

### Regional development at the borders of the European Union (proceedings of the Jean Monnet international conference, Oradea, 5th - 7th of November 2020)

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**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT  
THE BORDERS OF THE  
EUROPEAN UNION**

(proceedings of the Jean Monnet international conference,  
Oradea, 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2020)

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# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE BORDERS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION INTRODUCTORY STUDIES

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Development is a complex process, with multiple values and dimensions. For specialists in many domains of activity, it represents a concept to which intensive research has been dedicated. On the other hand, politicians and governments have adopted it as a phrase that might substantiate their strategies and policies.

As early as the beginning of the 18th century, the representatives of the Enlightenment, who showed interest in understanding the natural laws that determined the growth of plants and animals, tried to outline the meaning of this concept. Development was understood as being conditioned by the presence of favourable circumstances, in which the potential of living organisms could be released and a perfect existential form could be attained.

The understanding of the concept as evolutionary process over time was borrowed by philosophers in the second half of the eighteenth century, in their approach of socio-economic and political issues from a rational and scientific stance. As advocates of rationalism, they managed to promote development as part of the set of principles imposed by the divinity, which governed the physical and human universe. In that context, the process had to be analysed independently of religious issues or explanations, economic and social constraints were challenged, and the state wanted to be the main instrument of progress. Later on, during the nineteenth century, modernist currents of thought, dominant at the time, placed emphasis on humans as emancipated beings who, by the use of their own abilities, became the subject and the main actors of their own development. Before long, the politicians of the time also adopted the phrase, at the same time adding to it the dimension of necessary and inevitable desideratum from the perspective of the success of the new production methods, extended on an industrial scale<sup>1</sup>.

The principles of development were disseminated beyond the borders of Europe with the emergence and consolidation of colonial systems. During the same period, concepts such as “evolution” or “growth” were used in the publications of

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<sup>1</sup> Gustavo Esteva, “Development”, in *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Second Edition, edited by Wolfgang Sachs, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 3-6.



the time in order to characterize transformations that occurred in society. They heralded a change as regards the association of development with welfare. The term was used mainly in the legislation whereby rulers undertook to guarantee a minimum level of food, education and health care services in the colonies, but also to confirm a certain level of civilization, industrialization and productivity. From that moment on, regardless of the context in which it was used, the concept of development was perceived as encompassing change, evolutionary steps from simple to complex, and stages of growth from lower to higher levels, the factors and determinants involved in the process being only of economic nature. Adam Smith was one of the first theoreticians to demonstrate the influence of factors such as production, savings, and capital accumulation on economic growth<sup>2</sup>. The neoclassical theory developed by him, together with the one founded by Karl Marx, offered several development models that focused on the behaviour of individuals and companies in the context of a perfect competitive environment, with very mobile production factors. In addition, the microeconomics of the early twentieth century were self-regulating through wages, prices, and low interest rates<sup>3</sup>. During the crisis of the 1930s, Keynes examined the role of the state in managing the economic downturn and noted that it was directly involved, as a consumer, investor or job creator, in the recovery of society. Thus, Keynes outlines a new, macroeconomic approach for the analysis of economic growth, the proposed model being oriented towards the priority development of certain activities and the use of a set of indicators to measure growth, the most important of which used to be the gross domestic product<sup>4</sup>.

By the end of World War II, development had become an objective, with economic connotations, for each state, assumed even by the Charter of the United Nations<sup>5</sup>. Keynesian thinking was taken up by other economists, who proposed models for intensifying production through industrialization, for increasing the per capita income<sup>6</sup>, and for increasing the production of per capita goods<sup>7</sup>. Such guidelines did not take into account the consequences of rapid growth and neglected the social realities described in the first World Social Welfare Report,

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<sup>2</sup> Gheorghe Zaman, George Georgescu (coord.), *Dezvoltarea economică endogenă la nivel regional: cazul României* [Endogenous economic development at regional level: the case of Romania], Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Mihail Lupașcu, *Concepte și teorii cu impact asupra dezvoltării durabile a așezărilor umane* [Concepts and theories with an impact on the sustainable development of human settlements], available at [https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag\\_file/161-165\\_11.pdf](https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/161-165_11.pdf), [accessed in August 2021], p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> Gheorghe Zaman, George Georgescu (coord.), *op.cit.*, p. 21-22; Mihail Lupașcu, *op.cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> Gustavo Esteva, *op.cit.*, p. 8; U.N., *United Nations Charter*, available at <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>, [accessed in August 2021].

<sup>6</sup> Lewis W. Arthur, *The Theory of Economic Growth*, Homewood, Ill., Richard D. Irwin, 1955.

<sup>7</sup> Paul N. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1957.

published in 1952 by the UN. During the following decade, starting from the observation that in a global capitalist system there was a systematic exchange of resources from poor to rich countries, neo-Marxist proponents put forward the view that such an exchange was unequal and represented the source of socio-economic imbalances and reflected the way societies were evolving<sup>8</sup>.

The focus exclusively on economic growth has been heavily criticized, especially with the worsening of social problems (persistence of poverty, environmental degradation, emergence of ecological imbalances, uncontrolled expansion of urbanization, persistence of unemployment, the emergence of new forms of crisis, loss of confidence in government, etc.)<sup>9</sup>. Another term gradually entered the vocabulary of specialists, i.e. "social situation". If initially the concept was only a set of statistical indicators adjacent to development, later the concept started to be widely debated and studied as being part of both reality and of economic growth. In 1962, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) characterized development processes as having two dimensions, economic and social, recommending a balance between the two aspects and their integration within the same concept, given the interdependence between the factors and determinants of each dimension. Thus, a new paradigm was born in which resources, technological progress, economic aspects and social changes were integrated<sup>10</sup>, and the system of indicators (GDP, labour productivity, money flow, trade balance, etc.) was completed with indicators regarding the quality of life. In 1975, the human-centred dimension of development was added, starting from the idea that human beings have a huge impact on development processes. Indicators relating to aspects of community life, to relations with the outer world and with one's own consciousness (the human development index and the human freedom index)<sup>11</sup> were also added. In the late 1980s, development was equated with the idea of well-being, which encompassed growth, expansion, economic progress, continuous enrichment (of an individual, community, or society as a whole), and improved living conditions.

When the indicators mentioned above refer to a more or less defined area, the development acquires a spatial character, in addition to the temporal one, conferred by the evolution in time of the growth processes. In this context, development theories can be extrapolated and translated into local, regional, rural, urban or territorial development models. In addition, the emergence of the globalization phenomenon has intensified interest in this type of analysis, the territorial impact of direct and unmediated relationship between different areas of the globe, situated at a great distance from each other, being an important factor in

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<sup>8</sup> Mihail Lupașcu, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup> Maria Prisacari, *Abordări teoretice ale politicilor de dezvoltare regională* [Theoretical approaches to regional development policies], available at [https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag\\_file/490-493\\_1.pdf](https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/490-493_1.pdf), [accessed in August 2021], p. 490-491.

<sup>10</sup> Gustavo Esteva, *op.cit.*, p. 8-10.

<sup>11</sup> Maria Prisacari, *op.cit.*, p. 490-491, Gustavo Esteva, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

the development of an area<sup>12</sup>. The broad issues addressed in these analyses can be grouped into 4 broad categories, depending on the theories of regional development underlying the studies. Thus<sup>13</sup>:

1. Analyses that address the issue from the perspective of neoclassical theories of growth, in which the quantity and quality of natural resources, the level of technology, monetary resources, labour and the cost of transport are considered the main determinants of regional growth. To these the following factors are added: full employment, maintaining a certain level of wages, flexibility of prices and wages, population growth, the degree of savings and investments, etc. In order to have constant and equal growth rates, labour and capital should move freely in a homogeneous economic space and in a perfect competitive environment, without taking into account social, political, innovation and regional geographical features. The model developed by Solow brings an improvement to these theories by integrating, along with labour and capital, the third factor - technical progress. In this way, the model manages to provide an explanation for the existence of convergence in the case of growth indicators for certain regions or for the deepening of discrepancies in underdeveloped areas. In order to reduce the gap, the model proposes investments in human and technical capital, the import of know-how and the training of a highly qualified workforce.

2. The creators of cumulative growth theories have improved the Solow model with the intention of providing solutions to long-term growth. Thus, David Romer considers the human factor as being more efficient than material investment, the transformation of unskilled labour into skilled labour involving the use of more complex equipment, and therefore determining technological progress. Even the short-term investment in human capital might trigger a constant or progressive rate of growth while also preventing the slowing down of growth. In this case, the engine is innovation. In order to have a sustainable economic growth, the theories focus on activities that involve innovation and creativity, on professionalized education and an infrastructure that is adapted to the requirements. For Gunnar Myrdal, all these factors lead to the concentration of development in growth centres. Drawing on the centre-periphery theory developed by John Friedmann, which is based on the hypothesis that relations between central and peripheral areas are the engine of regional development, Myrdal attributes the

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<sup>12</sup> Daniela Antonescu, *Noile perspective teoretice ale dezvoltării economice la nivel regional* [New Theoretical Perspectives of economic development at the regional level], Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2011, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Irina Azarova, "Key Factors and Tools of Regional Development", in *Управління розвитком складних систем* [Management of complex systems development], vol. 37/2019, p. 154; Gheorghe Zaman, George Georgescu (coord.), *op.cit.*, p. 26-28; Maria Prisacari, *op.cit.*, p. 491-493; Daniela Antonescu, *op.cit.*, p.4-5, Mihail Lupașcu, "Characteristics and Essence of Sustainable Development of the Territory and Community Development", in *Tribuna tânărilor cercetător* [Tribune of the Young Researcher], no. 2/2020, p. 110; Simona Iammarina, Andres Rodriguez-Pose, Michael Storper, *Why Regional Development matters for Europe's Economic Future*, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, p. 4.

differences in growth between regions to the relations of autonomy - dependence between central and peripheral regions. Manifested in a space delimited by national borders or centres of power, these relations attribute control over their own destinies to the central regions, the peripheral ones being dependent and controlled by the former. Based on this theory, Walt Whitman Rostow promotes the staged development model, whereby the large discrepancies recorded at the beginning are gradually reduced as the development spreads from the growth centres to the periphery. Another perspective is offered by Francois Perroux, a researcher of the growth pole theory, who considers that locating companies with a high capacity for innovation becomes a centre of attraction for capital and resources. He also points out that ports, airports, industrial platforms or large companies can have a similar effect, since by their mere presence they attract and facilitate the emergence or location of potential economic activities. The development manifested in these growth poles then spreads through various channels, involving the adjacent area or even the entire regional economy. Later, P. Pottier demonstrates that the transport links between these poles favour the flow of resources and the spread of innovation, becoming axes of development. The cumulative regional growth rate and the development model obtained, which can also be of a continuously polarized type, depend on the quality of the diffusion and of the transport routes.

3. In an attempt to explain the inequalities in the level of development of some regions, a group of regionalist theorists have developed a new current of thinking based on theories of international trade. Long-cycle theory promotes models whereby a competitive advantage is created, in conditions of imperfect competition, by the stimulation of technological innovation and the financial services sectors, factors on which the economies of large metropolitan areas depend. These cycles, based on long-term technological changes, are often coupled with the mechanisms of globalization of trade and favour, in particular, metropolitan regions rather than areas in the vicinity or on the periphery. At the same time, proponents of exogenous development theory recognize the importance of localization and public intervention. In the models proposed by them, they employed concepts such as diversified space, regions of knowledge, smart regions, etc., where the most innovative activities take place and which concentrate the best jobs. Therefore, the solutions offered to achieve homogeneous levels of development do not exclude the functioning of a predominantly endogenous framework of local development. Thus, the theory of endogenous development, founded by John Friedmann and Walter Stöhr in the late 50s, becomes central to the currents of thought, with an emphasis on local resources, ways of cooperation and cultural values of the community. Thus, based on this theory, development encompasses the three dimensions mentioned above: a spatial dimension, in which geographical, economic, social and cultural factors are manifested; a community-related dimension, which involves the inclusion of communities in the development process; a democratic dimension, based on the existence of structures within which people can express their views.

4. Other theories of regional growth promote growth patterns that focus on the core economic sectors that produce goods and services for export, or on

achieving flexible regional specialization that allows for a transition from a competition related to prices to a competition based on innovation. The newest theoretical orientation, sustainable development, is based on the concordance between resources and their capitalization, offering a development model that creates a system of interdependence between the environment and the socio-economic development. These relationships, which are ultimately found in indicators that reflect the quality of life, include governance, and its effectiveness in strengthening decision-making capacity in areas important for long-term development.

All these theories ultimately lead to models that combine the economic development of a region and its progress through the emergence of new roles and functions, with human development and the strengthening of individual capacities through education and adherence to ethical values, and with social development that has in view socio-cultural relations and citizen participation in the decision-making process<sup>14</sup>. In reality, the models that aim towards the achievement of well-being must take into account the interaction between global economic forces and regional characteristics, this generating a fragmented space in countries, regions, region-cities or region-states with different roles and functions.

