat. Hucho hucho).

The examination of the Drina Euroregion led to the following conclusions about its characteristics:

- The Drina River plays a significant role in the life of the municipalities and larger regional units of the four involved countries.
- A Euroregion as a form of cooperation can be appropriate for achieving common goals, but only if it has sufficient resources in the background.
- The population of the study area does not see the state borders as separating factors, thus the cohesion of the Euroregion is quite strong.
- With the utilisation of this cohesive power, considerable development projects could be realised if the necessary cooperation and resources were available.
- Their formulated development plan foresaw activities only for the short run, and even those were realised only partially.
- The activities of the Drina Euroregion were communicated to the population in a limited way; therefore it was not accepted widely.
- The representatives of local municipalities see an opportunity in such cooperation.
- The political changes among the founders affect the future of the Euroregion as well.
- The functioning and operation of the Euroregion would always require a dedicated leader who has an adequate team in the background.
- In spite of the strong relations between the people living on the banks of the river, cross-border cooperation has not become natural in these areas.
The lack of proper planning and of necessary resources, as well as the limited cooperation of the Euroregion members have made them unable to achieve their goals so far. In our opinion, it should not be allowed to stop this construction process right after its foundation and after facing the first obstacles. There are several good examples of cross-border cooperation in Europe that could be followed by the Drina Euroregion to fulfill its mission on behalf of the population. Settling the situation in the Euroregion, consolidation of political relations, development of a resources-based medium-term strategy that is accepted by all stakeholders, as well as a new management team ready for action – these are all prerequisites for achieving outstanding success in the Drina Euroregion.
12. Bibliography

Publications


Danube CBC databases for Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro (unpublished document)


Promjene u udjelima Hrvata i Srba u etničkom sastavu stanovništva Hrvatskog Podunavlja kao posljedica Domovinskog rata i mirne reintegracije (1991. – 2001.)
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border

Drina Euroregion


Websites


Drina Euroregion: http://www.euroregijadrina.com

Ljubovija: http://www.ljubovija.rs/privreda/17 (Last visited: 01/01/2015)

Mali Zvornik: http://www.malizvornik.rs/index.php/2012-01-10-12-17-58 (Last visited: 01/01/2015)


Užice: http://www.graduzice.org/19-1-l (Last visited: 01/01/2015)

13. Annex

Figure 5: The cover pages of the Development Programme of the Drina Euroregion
Source: http://euroregijadrina.com/

Figure 6: Picture of the Drina River
Source: http://euroregijadrina.com/
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Figure 7: Picture of the Drina River
Source: http://euroregijadrina.com/

Figure 8: Picture of the Drina River
Source: http://euroregijadrina.com/
Crossing the borders. Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
Case Study of cross-border cooperation along the Serbian–Croatian border
Drina Euroregion

Figure 9: Picture of the Drina River
Source: http://euroregijadrina.com/

Figure 10: Picture of the Drina River
Source: http://euroregijadrina.com/
Crossing the borders
Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region
2016

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