The constructivist and reflectivist doctrines have changed the classical perspective of approaching the region<sup>15</sup>, defining it as a process, as an entity in continuous evolution, with borders that are built, deconstructed and rebuilt from the outside or from the inside following the collective actions of the people and the process of identity formation. The structural elements that deconstruct and rebuild the borders of the regions are the economic flows and the communication infrastructure. The concept of “region-actor” has also been introduced, which defines the position of a region in terms of regional cohesion, representing the process whereby “a geographical area turns from a passive object into an active subject, able to express the transnational interests of the region”<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the concept becomes a comparative analytical tool for understanding the construction and consolidation of regions and their formation as important actors in the international system.

Regions have very different economic performances (among themselves) compared to states, induced by a number of determinants, such as: geography, demography, degree of specialization, economic productivity, physical and human capital, infrastructure, capacity for innovation. In this context, some regions are taking greater advantage of the benefits and opportunities of globalization and interconnection, being better connected to global markets. Thus, there are

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<sup>14</sup> Mihail Lupaşcu, *Concepte și teorii...*, p. 162.

<sup>15</sup> Fredrik Söderbaum, “Exploring the Links between Micro-Regionalism and Macro-Regionalism”, in *Global Politics of Regionalism. Theory and Practice*, edited by Mary Farrell, Björn Hettne and Luk Van Langenhove, Pluto Press, London, 2005, p. 90-91.

<sup>16</sup> Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorising the rise of regionness”, in *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy*, edited by Shaun Breslin, Christopher W. Hughes, Nicola Phillips, Ben Rosamond, Routledge, New York, 2002, p. 38.

significant differences in the global regional landscape, related to production capacity, comparative advantage, economic indicators (GDP, GDP / capita, annual growth rate), income level, employment rate, labour productivity, demographic characteristics, institutions, policies, resources.

The paradigm in which these structures operate no longer focuses on achieving convergent or equal levels of development, but on identifying regional models that allow sustainable development for prosperous regions and provide opportunities, in the short and medium term, aimed at eliminating disparities persistent in less prosperous regions<sup>17</sup>. For the latter category of areas, there has recently been a major concern in Central and Eastern Europe, driven by the need to find solutions to the new difficulties posed by the restructuring and reform processes experienced by the Member States that joined after 2004.

Interest in the European Union's regional development and cohesion policy has also increased as a result of obstacles to deepening economic and political integration<sup>18</sup>. Being a horizontal policy, it addresses areas considered strategic by the European Commission (education, employment, energy, environment, single market, research and innovation, etc.) by funding the territorial development programs proposed by the Member States and implemented at regional level by local authorities. The new thematic objectives developed for the period 2021-2027 aim at: a smarter Europe through innovation, digitalisation, economic transformation and support for SMEs; a greener, low-carbon Europe; a more connected Europe through strategic transport and digital networks; a more social Europe that respects social rights and supports quality jobs, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to health care; a Europe closer to its citizens by supporting locally responsible development strategies and sustainable urban development<sup>19</sup>.

One of the instruments that might ensure the implementation of the European Union's Cohesion and Regional Development Policy is undoubtedly the one that promotes cross-border cooperation (CBC). During the construction and integration processes of Europe, a number of forms of CBC<sup>20</sup> have developed, in several stages, as shown by Durr-Guimerr and Gonzales, depending on the growth

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<sup>17</sup> Simona Iammarina, Andres Rodriguez-Pose, Michael Storper, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

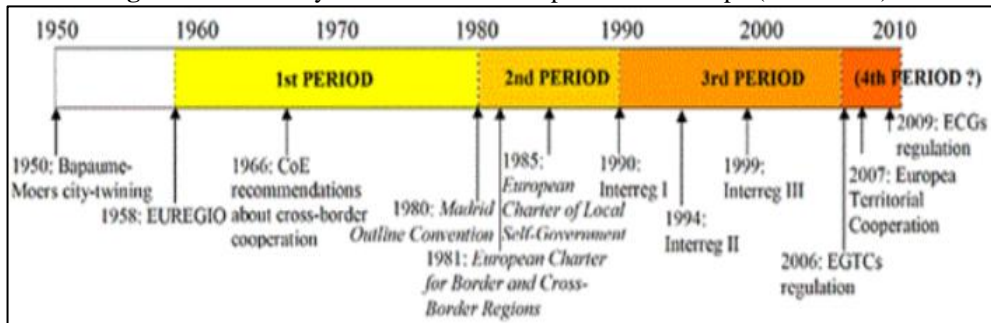
<sup>18</sup> Dorin Jula, Nicoleta Jula, Dorel Ailenei, Ananie Gârbovean, "Competitivitatea și dezechilibrile regionale" [Competitiveness and regional imbalances], in *Dezvoltarea regională și integrarea Europeană* [Regional development and European integration], edited by Eugen Simion, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2001, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Daniela Antonescu, *Politica de coeziune și dezvoltare regională în noua perioadă de programare 2021-2027* [Cohesion policy and regional development in the new programming period 2021-2027], Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2019, p. 1, 10; European Commission, *Priorities for 2021-2027*, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/ro/policy/how/priorities](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/ro/policy/how/priorities), [accessed in August 2021].

<sup>20</sup> Klára Czimre, *Cross-Border Co-operation: theory and practice*, Debreceni Egyetem Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 2006; Klára Czimre, *Kisközségtől Az Eurorégióig* [From a small village to a Euroregion], Didakt Kft, 2005, Debrecen, p. 65-69.

of cross-border initiatives, the territorial expansion, and the development of instruments of institutional support to cooperation (see Fig. 1)<sup>21</sup>.

**Figure1.** The history of cross-border co-operation in Europe (1950-2010)



*Source:* Antoni Durf-Guimerf, Xavier Oliveras González, *op.cit.*

The emergence and development of cooperative relations between border regions has been supported by other European Commission initiatives, most of which have been transposed into EU law. We refer to: Resolution on Co-operation between Local Communities in Frontier Areas (1974); European Outline Convention on Cross-Border Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980); European Regional / Spatial Planning Charter (1983); European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985); Legal Declaration on Cross-border Co-operation (1987); Community Charter of Regionalization (1988); European Convention on Transfrontier Television (1995); Additional Protocol to European Outline Convention on Cross-Border Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1998); Strategies for Promoting Cross-Border and International Co-operation in an Enlarged EU (2002); Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of cross-border co-operation (2006, with the 2013 amendments)<sup>22</sup>. Under this legislation, the first mechanisms for effective interregional integration have been developed at the level of border regions, leading to the emergence of the first forms of cross-border cooperation<sup>23</sup>. The first Euregio created (it coined the term) consisted of Twente-Oostgelderland (NL) Westmuensterland and Grafschaft Bentheim (FRG), the second being the Maas-Rhine region around Maastricht (NL), Aachen (FRG)

<sup>21</sup> Antoni Durf - Guimerf, Xavier Oliveras González, "Recent dynamics in European cross-border cooperation: towards a new period?", in *Regional Studies Association Annual International Conference 2010*, available at <http://www.regional-studies-association.ac.uk/events/2010/may-pecs/papers/Guimera.pdf>, [accessed in August 2021].

<sup>22</sup> Klára Czimre, *Cross-Border Co-operation ...*, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Klára Czimre, *Studia Geografica. Euroregionalis fejlődés az EU csatlakozás kuszoban különös tekintettel Magyarország euroregioira* [Geographic Study. Euroregional development in the context of EU accession with special regard to the Euroregions of Hungary], Debrecen, 2005, p. 9.

and Liege (B)<sup>24</sup>. The two examples of good practice have been replicated in other EU Member States, with the process starting in the western part of the European Union and moving towards Eastern Europe. This develops a network of such structures along the EU's internal or external borders<sup>25</sup>. Another form of cooperation, based on the 2006 Regulation<sup>26</sup>, is represented by European cross-border cooperation groups. The first group was Eurometropola Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, registered in 2008 in France and Belgium<sup>27</sup>, and the last of the 79 European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation is set up in 2020, EGTC Pirineos Pyrenees (between France and Spain)<sup>28</sup>.

From the perspective of financial support for cross-border cooperation, a number of programs have been carried out at the internal borders of the European Union during various budget years and financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the name INTERREG Community Initiative: Interreg I (1990-1993); Interreg II (1994-1999); Interreg III (2000-2006); Interreg IV (2007-2013); Interreg V (2014-2020); Interreg Europe (2021-2017)<sup>29</sup>. At the external borders of the European Union, a series of programs, aimed at the stimulation of

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<sup>24</sup> Willem Molle, "Half a Century of Cross-border Cooperation in Europe. Insights from the Cases of the EUREGIO and the EMR", in *Eurolimes*, Vol 21/2016, p. 23-26.

<sup>25</sup> Constantin – Vasile Țoca, Ioan Horga, "Sociological Research: University of Oradea's Students Knowledge Regarding the Bihor–Hajdú Bihar and Carpathian Euroregions", in *Regional Development in the Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Space–From national to European Perspective*, edited by István Süli-Zakar, Ioan Horga, Debrecen University Press, 2006, p. 129-136; Florentina Chirodea, Luminița Șoproni, Constantin – Vasile Țoca, "Cross-border Cooperation in Bihor – Hajdu Bihar Euroregion. Achievements, Opportunities and Perspective", in *Achievements, Contemporary Approaches and Perspectives in the Evaluation of CrossBorder Cooperation*, edited by Constantin-Vasile TOCA, Ioan HORGA, Luminita SOPRONI, University of Debrecen Press, Debrecen, 2017, p. 49-62.

<sup>26</sup> European Parliament, *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)*, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/gect/ce\\_1082\(2006\)\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/gect/ce_1082(2006)_en.pdf), [accessed in August 2021]; European Commission, *Assessment of the application of EGTC regulation. Final report*, 2018, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/assess\\_egtc\\_applic\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/assess_egtc_applic_en.pdf), [accessed in August 2021].

<sup>27</sup> Constantin – Vasile Țoca, *Romanian – Hungarian cross-bordere cooperation at various territorial levels, with a particular studies of the Debrecen – Oradea Eurometropolis (EGTC)*, Debrecen University Press, 2013, p. 61-66.

<sup>28</sup> European Committee of the Regions, *List of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation*, 2021, available at [https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRAactivities/Documents/Official\\_List\\_of\\_the\\_EGTC\\_s.pdf?Web=0](https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRAactivities/Documents/Official_List_of_the_EGTC_s.pdf?Web=0), [accessed in August 2021].

<sup>29</sup> Klára Czimre, *Development of cross-border regions*, Debreceni Egyetem, Debrecen, 2013, p. 48-56; European Commission, *Interreg: European Territorial Co-operation*, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/), [accessed in August 2021].



cross-border cooperation, while also providing opportunities for the development of regions close to the EU's external borders, have been developed. They include<sup>30</sup>: Phare CBC (1994-1998, 1998-2000, 2000-2006), Phare CREDO, LACE Phare (Linkage Assistance and Cooperation for the European Border Region); TACIS CBC (Technical Assistance to the Community of Independent States); MEDA - financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization); IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance); ENPI (European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument); ENI (European Neighborhood Instrument).

In this context, areas adjacent to borders are often described as laboratories of European cohesion, in which processes of change can be analysed on a small scale. Researchers have shown particular interest in areas delimited by the EU's internal borders, which are more or less open, as they face 3 major changes: increased trade and cross-border service flows, and labour mobility, due to the process of European integration; the expansion of transport networks, utilities and public services by increasing the volume of investments in transnational infrastructure; strengthening cooperation between communities on both sides of the border by standardizing legal and administrative processes and developing cross-border initiatives<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, the border regions delimited by the old border dividing Western Europe from Eastern Europe, also called "small Europe", seem to be the most appropriate areas for analysing opportunities for political, economic, cultural, environmental and social welfare<sup>32</sup>. As for the regions at the EU's external borders, their disadvantage prevails, especially when the "fortress of Europe" closes to its neighbours. However, as the good neighbourhood policy is implemented, regional growth also manifests itself at the EU's eastern border<sup>33</sup>.

The present volume of studies and analyses, the second one in a series dedicated to investigating regional development at the borders of the European Union<sup>34</sup> was conceived starting from the theoretical underpinnings presented above. However, it does not claim to be exhaustive. The chief purpose of its two sections is to improve approaches to regional development through new levels of analysing contemporary realities. At the same time, its aim is to bring to the

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<sup>30</sup> Klára Czimre, *Development of...*, p.60-74

<sup>31</sup> Peter Nijkamp, "Moving Frontiers: A Local-Global Perspective", in *Developing Frontier Cities. Global Perspective – Regional Context*, edited by Harvey Lithwick and Yehuda Gradus, Springer-Sciences+Business Media, 2000, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Sabrina Ellebrecht, "Qualities of Bordering Spaces. A Conceptual Experiment with Reference to Georg Simmel's Sociology of Space", in *Borders and Border Regions in Europe. Changes, Challenges and Chances*, Political Science, Vol. 15, edited by Arnaud Lechevalier and Jan Wielgohs, Transcript Verlag - Independent Academic Publishing, Bielefeld, 2013, p. 95.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24-25.

<sup>34</sup> Some of the studies and analyses were included in a book entitled *Border Regions: Area of Cooperation and good Neighbourhoods* and published in 2020. See *Eurolimes*, volume 29/2020, edited by Florentina Chirodea, Khrystyna Prytula, Klara Czimre.

attention of the academic community, researchers and policy makers the particularities in the development of the EU's eastern border regions. The topics were discussed during the international conference Jean Monnet Regional Development at the Borders of the European Union, organized in Oradea in November 2019, within the project "Development of the border regions in Central and Eastern Europe countries", funded by the Erasmus + program of European Union, the Jean Monnet Program.



## **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES AND NEW LEVELS**

Dan APĂTEANU - The Cooperation in the Cross-Border Euroregions: Is There a Positive or Negative Influence from its Public Opinion Perception?

Luminița ȘOPRONI - The Competitive Agglomeration, Pole of Economic Growth

Alina STOICA - Cultural Networks Platform for Cooperation in the European Union Borders

Ioana BORDEIANU - Border Guards' Education Development in the New European System of Specific Training. Interoperability Gained after Implementing the Common Core Curriculum for Border and Coast Guards at the European Level

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# THE COMPETITIVE AGGLOMERATION, POLE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Luminița ȘOPRONI\*, Alina STOICA\*\*

***Abstract.** The global competition determines the states and regions to follow the industrial policy based on the competitive agglomerations, which supports and increases their economic competitiveness. The cluster policy allows the consideration of local development conditions and the implementation of growth programs that contribute to the economic growth and the establishment of a balanced social environment. Therefore, it is obvious that current economic policies are reorienting towards the microeconomic elements of development, as the economic climate and the legal framework are no longer sufficient to achieve economic progress.*

***Keywords:** regional growth, competitiveness, cluster, industrial park*

## **New regional structures within the new regionalism**

Globalization and the liberalization of economic trade have led to major transformations in the world economy. They have brought to the forefront the regions as key players in the struggle for resources and competitive advantage, which are necessary factors for economic power in international competition.

The economic literature distinguishes between the old type of regionalization, which aims primarily to reduce or eliminate trade barriers and the new regionalization that involves the harmonization of national policies towards economic integration. This new type of regionalism emerged as a result of negotiations in the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the European Union is seen as a model in this respect, due to its features regarded as essential to a deeper integration: facilitation of the financial and foreign direct investment flows; the liberalized movement of labor force; harmonized macroeconomic policies in order to develop a stable macroeconomic environment; institutions and funds securing a coordinated regional integration policy; an active policy to improve communications and transportation

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infrastructure; coordinated legislation and common rules for product and factor markets; and a monetary union with a common currency<sup>1</sup>.

This new regionalism has two sides. The first direction addresses cross-border coalitions at both the levels of meso-regional (different states that tend to integrate their economic, political, or military activities) and macro-regional integration (trading blocks, regional organizations, transcontinental frames – e.g. BRIC countries). The second direction involves new forms of governance at the urban level (metropolitan regionalism)<sup>2</sup>. The regional integration agreements made at mezzo and macro-regional level have as the main beneficiaries the developed countries. In this context, the Governments of the developing countries face challenges in the short and long-term in which concerns the increase competitiveness regionally and globally, and traditional responses no longer offer viable solutions. That is why the mechanisms for micro-regional integration emerge as a viable solution for the states and regions that have resources that can be exploited in order to attract investment to create wealth and prosperity within.

Micro-regional structures have emerged as a consequence of economic and political liberalization and have developed as a result of two essential needs: on the one hand, the need to strengthen stability and security within regions and on the other hand the desire to develop multilateral relations with other actors. Their chief aim is to impose themselves in the global world. Their sphere of action is multi-directional (economy, society, environment, security, culture), their structure is multipolar, and the actors involved in the process are regional governments, local authorities, civil society, non-state actors, business players, interacting to achieve common goals.

Micro-regional integration is often achieved as an alternative or in opposition to the formal regionalism of states, without calling upon national capital.<sup>3</sup> The traditional resources on which states are based (labour, nature and capital), which give them the comparative advantage according to the classical theory of international trade, are no longer the main motivation for trade in the global market. Globalization provides access to resources anywhere in the world, in international capital markets, so that regions no longer need national capital to develop or increase their competitiveness. Their competitive advantage results from the technology used and the efficient use of these resources<sup>4</sup>, and regional competitiveness is a benchmark for measuring the potential and results of the micro-region.

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<sup>1</sup> Helmut K. Anheier, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2012, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218557.n452>, [accessed in March 14, 2021].

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Björn Hettne, Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theorising the Rise of Regionness”, in *New Regionalisms in the Global Political Economy*, edited by Shaun Breslin, Christopher W. Hughes, Nicola Phillips and Ben Rosamond, Routledge, New York, 2002, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Snowdon, George Stonehouse, “Competitiveness in a Globalised World: Michael Porter on the Microeconomic Foundations of the Competitiveness of Nations, Regions, and Firms”, in *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37/2006, p. 166-167.

Micro-regions are “political constructions under the state level of analysis that have a legal, political, economic or cultural singularity and which may or may not fall into the legal borders of a state”<sup>5</sup>, often constituted by “a network of transactions and collaboration across national boundaries, which may very well emerge as an alternative or in opposition to the challenged state, as well as to formal state regionalisms”<sup>6</sup>. They were formed and developed out of the need to organize societies and communities in a more efficient way, to create change and generate faster growth for regions and their communities.

There are different types of micro-regions in the world, with the following main characteristics:

- go from the transnational or national level to the sub-national or local level;
- have a low degree of institutionalization (with the exception of Euroregions at EU level);
- are constituted according to principles governed by the market and the private sector;
- involve multiple interactions between non-state actors.

Micro-regions can take the following forms: growth pole, growth polygon, growth triangle, special economic zone, spatial development initiative, development corridor, cluster or cross-border region. Regardless of form, they have as a common element the shift of responsibilities for economic development from governments to non-state actors (public authorities at various levels, educational and research institutions, private actors), replacing government economic policy decisions with the process of cooperation of stakeholders and those involved in regional development.

### **The regional competitiveness**

The world economy has undergone major transformations, evolving from protectionism and strict regulations to policies of trade liberalization, integration, regionalization and competitiveness. In this context, competition between regions becomes the general framework in which each actor seeks to gain points by attracting and using the factors and means that ensure its economic competitiveness. It should be noted here that this competition is not a zero-sum game of the globalized economy, but a way to achieve economic growth and a high standard of living for the regions involved.

Regional competitiveness is closely linked to the capacity of local actors to effectively use the endogenous and exogenous factors of the region to achieve common goals. The development of micro-regions requires economic initiatives

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<sup>5</sup> Rodrigo Tavares, “The State of the Art of Regionalism. The Past, Present and Future of a Discipline”, in *UNU-CRIS e-Working Papers*, W-2004/10, UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies, 21/2004, available at <https://cris.unu.edu/sites/cris.unu.edu/files/W-2004-10.pdf>, [accessed in March, 20, 2021].

<sup>6</sup> Fredrik Söderbaum, Yan Taylor (eds.), *Regionalism and Uneven Development in Southern Africa*, Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington, 2003.



and partnership actions between the public and private environment, which make the most of the resources of the territories and create real competitive advantages to attract businesses and human capital. The competitive position of each territory, in terms of price and quality, results from a combination of factors, associated with: the assets they have available; the technologies they can deploy; costs/prices in the local market; extraneous influences on supply/demand in their field; and 'pure chance'. The combined effect of these factors across all local businesses/individuals generates some places which are 'winners', while others are 'losers' in the place competition<sup>7</sup>.

Regional competitiveness can be defined as "the ability of a region and, therefore, of its public authorities, to maintain its local business base and skilled labour force and to attract foreign investment (corporate social responsibility and SMEs)"<sup>8</sup>. According to Porter, in a region, competitiveness means "productivity measured by value, not productivity in the narrow sense of volume"<sup>9</sup> and for that reason the context is important (macro-economic stability, sound legal institutions, investment facilities, the quality of the business environment within which the firms compete). Therefore the main challenge for the economic development of a region is to create conditions for fast and sustainable growth of productivity.

In general, the definitions of regional competitiveness relate this concept to economic growth, which has the function of generating prosperity and quality living conditions for the members of the community concerned. This train of thought includes Cooke, who states that regional competitiveness is "the capability of a sub-national economy to attract and maintain firms with stable or rising markets shares in an activity, while maintaining stable or increasing standards of living for those who participate in it"<sup>10</sup> or Poot, who considers that "competitiveness of a territory presents a measure of its potential to achieve sustainable growth of the living standards of all its constituents"<sup>11</sup>.

Consequently, the competitive characteristics of a region are based on the existence and efficient exploitation of the following factors: quality of infrastructure, general quality of the environment, quality of business environment,

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Gordon, "Territorial Competition", in *Handbook of Local and Regional Development*, edited by Andy Pike, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, and John Tomaney, Routledge, London, 2010, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> *Manual de evaluare a competitivității regionale* [Regional Competitiveness Assessment Manual], Grupul de Economie Aplicată, Bucharest, 2007, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Snowdon, George Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 163–175.

<sup>10</sup> Philip Cooke, "Competitiveness as Cohesion: Social Capital and the Knowledge Economy", in *City Matters: Competitiveness, Cohesion and Urban Governance*, edited by Martin Boddy, and Michael Parkinson, Policy Press, Bristol, 2004, p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Poot, "Reflections on Local and Economy-Wide Effects of Territorial Competition", in *Regional Competition*, edited by P. Batey and P. Friedrich, Springer, 2000, p. 205-230.

quality of research and innovation centres, ability to retain and attract qualified human resources, taxation, cost and quality of labour.<sup>12</sup>

Porter analyses the competitive characteristics of the territory through the prism of the “diamond” model he has created, by focusing on the factors that drive the competitiveness of nations. The Porter's Diamond states that the competitive advantage in international markets is driven by four factors: the factors conditions, the demand conditions, the related and supporting industries and the firms' strategy, structure and rivalry. “Each point on the diamond – and the diamond as a system – affects essential ingredients for achieving international competitive success: the availability of resources and skills necessary for competitive advantage in an industry; the information that shapes the opportunities that companies perceive and the directions in which they deploy their resources and skills; the goals of the owners, managers, and individuals in companies; and most important, the pressures on companies to invest and innovate”<sup>13</sup>.

Starting from the conditions formulated by Porter, there are several dimensions that can be taken into account when analysing the success factors of regional competitiveness<sup>14</sup>:

- productivity generating factors: access to inputs and specialized employees, access to information, access to public goods, providing incentives and measuring performance;

- factors that stimulate innovation: the needs of buyers, new technological processes, production or distribution, the ability to react quickly offered by the existence of these elements;

- factors that facilitate the creation of new companies: lower barriers to entry compared to other areas (better information on market opportunities, easier identification of uncovered niches or segments in terms of products, services or suppliers, which can be quickly served, a lower risk capital premium, a significant local market);

- competitive factors: dissemination of information that can contribute to the development of new products or obtaining advantages through better coordination of the activity horizontally (in relation to direct competitors) or vertically (in relation to suppliers, distributors and customers).

These dimensions are, in fact, the necessary conditions for the creation and development of economies based on agglomeration (industrial agglomerations), ensuring a solid business environment and generating economic growth and

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<sup>12</sup> Liviu Voinea (coord.), Valentin Cojanu, Laurian Lungu, Dumitru Sandu, Iulia Șerb, *Manual de evaluare a competitivității regionale* [Regional Competitiveness Assessment Manual], Grupul de Economie Aplicată, București, August 2007, p. 11-12.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Porter, “The Competitive Advantage of Nations”, in *Harvard Business Review*, from the Magazine - March–April 1990, available at <https://hbr.org/1990/03/the-competitive-advantage-of-nations>, [accessed in April, 10, 2021].

<sup>14</sup> Liviu Voinea (coord.), Valentin Cojanu, Laurian Lungu, Dumitru Sandu, Iulia Șerb, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

prosperity. And the ability of regions to create competitive advantages through the formation of industrial agglomerations determines economic competitiveness.

### **Clusters – part of the industrial policy**

In addition to the business sector, government can establish policies to promote opportunities for change through time, generating comparative advantage<sup>15</sup>. When government is actively involved in creating comparative advantage, through the mobilization of skilled labor, technology, and capital, the term industrial policy applies<sup>16</sup>.

The industrial policy is a strategy created in order to revitalize, improve, and develop an industry. This strategy requires that resources be directed to industries with the highest growth prospect, in which productivity is highest, linkages to the rest of the economy are strong<sup>17</sup>, and future competitiveness is important.

Usually, industrial policy is developed collectively by government, business, and labor through a tripartite consultation process. The result of such policies is that the domestic economy will benefit from a higher average level of productivity, becoming more competitive in world markets<sup>18</sup>.

European Union documents emphasize the need to involve all Member States, regions, cities and the private sector in the industrial policy review process, in order to achieve a single market that facilitates the integration of companies into European and global value chains and acts as an important driver of industrial competitiveness, strengthening the capacity of industry to adapt to the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities of globalization.

In this direction, Romania's industrial policy document takes an approach to industrial policy based on the competitive advantages of enterprises and introduces the *cluster* among the seven transversal objectives, as an important tool for promoting industrial development, innovation, competitiveness and growth, to support the emergence of new, interconnected value chains globally (*developing and encouraging cooperative relationships in innovative clusters*)<sup>19</sup>.

According to Porter, the *cluster* is a derivative of the Diamond theory and represents “a critical mass of companies in a particular field in a particular location,

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<sup>15</sup> This process is known as *dynamic comparative advantage*.

<sup>16</sup> Robert J. Carbaugh, *International Economics*, South-Western Cengage Learning, Mason, 2011, p. 96.

<sup>17</sup> A good example is the sector of semiconductors.

<sup>18</sup> Robert J. Carbaugh, *op. cit.*, p. 96-97.

<sup>19</sup> Doina Turcu, Florentina Ionescu, Cornelia Muraru Ionel, Christina Leucuța, Monica Aldoiu, Cătălin Bălan, Răzvan Deșliu, Cătălin Potârniche, Sabin Rotaru, Daniel Coșniță, *Document regarding the Industrial Policy of Romania*, August 2018, available at <http://www.economie.gov.ro/images/politici-industriale/SIPOCA7/Document%20de%20Politica%20Industrial%20a%20Roma%20niei.pdf>, [accessed in April 20, 2021], p. 9, 25.

whether it is a country, a state or region, or even a city”<sup>20</sup>. Within a cluster, the industries are related by knowledge, skills, inputs, demand, and other linkages<sup>21</sup>. They are geographically concentrated, sell their products and services across many regions and face competition from other regions<sup>22</sup>. In this regard, the four elements of Porter's Diamond are important because clusters “represent an efficient productive structure within which firms can operate”<sup>23</sup>.

The cluster is a particular form of industrial agglomeration, which represents geographical concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, companies in related industries and associated institutions (for example: universities, standardization agencies and trade associations) in a given domain. There are several types of agglomeration economies, such as: “input-output linkages, labor market pooling, knowledge spillovers, sophisticated local demand, specialized institutions, and the organizational structure of business and social networks”<sup>24</sup>. Economies formed by industrial agglomerations involve the simultaneous accomplishment of several conditions and characteristics<sup>25</sup>: economic activities *concentrated in a certain space, critical mass of specialized economic agents, multiple economic agents* addressing several markets, *competition and cooperation* strategies involving all participants, *the adaptation in time* of the different economic agents that are interconnected through the industrial grouping.

Unlike traditional agglomeration economies which are “centered on cost minimization”, cluster advantages come from “information, transactions costs, complementarities, and incentives as well as “public” goods that result from both public and private investments”<sup>26</sup>. The main function of clustering is that of driver of innovation and competitiveness, influencing competitiveness in several ways<sup>27</sup>:

- the geographical concentration of firms allows more efficient access to specialised suppliers, information and the workforce<sup>28</sup>;

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<sup>20</sup> Michael E. Porter, Michael P. Porter, “Location, Clusters, and the “New” Microeconomics of Competition”, in *Business Economics*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 1998, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Mercedes Delgado, Michael E. Porter, Scott Stern, “Defining Clusters of Related Industries”, in *NBER Working Paper*, No. 20375, August 2014, available at <https://www.nber.org/papers/w20375>, [accessed in April 20, 2021], p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (EOCIC), *European Panorama of Clusters and Industrial Change*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, available at [https://clustercollaboration.eu/sites/default/files/news\\_attachment/european\\_panorama\\_2020.pdf](https://clustercollaboration.eu/sites/default/files/news_attachment/european_panorama_2020.pdf), [accessed in February 15, 2021], p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Snowdon, George Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>24</sup> Mercedes Delgado, Michael E. Porter, Scott Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Liviu Voinea (coord.), Valentin Cojanu, Laurian Lungu, Dumitru Sandu, Iulia Şerb, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Michael E. Porter, Michael P. Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Brian Snowdon, George Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>28</sup> The case of the *Boston Life Sciences Cluster*, where the presence of world-class research universities such as Harvard and MIT, teaching hospitals and biotech companies

- allows companies to be more productive and innovative than if they operated in isolation;
- reduces barriers to entry, given that new firms have access to an established pool of resources;
- challenges the economies to upgrade the sophistication of their clusters towards more advanced high-value activities.

Within regional clusters, companies and associated institutions (trade organizations, universities, and local government) can act more efficiently and innovate faster based on the following factors: “sharing common technologies, infrastructure, pools of knowledge and skills, inputs, and responding to demanding local customers”<sup>29</sup>.

At EU level, the *European Panorama of Clusters and Industrial Change 2020*<sup>30</sup> identified 2950 regional industrial clusters, which provided 61.8 million jobs, representing 1 out of 4 jobs in Europe. There are 198 high-performing clusters across Europe, which are regional concentrations of exporting industries<sup>31</sup>.

In terms of productivity, the report confirms the hypotheses presented above, according to which the cluster is a generator of innovation, productivity and competitiveness: “productivity in clusters is much higher than average productivity, corresponding to a 25% above-average productivity effect. Productivity increases with cluster strength: in basic-performing and medium-performing clusters productivity is 10-15% above average, while productivity in high-performing clusters is more than twice as high as the average (+140%)”<sup>32</sup>. Overall, productivity has grown at 3.5% per year between 2014 and 2017, and employment has grown at 1.5% per year.

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provides an excellent environment for innovation and competitiveness (Brian Snowdon, George Stonehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 168).

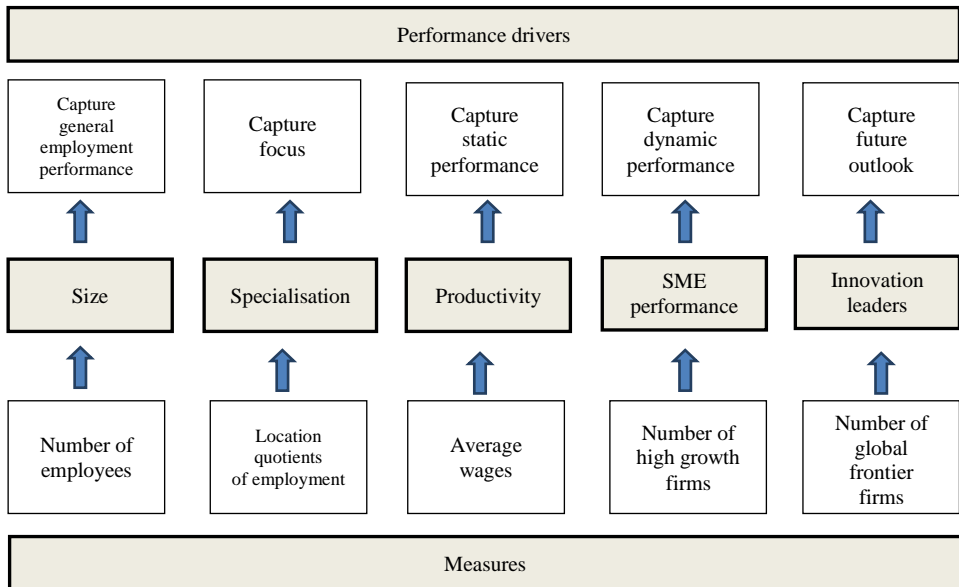
<sup>29</sup> Mercedes Delgado, Michael E. Porter, Scott Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Exporting industries (or traded industries)* are the industries including firms which sell products or services across regions and countries. The traded industries (geographically concentrated) are also opposite to local industries (geographically dispersed). See EOCIC, *op. cit.* and Mercedes Delgado, Michael E. Porter, Scott Stern, *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

**Figure 1. Measuring cluster strenght**



**Source:** EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 10-11.

Cluster strength is based on the following performance drivers: cluster size, specialisation, employee productivity, SME (high-growth) performance and innovation leaders. The European regions with the largest number of strong clusters includes many metropolitan areas. There are 10 metropolitan areas with more than 2.5 million inhabitants among the top-25 regions, including: Barcelona (Spain), Budapest (Hungary), Madrid (Spain), Milano (Italy), Munich (Germany), Paris (France), Rome (Italy), Stuttgart (Germany), Valencia (Spain) and Warsaw (Poland)<sup>33</sup>.

Eastern European clusters are an attractive alternative for foreign investors due to the advantages offered by the low costs, location and facilities offered by local authorities. That is why some Western European clusters, such as the textile and automotive cluster, have relocated part of their production towards Eastern European regions. A similar trend occurred in the aerospace industry, where a lot of buyer-supplier and investment linkage have moved to Eastern Europe as well during 2010-2014<sup>34</sup>. The Western-Eastern cooperation generates many positive effects for the Eastern European clusters: allows firms in Eastern European clusters to build their own networks in the Western European markets and to develop their own brands, and improves the net wages for employees.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>34</sup> The clothing clusters in Slovakia (the Prešov and Trenčín region have the highest number of registered clothing manufacturers), the Aviation Valley in the south eastern part of Poland (140 companies from the aerospace industry). See EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 47-48.

In 2011, the Romanian Cluster Association - CLUSTERO was founded in **Romania**. Its chief role is that of promoting and representing clusters at national, European and international level. The Ministry of Economy, through the Industrial Policies Directorate, together with CLUSTERO, the Regional Development Agencies, the Institute of Economic Forecast of the Romanian Academy and the National Research-Development Institute for Machinery and Technical Equipment for Agriculture and Food Industry (INMA) carried out an intense activity for disseminating the cluster concept at national and regional level, for developing and involving clusters in European projects within the INTERREG, Competitiveness and Innovation-CIP Programs, South Eastern Europe, Horizon 2020, COSME, cross-border, Creative Europe, etc., for developing smart specialization strategies and in the exchange of good practices within European networks<sup>35</sup>.

At the level of 2020, Romania had a number of 76 clusters, 46 of the most active being members of CLUSTERO<sup>36</sup>. Of these, 58 clusters have received, since 2013, ESCA - European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis certification, following an extremely rigorous process, based on several quality indicators that evaluate the cluster structure, management system, financing, strategy, services and its recognition. Thus, they were declared as cluster structures recognized at European level: 3 clusters in the Gold Label category (the best performance for Eastern Europe), 17 clusters in the Silver Label category and 58 clusters in the Bronze Label category. 25 public and private universities are cluster members and more than half of the research and development institutes are involved in cluster partnerships<sup>37</sup>.

Regarding the CLUSTERO member clusters, they totalled at the end of 2019: 2,000 companies, 189,000 employees and accumulated a turnover of 43.6 billion lei, noting increases ranging between 40% in the case of exports and 162% in the case of research expenditures development compared to 2013<sup>38</sup>.

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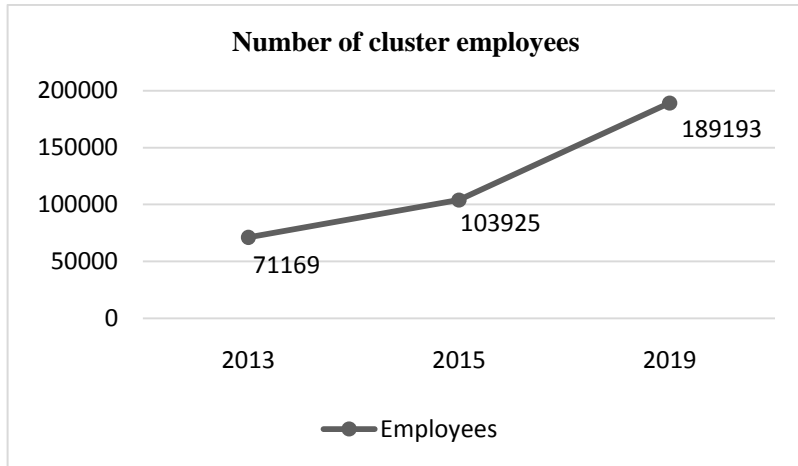
<sup>35</sup> Doina Turcu et al., *op. cit.*, p. 25-26.

<sup>36</sup> See the official site of Clustero, available at <https://clustero.eu/about-us/>, [accessed in July 19, 2021].

<sup>37</sup> Clustero, *The Situation of Clusters in Romania*, April 2020, available at <https://clustero.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/situatia-clusterelor-din-romania-aprilie-2020.pdf>, [accessed in July 19, 2021], p. 4. The official site of European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis, <https://www.cluster-analysis.org/>.

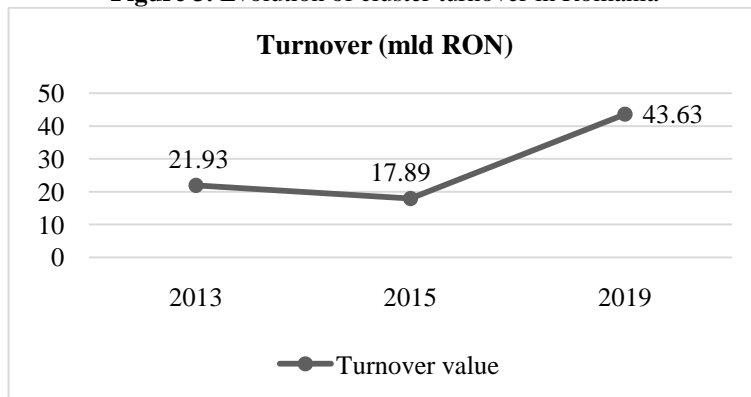
<sup>38</sup> Clustero, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

**Figure 2.** Evolution of the number of cluster employees in Romania



**Source:** Clustero, *The Situation of Clusters in Romania*, April 2020, p. 5.

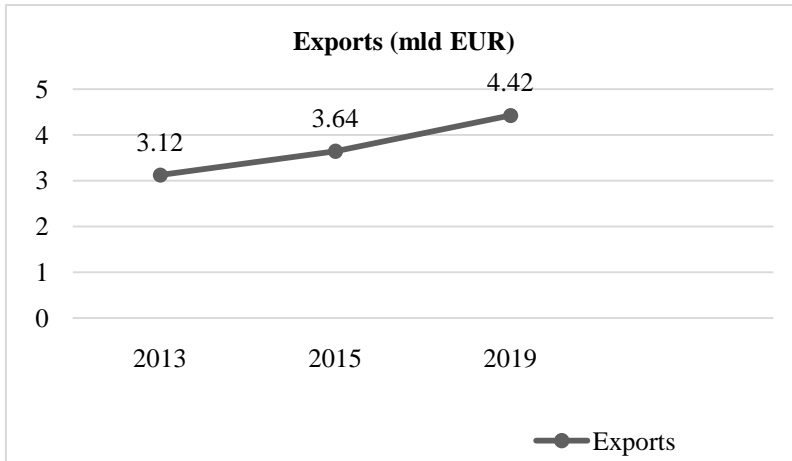
**Figure 3.** Evolution of cluster turnover in Romania



**Source:** Clustero, *op. cit.*, p. 5.



**Figure 4.** The evolution of exports for clusters in Romania



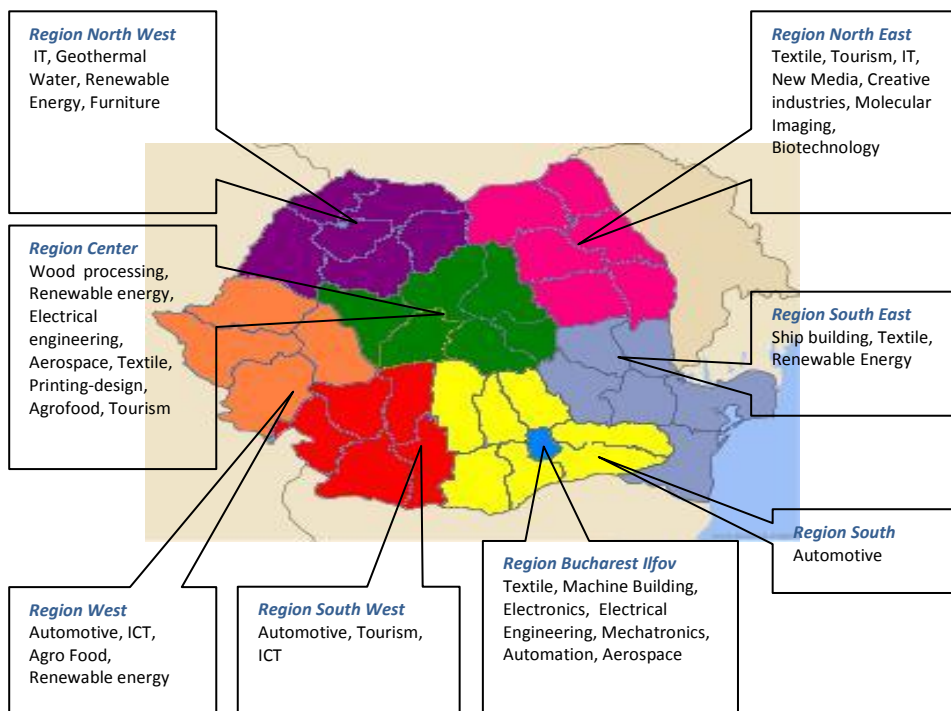
**Source:** Clustero, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Successful clusters are present in various economic and service sectors: automotive, wood industry, textile, clothing, agro-food industry, tourism, health and medical sciences, renewable energy, essential generic technologies (KET), creative and cultural sectors, construction, information and communications technology, the naval and logistics sectors. By stimulating the assimilation of intelligent technologies throughout the industrial value chains, the development of enterprises and their internationalization, the clusters contribute to the increase of the competitiveness of the Romanian economy. Thus, the Romanian clusters are oriented towards the future, towards the creation of global value chains within smart industries, towards international cooperation and cross-sectoral partnerships<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Doina Turcu et al., *op. cit.*, p. 26.

**Figure 5.** Distribution of clusters by development regions in Romania



**Sources:** Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, *Cluster Policy - Component of Industrial Policy*, available at <http://economie.gov.ro/images/domenii/clustere>, [accessed in July 19, 2021]; Daniel Coșniță, *Cluster Mapping in Romania*, 2013, available at <https://competitiveness.danube-region.eu/mdocs-posts/cluster-mapping-in-romania-daniel-cosnita/>, [accessed in July 19, 2021].

The cluster environment in Romania is distinguished by the existence of top clusters at European and international level, excellence in cluster management, viable business models developed by clusters, the existence of cluster consortia at regional and thematic level and the existence of a representative association at national and international levels (CLUSTERO). At the same time, however, the environment was marked by the lack of a coherent support policy: structural funds were only available under ERDF interventions in the 2014-2020 ROP, and no support measures were foreseen in the ROP 2014-2020. Therefore, future actions in the field must be part of an integrated and coherent cluster policy at national and regional level, achieving adequate funding, leading to increased value added and integration of Romanian companies in global value chains through clusters<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Clustero, *op. cit.*, p. 17-18.

### **Short case study: the Industrial Business Parks from Oradea**

The industrial parks in Oradea are industrial agglomerations that come close to the cluster concept presented above, so that they represent a good example of economic agglomeration found on the Romanian territory, in the North-West development region (even if its dimensions are small). Both structures (clusters and industrial parks) share the advantages of economic agglomeration, differing in terms of formation, barriers to entry, company composition and effects on the local / regional economy.

The cluster-based model has been a defining feature of the industrial growth in many countries over the time (China and other Asian countries). The strategy of creating clusters and industrial parks fits particularly well with certain comparative advantages often found in developing countries<sup>41</sup>.

The industrial park is a delimited area where economic activities, scientific research or technological development are carried out in order to capitalize on the human and material potential of the area. It is created for two main reasons:

- one of a real estate nature: the existence of a generous area of land that can be offered for the use of interested companies;
- one of a socio-economic nature: the activities carried out in the area contribute to the increase of the employment rate and to the obtaining of substantial incomes (from the real estate tax or of the turnover).

The industrial park is a form of competitive economic agglomeration which is also an investment pool and generator of multiplier effects. The advantages offered by such a structure to companies are the following: reduced investment and infrastructure costs, the existence of skilled labour, low labour cost, proximity to sales markets, proximity to suppliers, and proximity to highways, airports and railway junctions.

The main difference between creating clusters and creating industrial parks is the degree of government intervention during the initial stage<sup>42</sup>. If clusters are usually formed without government intervention, industrial parks are initiated by public authorities (national, regional, local) to attract investment in order to boost economic growth in a given region (as is the case of Oradea Industrial Parks). According to the Romanian legislation<sup>43</sup>, the founders of the industrial park can be the local public administration authorities, private investors or in public-private partnership, Romanian or foreign. And the residents of the park can be Romanian or foreign economic operators, NGOs, research institutions and other entities that carry out economic activities, scientific research, capitalization of scientific

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<sup>41</sup> Xiaobo Zhang, *Building Effective Clusters and Industrial Parks. IFPRI Discussion Paper 1590*, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington, December 2016, available at <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/131010>, [accessed in August 30, 2021], p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> Ministry for Development, Public Works and Administration, *Parcuri industriale* [Industrial Parks], available at <https://www.mdpa.ro/pages/parcuriindustriale>, [accessed in August 30, 2021].

research or technological development, agro-industrial, logistical and innovative or industrial.

Oradea is a city with complex services of sub-regional importance<sup>44</sup>, connected by important flows to 4 large and medium cities, two from the North-West Region (Satu Mare and Zalău), and the others from the West region (Arad and Timișoara). The polarization area of Oradea municipality includes Bihor county, as well as regions from neighbouring counties. There is a significant concentration of population in Bihor around Oradea, the average population density in the Oradea Metropolitan Area being 326 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>, (while in the rest of Bihor county it is only 47 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>), on an area that covers 10% of the total area of Bihor county (over 753 km<sup>2</sup>). In terms of business environment, Oradea is the second area of concentration of economic activity in the North-West Region (after Cluj-Napoca), achieving about 15% of the region's economy<sup>45</sup>.

Eurobusiness Oradea industrial parks are managed by the Oradea Local Development Agency (ADLO), a public company owned by the Oradea City Hall. The 4 parks cover an area of 234.5 hectares. The structures benefit from a *strategic location*, for two reasons:

- Romania is located on the “new silk road” of economic growth, the Eurasian trade corridor meant to become a platform for investment, infrastructure and trade;

- Oradea benefits from advantages resulting from its location in north-western Romania, very close to the Romanian-Hungarian border, offering very good accessibility to national transport networks and direct connections with European trade routes.

The attractiveness of the industrial parks in Oradea results first of all from the *competitive advantages* they have:

- strategic geographical positioning - provides quick access to Central Europe;

- accessibility and fast transport across the border;

- the created infrastructure;

- the attitude of the local authorities: openness towards investors and efficiency in the relationship with them;

- skilled labour force.

These are reasons that led to a high degree of occupation of the plots of the Parks by investors: 99.6% in Eurobusiness Oradea I Industrial Park, 60% in Eurobusiness Oradea II, 95% in Eurobusiness Oradea III and 0% in Eurobusiness

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<sup>44</sup> According to the “Reilly-Converse” model, which ranks urban polarization centres. The model takes into account several criteria for including urban centres in hierarchies (number of inhabitants, position within the network of settlements, the range of services available, distance) and allows the observation of the main spatial interaction flows that take place at the level of the region. See The North-West Regional Development Agency, *The Development Plan for the North-West Region 2014-2020*, available at [https://www.nord-vest.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/7r238\\_PDR\\_2014\\_2020.pdf](https://www.nord-vest.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/7r238_PDR_2014_2020.pdf), [accessed in August 30, 2021].

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

Oradea IV (which recently obtained the title of industrial park, being designed for small and medium-sized companies that want areas between 2,000 and 4,000 square meters).

Local and foreign investors receive a number of facilities and support from the administration, consisting of:

- active communication between investors and local administration;
- regular information on state aid schemes and EU funding opportunities;
- assistance in relations with authorities, institutions, government agencies and public bodies;
- access to personalized training programs;
- assistance in obtaining legal approvals and permits, streamlining the process and shortening the time required;
- tax incentives.

Competition among cities in attracting investment has led the park management company to seek, in addition to investor support, solutions to increase the attractiveness of the local environment, by setting up new sites and improving existing ones: building blocks of service housing, arranging a social centre with hotel, restaurant, conference room, fitness room, shop, doctor's office, parcel-delivery centre, nursery and kindergarten for employees' children<sup>46</sup>.

In this context, the evolution of industrial parks registered an upward, positive dynamic. The parks include over 100 companies, which have created about 8,500 jobs. Since its establishment (2008), the industrial areas of Oradea have attracted a total investment of 397 million euros, constituting one of the main economic engines of the city<sup>47</sup>. According to officials, most investors follow their suppliers or customers with whom they already have business relationships, which confirms the multiplier effect of the agglomeration economy.

The total value of investments attracted in industrial parks in 2020 was 33,646,243 euros, reaching a total of 8,900 jobs by 2023<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Local Development Agency Oradea, *Press Release*, August 17, 2021, available at <https://adlo.ro/noutati/comunicat-de-presa>, [accessed in August, 30, 2021]; Dan Simai, "Fabricile de bani: Parcurile industriale din Oradea au atras investiții de 400 milioane euro și trec la afaceri "deștepte": IT, robotică și medicamente" [Money factories: The industrial parks in Oradea have attracted investments of 400 million euros and are moving to "smart" businesses: IT, robotics and drugs], in *Bihoreanul*, February 6, 2020, available at <https://www.ebihoreanul.ro/stiri/fabricile-de-bani-parcurile-industriale-din-oradea-au-atras-investitii-de-400-milioane-euro-si-trec-la-afaceri-destepte-it-robotica-si-medicamente-154379.html>, [accessed in August, 30, 2021].

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> Ichim Vasiliță, "În anul pandemiei, Parcurile Industriale din Oradea au atras investiții de peste 33,5 milioane de euro!" [In the year of the pandemic, the Industrial Parks in Oradea attracted investments of over 33.5 million euros!], in *Oradea Press*, February 8, 2021, available at <https://oradeapress.ro/2021/02/08/in-anul-pandemiei-parcurile-industriale-din-oradea-au-atras-investitii-de- peste-335-milioane-de-euro/>, [accessed in August 30, 2021].

In order to follow the trend shown by the global industry (smart industries, creative industries, ultra-specialized personnel), ADLO is designing, in collaboration with the University of Oradea, a technology transfer centre, where students can do research for companies, and tries to attract Oradea companies in the creative industries, from IT and software to robots.

Given the data presented above, we find that the industrial parks of Oradea combine all the success factors of regional competitiveness resulting from the Porter's Diamond model (specified above, in the paper): productivity generating factors (access to inputs and specialized employees, access to information, access to public goods, incentives), factors stimulating innovation (new technological, production or distribution processes), factors facilitating the creation of new companies (lower barriers to entry compared to other areas), competitive factors (gaining advantages through better coordination of relationships with suppliers, distributors or customers). Therefore, the analysed industrial structure represents a successful model for Romania, which meets the necessary conditions to constitute a pole of regional competitiveness and a driver of economic growth.

Thus, Oradea benefits from an attractive and competitive business environment, supported largely by industrial parks, in their capacity as development engines. The arguments in support of the above statement are numerous, as industrial parks contribute to:

- job creation: in the area, over 20,000 jobs (out of 96,000) were generated by companies that invested in the city and in the Metropolitan Area;
- diversification of business networks: a foreign company comes not only with know-how, but also with its own markets;
- regional economic growth: 1/3 of the salary tax enters the city budget;
- increasing the participation in Romania's GDP;
- improving the quality of life for residents.

## **Conclusions**

Initiatives on the creation and development of industrial agglomerations represent an opportunity to redefine the roles of the public and private sectors in regional economic development. In the modern competitive environment, private companies evaluate their impact alone or in collaboration with other companies, shaping their economic environment and opportunities for success in global markets. The economic agglomerations thus formed contribute to increasing competitiveness by:

- business environment development;
- education and training of the workforce;
- investments in technology;
- setting standards;
- creation and improvement of infrastructure;
- dissemination of information;
- export promotion;
- protection of natural resources.

In Europe, the most important objectives of the cluster programs are “to strengthen the cooperation structures of different stakeholders, to increase small and medium-sized enterprises' competitiveness, and internationalisation activities (at country level) or industrial modernisation (at regional level)”.<sup>49</sup> That is why the clusters play a strategic role, consisting in<sup>50</sup>:

- strategic leadership to address recovery efforts and system-level challenges,
- development and implementation of industrial policy in multilevel governance,
- linking actors from different EU member states, regions and their industrial ecosystems,
- leading the entrepreneurial discovery process in smart specialisation strategies,
- active involvement in reskilling and upskilling,
- reaching out to non-EU international markets,
- channel EU public funding to SMEs,
- build own capacity to facilitate collaboration, capitalise and disseminate technological and market intelligence and provide specialised services.

Clusters provide an important part of the EU's jobs and contribute to the development and specialization of SMEs in a region. In this way, they provide Europe with opportunities to strengthen its position in the global market. Industrial clusters account for 61.8 million jobs (46.4%) of employment in exporting industries and for almost 1 out of 4 jobs in total employment (23.4%)<sup>51</sup>.

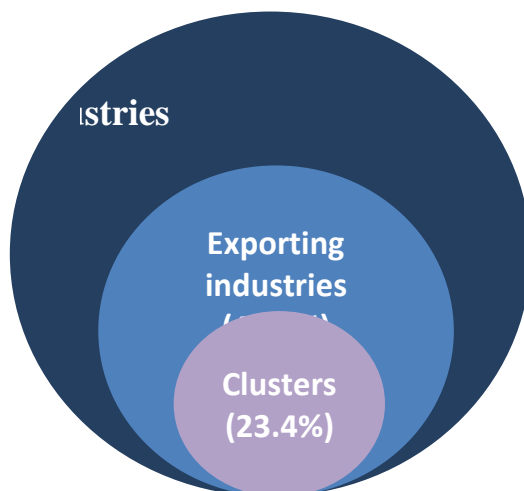
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<sup>49</sup> EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>50</sup> European Expert Group on Clusters, *Recommendation Report 2020*, December 15, 2020, available at [https://tillvaxtverket.se/download/18.76813be31768421dd9073e0d/1610708646705/European%20Expert%20Group%20on%20Clusters\\_final%20adopted%2015%20Dec.pdf](https://tillvaxtverket.se/download/18.76813be31768421dd9073e0d/1610708646705/European%20Expert%20Group%20on%20Clusters_final%20adopted%2015%20Dec.pdf), [accessed in July 19, 2021], p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

**Figure 6.** Share of clusters in total employment in EU



**Source:** EOCIC, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

All these data, along with results from recent literature, show that clusters contribute positively to employment growth, firm growth and urbanization<sup>52</sup>.

Productivity in regional industrial clusters is much higher than average (+25%) and also much higher than in exporting industries without clusters – corresponding to a 35% above average productivity effect between exporting industries with and without clusters<sup>53</sup>.

We can conclude that clusters have a positive impact on economies. “The European Panorama of Clusters and Industrial Change and SME barometer provide evidence that companies within industrial groupings are more innovative than operating alone, create more and better jobs, conduct more market research, register more international patents and export more than other companies”<sup>54</sup>.

*Romania*, in turn, follows the guidelines of European industrial policy, managing to attract greenfield or brownfield investments in industrial parks, from parks with textile profiles to software and electronics. In this context, *the industrial parks of Oradea* represent a successful model for Romania, which meets the necessary conditions to constitute a pole of regional competitiveness and a driver of economic growth.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14-15.

<sup>54</sup> European Expert Group on Clusters, *op. cit.*, p. 6.





# CULTURAL NETWORKS FOR COOPERATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD

Alina STOICA\*, Luminița ȘOPRONI\*\*

**Abstract:** *The transition of culture from classical and conservative aspects to assuming the role of socio-economic cohesion factor, felt especially in the last period, changes the agendas of many actors on the international stage. Among them, the European Union includes culture among the areas for which it develops policies and creates tools that ensure cultural development. However, these initiatives are influenced by the issues and interests of the Member States, on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, according to which national policies prevail over cultural competences.*

*The diversity of forms of expression and the interdependence of the different components of culture, such as essays and the case of cultural networks, generate bridges between the layers of society (vertically) or between communities (horizontally). These allow individuals or groups to envision a future in relation to the past and present or to redefine the "architecture of the value model". We are not referring to the "hard core of fundamental traits", but to the "related values" influenced by the universalization and uniformity of images and ideas promoted by the media and cultural industries. The fundamental values are not touched by the phenomenon of cultural homogenization; instead, their permanence contributes to maintaining cultural diversity in, the study aims to highlight a mechanism for creating cultural networks within the framework offered by the European Union.*

**Keywords:** ??????????????????

## Introduction

Much of the literature, which is devoted to globalization and the effects of this phenomenon, speaks of this concept as “the unbridled power of transnational capitalism”<sup>1</sup>. Undoubtedly, the importance of the economic factor in the process of globalization cannot be diminished, but the multidimensional nature of this concept must be taken into account. Globalization must be understood in terms of simultaneous processes with complex links between them, which take place in the sphere of economy, politics and culture and which has effects on all dimensions of

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<sup>1</sup> John Tomlinson, *Globalizare și cultură* [Globalization and culture], Amarcord Publishing House, Timișoara, 2002, p. 30.

society.<sup>2</sup> Of course, an exhaustive analysis from this point of view is in our opinion impossible and does not make the interest of the present study anyway. A plausible argument would be that reality defies any attempt to comprehend the whole. One issue is clear from all the research that addresses the various perspectives of the globalization phenomenon, namely that this concept is generally seen as an “empirical process of increasing economic, political, technological and cultural interconnection, worldwide”<sup>3</sup>.

We will focus on the impact of globalization on culture, which has been seen as both a blessing and a curse<sup>4</sup>. Why? First of all because it offers unprecedented opportunities for interactive and enriching cultural exchanges, which in turn make it possible to accept and increase cultural diversity. On the other hand, this impact leads to uniformity or tension between crops. In support of this idea, we can see that in many parts of the world, globalization is perceived as a threat to national cultures and traditional forms of identity. It represents a challenge for the national state in controlling cultural flows and processes, not only from within, but especially from without. In general, strong, democratic states, ready to accept the new development trends on all levels, through paradiplomatic instruments, acting at regional or even local level, consider that “the forces of globalization appear to be more nurturing than destructive of the reaffirmation of sovereignties. and, in reaction, of the demands for recognition of regional and local differences”<sup>5</sup>. However, more and more states accept the theory that “culture is intrinsically linked with some of the most important building blocks for the existence of the state: peace, security, development, human rights, social harmony, and human well-being”<sup>6</sup>.

Globalization may bring people with different cultures closer together, yet in many ways our societies are becoming even more unequal, exclusive and rife with tensions than ever before. Developed countries have been giving particular priority to migration concerns<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Jean Tardif, Joëlle Farchy, *Les enjeux de la mondialisation culturelle*, Éditions Hors Commerce, Paris, 2006, p. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> Irena Kozymka, *The Diplomacy of Culture. The Role of UNESCO in Sustaining Cultural Diversity*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2014, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> JoAnn Chirico, *Globalization: Prospects and Problems*, SAGE, London, 2013; Nadia Kiwan, Ulrike Hanna Meinhof, *Cultural Globalization and Music: African Artists in Transnational Networks*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011; Simon Murden, “Culture in World Affairs”, in John Baylis et al. (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 414–427; Robert J. Holton, *Globalization and the Nation State*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011, p. 189–219.

<sup>5</sup> Irena Kozymka, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Promoting Young People's Full Participation in Education, Employment and Society*, September 5, 2007, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0498:FIN:EN:PDF>, [accessed in May, 2021], p. 3.

## **What is culture and what role does it play in the sphere of international relations?**

Culture itself is a phenomenon difficult to define, difficult to limit or comprehend<sup>8</sup>, but in general it speaks about the identity of a people, about its values, traditions and customs, but also about otherness. But the role it plays in the context of new world and European realities, doubled by the unimaginable evolution of new technologies, has paid more attention to this concept, which has proven to be chameleon-like and extremely useful over the centuries. Today, culture is an important prerogative of diplomacy, foreign policy and international security. In this context, she emphasizes the importance of mutual relations of respect and peace between groups, nations, etc. These are some of the elements we need to keep in mind when talking about culture and its role in contemporary society.

Culture and creativity represent an enormous social and economic value, not only in developing countries, but also in the Old World, a force that allows and leads to social cohesion, (re) construction and development. As UNESCO says, “Culture is *the place* where society meets and discovers itself; therefore, cultural citizenship, cultural rights and cultural creativity are deeply interlinked”<sup>9</sup>.

The following aspects must be considered as essential elements for the study of culture:

a) The relationship between tradition and innovation is present in the oldest cultural forms.

b) Culture must be understood as a living entity, a fundamental feature that makes the society in which people live, to be consciously human.

c) Trying to understand the current meanings of culture, closeness to other cultures, awareness of their own cultural values.

d) Knowing and familiarizing individuals with the meanings of the concept of culture to the dimensions of the current world.<sup>10</sup>

Socio-scientific work on culture has three analytical focuses:

- formally organized systems that produce and distribute cultural products;
- expressive symbols that facilitate the production of individual and group identities and intergroup boundaries, and;
- the symbolic organization of meaning.

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<sup>8</sup> Wendy W. Williams, “The Equality Crisis: Some Reflections On Culture, Courts, and Feminism”, in *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, vol. 14, no. 2&3, Spring/Fall 1992, available at <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/worts14&div=18&id=&page=>, [accessed in May, 2021], p. 175.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee* at its 34th session, Brasil, 2010, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2010/whc10-34com-20e.pdf>, [accessed in June, 2021]; Adele Langois, *The Global Governance of Human Cloning: The Case of UNESCO*, Palgrave Communications, no. 19/2017.

<sup>10</sup> Gheorghe Popescu, *Diversitatea culturală – o provocare pentru progresul lumii contemporane*, available at [https://www.academia.edu/36750886/Diversitatea\\_cultural%C4%83\\_o\\_provocare\\_pentru\\_progresul\\_lumii\\_contemporane](https://www.academia.edu/36750886/Diversitatea_cultural%C4%83_o_provocare_pentru_progresul_lumii_contemporane), [accessed in April, 2021].

Relational theories are essential for each of these topics.

So, the 21st century is one of the complex realities and imagination, and in our effort to organize and understand our world, marked by both currents and barriers, culture has a catalytic role for political and economic activities at European, national and regional levels. Recent studies have shown that the local cultural factor can significantly influence an area's ability to generate wealth for the community, while being a catalyst for a sustainable economic renaissance by developing innovative and creative sectors based on artistic activities<sup>11</sup>.

Culture is also seen as a factor in democratization. Authorities that are aware of the role of culture in regional development focus on a civic culture that allows the expression of participatory democracy, the cornerstones of promoting and developing the social economy of that community and a precondition for increasing collaborative relations with other regions or countries. Investing in culture brings many benefits to all walks of life for the community<sup>12</sup>.

### **Cultural Europe**

The analysis of contemporary phenomena in interstate relations is particularly important if we intend to understand the direction in which the interaction between the relevant levels of international society moves. Therefore, the tension between sovereignty and internationalism is inherent, intrinsically linked to that between the state and society.<sup>13</sup> Or in this context, the support of cultural diversity becomes undoubtedly necessary.

Since the 1970s, the state's responsibility for the nation's cultural life has created the need for public support for cultural development, seen as an indispensable part of society's development. On the other hand, even in democratic states, public authorities have never been just an “instrument of culture,” although they have often instrumentalized culture through its use in diplomacy. In the 1990s, we are witnessing a resumption of the marriage between the state and culture, worldwide, but especially at the level of the European Union, given that this supranational structure, with economic, legal and political bases, has proved to be a greater challenge, as regards its unity, for Member States than it was at the origin of its creation. More and more political discourses have been built around the idea, according to which within the European Union it is up to culture to impose a sense of unity, of European solidarity. Many of these speeches referred to the authority of one of the founding fathers of the European Union, Jean Monnet, who said: “si l'Europe était à refaire, je commencerais par la culture”<sup>14</sup>. It was not until 1992,

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<sup>11</sup> Nukhet A. Sandal, Jonathan Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory. Interactions and Possibilities*, Routledge Publishing House, New York, 2013, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> John Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 37-40.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Jean-Christophe Barbato, *La place de la culture dans la construction européenne*, available at <https://alliance-europa.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/AFFICHE-Conference-UA-1204.pdf>, [accessed in August, 2021].

with the Maastricht Treaty, that the EU acquired statutory cultural competence<sup>15</sup>. However, “in a sense, cultural Europe is wherever it was exported in the colonial period, that is, almost everywhere”.<sup>16</sup> If we consider all the former colonial possessions in Africa, the Americas or Asia, of European metropolises and imagine a map of the world, what are the dimensions of cultural Europe? And what can the European Union do with this advantage, at the economic-commercial, even political level?

Finally, in the resolution Promotion of the enjoyment of cultural rights for all and respect for different cultural identities, dated April 2003, UNESCO insists very explicitly on the relationship of these three elements: Cultural Cooperation, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Rights. The evolution in other terms, despite the difficulties inherent in these forums, is evident. Both civil society and the private sector are also recognized as actors, in collaboration with public policies, which are given greater prominence. In other words, it echoes the greater complexity and multiplicity of agents that make up the current scenario.

### **Contemporary phenomena in international relations, in which culture plays an important role**

The realities of our century have imposed a worldwide reorganization of traditional diplomacy. Among the determining factors of these changes we also list the processes of democratization and socialization of the exercise of power in the state. They have changed the way foreign policy is pursued, and therefore diplomacy as well, turning it into a less closed, gradually more participatory and relatively more representative activity<sup>17</sup>. The complexity of international relations, the multiplication of actors, the development of telecommunications and the emergence of economic entities, sometimes stronger and more efficient than the states themselves, have produced substantial changes in diplomacy, its content, its scope and the profile of its agents. Diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy is aimed at societies in other countries, adopting a more humanistic tone, based on culture and constructive elements in interstate communication.<sup>18</sup> When individuals understand the differences between them, they always find a common ground.

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<sup>15</sup> We must not forget, however, the institution underlying the establishment of a Europe of Culture, the Council of Europe founded in 1949, before the establishment of the ECSC (1951) and the EEC (1957). This institution is in fact the UNESCO foundation for Europe. Both institutions were created in a similar context at the end of the war, with similar objectives such as building peace through human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms and culture.

<sup>16</sup> Vincent Citot, “L’idée d’une Europe de la Culture (L’Europe des cultures, la culture européenne et l’Europe de la Culture)”, in *Le Philosophe*, no. 27, 2006/2, p. 215.

<sup>17</sup> Luz Elena Banos Rivas, “Reflexiones sobre la diplomacia pública en México. Una mirada prospectiva”, in *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, no. 85, Noviembre de 2008 – Febrero de 2009, available at <https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/images/stories/numeros/n85/banos.pdf>, [accessed in August 2021], p. 138.

<sup>18</sup> Javier Noya, *Una diplomacia pública para España*, Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales-Fundación Real Elcano, Madrid, 2006, p. 2.

In this way new paradigms of the concept emerged, and others were adapted to the new contexts. We mention in the following only some of these models of cultural cooperation, with some brief explanations related to each one:

1. *Public diplomacy (PD)* – contributes to the completion of diplomats' work, through other means than traditional diplomatic ones, but with the same goal, that of promoting and achieving national foreign policy objectives at the international level<sup>19</sup>. Public diplomacy does not interact with foreign governments, but with individuals, social groups, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. In short, it is a practice that has appeared in government offices, supported by non-governmental actors and directed at people or social groups abroad. Public diplomacy covered the information, culture, new website and potential directions that these positions had for diplomats engaged in the public sphere. In 2000, Ambassador Paschke used the term in his famous report on the future of German embassies in Europe to explain how their role would change in the 21st century. Its use was derived from the English terms “networking” and “obbying”, because diplomats could no longer work efficiently if they worked only in secret.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, I would argue that it is less a definable concept than a significant one of change. The real value of public diplomacy lies in the fact that it connotes a program of rethinking and revitalization; the kind of program that never ends, but is part of the ongoing management of the evolving context of diplomacy.

2. *Cultural diplomacy (DC)* – has the role of effectively complementing the government's overall international strategy - of utmost importance for countries whose image is not correlated with political ambitions; DC contributes much more to historical revenge than military or economic pressure abroad, which has become too expensive literally and figuratively; changes the traditional negotiating system - which must not end in victory for one side over the other, in order to avoid resentment and a desire for revenge; DC has a great deal to do with marketing and advertising and an acute need for a certain quality and quantity of the cultural material on which it is based; it is considered the third pillar of diplomacy.

3. *Digital diplomacy (DD)* – aims to address with new means and technologies the classical concerns of diplomacy, but also the approach with classical diplomatic means of new topics, born in the virtual environment. DD has all the means and tools of the social media type, included in the digital space<sup>21</sup> and used by diplomats to communicate with virtual communities and vice versa<sup>22</sup>. In this century, new technologies, especially social media have transformed the process of information exchange and ways to attract public opinion, because online

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<sup>19</sup> Mihai Cercel, *Diplomație și negocieri diplomatice* [Diplomacy and diplomatic negotiations], Editura C.H. Beck, București, 2019, p. 69-71.

<sup>20</sup> Karl Th. Paschke, *Report on the Special Inspection of 14 German Embassies in the Countries of the European Union*, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Mirela Mărcuț, *Crystalizing the EU Digital Policy. An Exploration into the Digital Single Market*, Springer International Publishing, 2017, p. 6-7.

<sup>22</sup> Mihai Cercel, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

platforms “have the potential to ensure a resilient information penetration, which was almost completely lacking the classic media written press, radio and TV”<sup>23</sup>. Thus, digitalization itself has also influenced the diplomatic environment, leading to the emergence of a new concept of diplomacy - *digital diplomacy* - which has the role and power to disseminate foreign policy objectives in the virtual world. The feedback of the public opinion, or of the target group is much faster, the communication being made in real time.

4. *Paradiplomacy* – the phenomenon has had a major impact on subnational governments in Asia, America, Europe and Africa and has changed the traditional notions of sovereignty, diplomacy and foreign policy. In parallel with new forms of diplomacy, such as cultural or digital diplomacy, this form of subnational, regional or even urban diplomacy, *paradiplomacy*<sup>24</sup>, takes the lead as it makes important diplomatic efforts and contributes to the establishment of transnational networks around education, healthcare, climate change, waste management or transport. In fact, subnational activity and activism in the international arena is growing at a rate that far exceeds that of traditional representatives of sovereign states.<sup>25</sup> This is a concept around which there have been many discussions lately, in academia and in institutional, national, European and especially global environments. After the 1980s, changes at the global level led to a combination of cultures into a global one, which contributed to a form of denationalization. In the last 20 years, national societies have become insufficient for the new realities and have been replaced by higher and lower level structures, which participate in what has been called collective governance.<sup>26</sup>

5. *Cultural networks*. So, when we talk about culture we generally refer to knowledge, beliefs, expectations, values, practices and material objects through which we create meaningful experiences for ourselves and each other. This perspective helps us to look at cooperation networks as hardware (circuits) and culture as software (rules and routines of action), although this analogy is deceptively clear. The circuit is largely inert, with no rules or recipes to specify how the tracks go together, how the information should be created, and how the flow of communications will be controlled. On the other hand, products that can potentially be created through software are activated only through concrete paths and existing network connections. Therefore, social networks and culture go together synthetically, even necessarily. What varies is only the extent to which the

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>24</sup> Biserka Cvjetičanin, *Cultural Networks*, available at <http://www.mondialisations.org/php/public/art.php?id=36018&lan=EN>, [accessed in September 2021].

<sup>25</sup> André Lecours, *Political Issues of Paradiplomacy: Lessons from the Developed World*, Institute of Public Diplomacy, available at <https://www.kamudiplomasisi.org/pdf/kitaplar/paradiplomacylessonsfromthe.pdf>, [accessed in September 2021]; Eduardo Iglesias et al., *La provincias argentines en el escenario internacional*, PNUD, Bueno Aires, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Tomasz Kamiński, *The Role of Regions in EU-China Relations*, Łódź University Press, 2021, p. 7.



network structure or cultural recipes are emphasized to answer specific research questions.<sup>27</sup>

### **Cultural networks – keys to the survival of cultures in the age of globalization**

The unification of Europe, the “European Common House” sought to eliminate the formal boundaries between the various cultures that make up the European space. Thus, future generations will no longer have to have the singular option for one of the cultures, but will focus on the educational element, the one that can allow unhindered access to any of them.

An essential contribution in this direction is made by European cultural networks. Established since the 1980s, they number about 500 to date, of which about 100 are functional<sup>28</sup>. Since the 1990s, they have become a generic term for informal contacts between professionals. It should also be noted that they have the advantage of an “alternative approach that official bodies, too limited by inherited policy, cannot offer. Likewise, networks provide a broader basis for policy development than any individual institution, protecting its own funding base and projects”<sup>29</sup>. Particularly efficient in the direction of collaboration, networks represent “the functional compromise between the market and the organization, maximizing the positive characteristics and minimizing the negative ones”. When creating a network there are usually some concrete common objectives, it being the answer to the need to exercise mutual help, to the need to break the isolation, to establish contact and to formulate the common approach. Most of the time the network becomes a platform for the exchange and acquisition of attitudes, beliefs and ideas, promoting the common interests of members<sup>30</sup>.

The European Cultural Networks Manifesto adopted in Brussels on 21 September 1997 by the European Cultural Networks Forum considers that “European cultural networks contribute to European cohesion, facilitate the mobility of cultural operators and products, facilitate cross-cultural communication, combat xenophobia, racism and provides practice in intercultural understanding, strengthens the cultural dimension of development that is not produced by purely economic factors”<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Paul McLean, *Culture in Networks*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2017, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Raimund Minichbauer, Elke Mitterdorfer, *European Cultural Networks and Networking in Central and Eastern Europe*, Wien, 2000, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> Simion Mundy, *Politici culturale. Un scurt ghid* [Cultural policies. A short guide], Council of Europe Publishing House, Strasbourg, 2000, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> Consulting Center for European Cultural Programs *Thematic Cultural Networks. Final Report of the Proceedings of the Forum - Thematic Cultural Networks*, October 2005, p. 3; Dorel Zaharia, *Beneficiile existenței rețelelor culturale tematice europene* [The benefits of the existence of European thematic cultural networks], available at [http://www.philologica-jassyensia.ro/upload/VI\\_2\\_Zaharia.pdf](http://www.philologica-jassyensia.ro/upload/VI_2_Zaharia.pdf), [accessed in September 2021], p. 269-270.

Perhaps the first European regional alliance with cultural concerns was the Alpine Working Community. Created in 1972, with the name of Arge Alp, it brought together nine regions from four states (Austria, Italy, Germany, Sweden). Destined to protect alpine cultural differences, this objective has generated recommendations in various fields, including education, at local, regional and state level. Perhaps one of the longest-lived cultural networks was the one that resulted in the 1976 Franco-German-Swedish intergovernmental relationship. Initially intended to regulate neighborhood issues, it also controlled inter-university relations for a long time, and after 1990 it encouraged school collaboration to promote bilingualism, one of the most pressing local issues, possibly triggering violent manifestations.<sup>32</sup>

The Working Community for the Western Alps, set up in 1982, whose cooperation protocol brought together three Italian regions, two French and three Swedish cantons, provided a framework for cooperation in the field of culture and education.

Currently, the best known networks in the field of culture in Europe are IETM (Informal Meetings of European Theaters), EFAH (European Forum for Art and Cultural Heritage), ENCATC (European Network of Faculties and Training Centers for Cultural Managers), AMARC (Association of Independent Radio Stations) etc., all act in the direction of collaboration and uniform development of European culture.

### **The characteristics of the cultural network**

The New Society is made of networks. Global financial markets have been built with networks that they process financial transactions in real time. The Internet is a network of computer networks. Hypertext electronic that links different media in global and local connections is made of communication networks, production studies (...) the Red Company, as a new form of business organization is made of networks of firms and subunits of firms (...) and the most dynamic social movements are connected via the internet, through the city, the country and the world.<sup>33</sup> The horizontal interconnection of several fields, for example the audiovisual field, information technology and telecommunications, has considerably increased the number of channels for the transmission of information, and these are increasingly organized in networks.

Therefore, networking is a new opportunity for cultural organizations compared to traditional partners, states, regional governments, corporations or large institutions.

Networks are therefore considered to be a common and open form of activity, a platform for the exchange of experience, the creation of inspiration and

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<sup>32</sup> Dorel Zaharia, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>33</sup> Javier Brun, Joaquin Benito Tejero, Pedro Canut Ledo, *Redes culturales. Claves para sobrevivir en la globalización*, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo. Director de Relaciones Culturales y Científicas, Artes Gráficas Palermo, S.L., 2008, p. 50.

the implementation of collective ideas. Such international communication channels can also contribute to cultural policies through mutual support and solidarity. This has contributed to the democratization of culture itself, not in the sense of a uniform type of participation, but leading to a greater openness to different cultural values<sup>34</sup>. Such networks have begun to confuse the old structures, providing a step forward in terms of identity, communication, relationship and information<sup>35</sup>. They represent a flexible model of communication – open and heterogeneous<sup>36</sup> – which allows a company to learn about the problems of other companies and thus gain a better understanding of its own problems.

Cultural networks encourage the opening of options and objectives on a non-hierarchical basis and allow new forms of creation and international cooperation. Due to the circulation of different ideas and values, new forms of exchange of cultural experiences, cultural participation and intercultural dialogue take place through networks. One of the essential elements that cultural networks offer for the promotion of intercultural dialogue is a democratic and non-discriminatory approach to culture, openness to other cultures, an extended space for dialogue and cooperation. Cultural networks know no bounds. They embrace people from all over the world with different fields of interest and levels of experience, but who share a commitment to intercultural dialogue.

It is often emphasized that an intercultural Europe is an affair of networks: cultural pluralism is seen as an opportunity for interaction in which cultures express not only their specificities, diversity, but also tolerance towards other cultures. In addition, these communication tools initiate and promote the transnational mobility of artists and the mobility of goods and services in the cultural and creative industries in accessing new market opportunities at the international level, being in themselves open structures.<sup>37</sup>

### **The benefits of networking**

The amount of scientific attention devoted to the two topics of networks and culture, taken separately, has increased enormously in recent years. The International Network for the Analysis of Social Networks (INSNA) hosts an ever-growing annual conference, while hosting an extremely active list service for discussing all kinds of networking questions. Meanwhile, the Culture section of the American Sociological Association has become one of the largest since the late 1990s.<sup>38</sup>

- Those who already have proven experience in terms of their active participation in cultural networks are witnessing professional growth that is linked to some acquired skills, such as:

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<sup>34</sup> Biserka Cvjetičanin, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Gudrun Pehn, *La mise en réseau des cultures. Le rôle des réseaux culturels européens*, Editions du Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg, 1999, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Biserka Cvjetičanin, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> Paul McLean, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

- Broadening professional horizons
- New knowledge
- Ability to understand at a deeper level
- Discussion of values in an intercultural context
- Increasing the individual skills needed for cultural and collaborative work greater professional confidence

- Territorial consolidation<sup>39</sup>.

Network efficiency can be related to:

- The potential inherent in its complexity (confrontation of national, local and regional operators representing a wide variety of types, sizes and functions)
- The speed with which the relevant information is transmitted
- Their ability to act as incubators for innovative projects
- The context it provides for independent confrontation and intercultural dialogue (focusing on specificities and differences and, at the same time, increasing the understanding of different cultures)

- Continuous professional retraining and knowledge transfer around cooperation techniques

- Facilitating the mobility of cultural workers, products and ideas, including changes in the forms of cultural distribution (subnets, network projects, ...)

- Catalyze and encourage the creation of new support and funding alliances<sup>40</sup>.

Broadly speaking, we can distinguish two types of cultural networks in terms of their organizational methods. There is a big difference between networks that have a coordination office - also called a secretariat - and those in which members take on their daily work in a totally decentralized way. Both models coexist on the international stage, but experience tells us that normally the first of them, those with a professional secretariat, tend to evolve in maturity, size and purpose compared to the others, whose operation is possibly more democratic, but that inherent anarchy it makes a clear division of responsibilities a little more difficult<sup>41</sup>.

Therefore, the vast majority of networks adopt the first option. Thus, a formally constituted network would have a primary level of participation, which is that of the General Assembly, with an annual or biannual periodicity, of great importance, because it is the moment when, around a table, a member can establish a dialogue with the most representative people in the field in which a certain cultural entity operates, ie it finds its counterparts in the field in which it operates<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Aleksandra Uzelac, "El Reconocimiento de las Redes en el Campo Cultural: Modelos de Redes en el Ámbito Real y Virtual", 2015, available at <https://rodin.uca.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10498/14312/33757574.pdf?sequence=1>, [accessed in September, 2021], p. 134-145.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>41</sup> Javier Brun, Joaquin Benito Tejero, Pedro Canut Ledo, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

## **International Council of Museums (ICOM) - Cultural Networks platform for cooperation**

Over the years, ICOM has evolved in accordance with international museum professionals' needs worldwide, keeping in mind its main mission. More than 60 years after its creation, the organisation continues to represent the global museum community.

The initiation of the creation of this network took place in 1946, at the initiative of Chauncey J. Hamlin (US), who a year later, in Paris, was appointed the first president of the organization. The first General Assembly was held in Mexico in the same year. Since then, the organization has expanded its structure and geographical representation and its activities have become increasingly professional and consistent. After 1977 ICOM became international. A resolution adopted in Moscow in 1977 provided support to developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America for the training of museum staff and restorers. It addressed the need for experts in skilled labor and conversation. It also promoted the circulation of technical equipment for conservation training.

The International Council of Museums is an international organization of museums and museum professionals which is committed to the research, conservation, continuation and communication to society of the world's natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. As forum of experts, it makes recommendations on issues related to cultural heritage, promotes capacity building and advances knowledge. ICOM is the voice of museum professionals on international stage and raises public cultural awareness through global networks and co-operation programs.

- 44 686 professionals
- in over 138 countries
- with 118 national committees
- and 32 international committees

ICOM is currently a network as a cooperation platform, with several other networks as partners:

1. The Blue Shield - is dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict and natural disasters. It plans strategic interventions, in collaboration with local authorities, to prevent or respond to attacks and damage done to cultural goods in emergencies.

2. ICA – International Council on Archives - works for the preservation of archival heritage on a worldwide scale, by sharing experiences and goods practices about professional archives.

3. ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites.

4. IFLA – International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

5. WFFM – World Federation of Friends of Museums.

The entire collaboration of these associated networks on the platform managed by ICOM is intended for the protection of cultural heritage. ICOM is an excellent example of good networking practices, playing an increasing role on the agenda of international cultural relations. ICOM is one of the most sustainable and

influential organizations in the international public space, which, among other things, fights against illegal trafficking in cultural objects. In this sense, the basic site of the network has a red list of the most prone to theft. The list is created by European and international experts and is published in various foreign languages to be accessible<sup>43</sup>.

ICOM's missions: establish standards of excellence, lead a diplomatic forum, develop a professional network, lead a global think tank, carry out international missions. Its strategic plan realized in 2016 in Milan, is based on three main pillars Independence, Integrity and Professionalism to lead the organization for the coming six years<sup>44</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

As sociologist Daniel Bell said, the national state has become too small for the big problems in life and too big for the small problems. Therefore, the state has undergone a process of deep revision in recent years, which we discussed in this paper. One of the foremost specialists in the analysis of networks and their role in world society, Manuel Castells, spoke of the existence of a network state, to refer to the whole tangle of organizations that share a certain sovereignty, whether it is the result of decentralization. (autonomy of regions), the creation of supranational entities (European Union, Mercosur, ...) or by delegation to civil society organizations. Therefore, the network State would be the whole of that system<sup>45</sup>.

Therefore, cultural networks play a key role in regional or local cultural paradiplomatic actions, their development also depending on the evolution of the digital society. In order to transform the network model of a portal into a cultural network (a cultural cooperation platform), the portal should be able to generate genuine cooperation between some of its members as a result of their own activities. It seems that the acts of collaboration are the glue of a collaboration network. Cultural networks are not just a structure, but, as the definition suggests, a working method.

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<sup>43</sup> International Council of Museums (ICOM), *Las Listas Rojas de bienes culturales en peligro*, available at <https://icom.museum/es/nuestras-acciones/proteccion-del-patrimonio/listas-rojas/>, [accessed in September 2021].

<sup>44</sup> ICOM, *Missions and Objectives*, available at <https://icom.museum/en/about-us/missions-and-objectives/>, [accessed in September 2021].

<sup>45</sup> Javier Brun, Joaquin Benito Tejero, Pedro Canut Ledo, *op. cit.*, p. 74.



# BORDER GUARDS' EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF SPECIFIC TRAINING. INTEROPERABILITY GAINED AFTER IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM FOR BORDER AND COAST GUARDS AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

Ioana Lucia BORDEIANU\*

***Abstract.** The Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding (BG) is a framework of job competences and learning outcomes for border and coast guards, in EU, in the field of border security and management. At the national level there are different training structures, so therefore SQF for BG is ensuring a harmonized training and education. At the EU level was developed a common tool for ensuring job competencies, Common Core Curriculum (CCC) which covers the SQF for BG, level 4 job competences. The main objective of this research is to offer a comparison between different European countries education system and their learning outcomes for border and coast guards, with an accent on implementation of common standards for border and coast guard training, in order to achieve interoperability. Also, we focus on the tools used for implementation of the Common Core Curriculum in the context of the new European system of specific training.*

***Keywords:** border guard, European education, SQF, interoperability, implementation*

## **Introduction**

As a natural reaction to the so-obvious tendency of hyper-specialization (and automation) and the fragmentation of the knowledge of nature and society, the endeavour of a global, unitary approach to the world, or, in any case, of well-circumscribed domains, has intensified. Thus, multidisciplinary and, more fruitful epistemic, interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity emerged. The latter, with the pretence of finding, even from the point of view of existential view, something unitary, which is the substrate of all concrete manifestations is more an ideal than a reality<sup>1</sup>. But beyond the theoretical difficulties of establishing interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches especially to socio- humanistic sciences, there are also

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<sup>1</sup> Ovidiu Nicolescu, Ion Verboncu, *Management*, Editura Economică, București, 1999.



a number of practical difficulties related to team leadership and coordination, interconceptual communication, material costs, etc.<sup>2</sup> In discovering the optimal and practical strategies for approaching reality as holistic as possible but at the same time as rigorous as possible with interdisciplinarity, other concepts or phrases have emerged in recent decades, of which integration is very common, when talking about applied integrated subjects. Being in accordance to what the new type of society and knowledge are asking to achieve from the policing point of view.

More and more the postmodern society is speaking about a “society show”, characterized by “unceasing technological renewal, economic-state merger, generalized secrecy, fake without reply, a perpetual presence of the present image”<sup>3</sup>. Lyotard goes into knowledge-based research in computerized societies on the assumption that knowledge is changing status with the entry of societies into the post-industrial age and postmodern culture. The 19th and 20th centuries gave us a lot of emotions, and they also gave us the taste of terror, fear and insecurity. We have paid enough for nostalgia about everything and about one, about the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, about the transparent vs. fake and communicable experience. “Under the general request of relaxation and tranquillity, we hear the desire to restart terror, to fulfil the fantasy of the strangulation of reality ... success only means to gain time, thinking has only a flaw but though incorruptible: to make us loosing time”<sup>4</sup>.

The primacy of the performance criterion greatly affects the education-important verse of knowledge. When the criterion of pertinence is the performance of the assumed social system, that is, when adopting the system theory perspective, higher education is a subsystem of the social system and the same performance criterion applies to the solution of each problem<sup>5</sup>. The logical effect that will then be observed is the optimal contribution of higher education to better performance in the social system but the stress should also be on capabilities even if the lack of attitudinal development is obvious and accepted among the young professionals. Education continues to provide the social system with skills that correspond to its own exigencies, aimed at maintaining an exceptional internal cohesion and focusing even more on exceptional, sustainable experiences. They are especially designed to confront world competence and vary according to the specialties nation-states vs. stakeholders or large training institutions can sell on the market. Thus, the demand for experts, top personnel and above average staff in the top sectors will increase. Absolutely all disciplines have tangent to telematics training

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<sup>2</sup> Traian Rotariu, Petru Iluț, *Ancheta sociologică și sondajul de opinie. Teorie și practică* [Sociological survey and opinion poll. Theory and practice], second edition, Polirom, Iași, 2006; Petru Iluț, *Abordarea calitativa a sociumanului* [The qualitative approach of of the socio-human], Polirom, Iași, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Jean François Lyotard, *Condiția postmodernă. Raport asupra cunoașterii* [The post-modern condition. Knowledge report], second edition, Idea Design&Print Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13, 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 75.

and should recognize their prioritized education which should be implemented using as many methods as possible.

Until recently, the mission of education included the formation and dissemination of a model of life that the story of emancipation most often justifies, in the postmodern context of de-legitimization, deconstruction, educational institutions are now required to form competences and not ideals. Transmitting knowledge no longer is destined to form an elite capable of guiding it in its emancipation. It provides the system capable actors with a convenient role to fulfil in the pragmatic positions that the institutions need. Education nowadays addresses mainly the two categories of students illustrating “professional intelligence” and “technical intelligence”, while the other young people registered as partners in the education system are mostly “unemployed” in labor demand statistics. “The delegitimacy and primacy of performance is announcing the end of the Teacher’s era: he is not more competent than memory networks to convey the existing knowledge and is more competent than interdisciplinary teams to imagine new moves or new games”<sup>6</sup>. However, the computerization of society as the foundation of the starting point in consolidating and regulating the market system, governed by the principle of performance, is the one that scares because it inevitably brings terror.

Access to the public at large sophisticated and well-suited data automatically sends us to a logic of security and safety. We refer here to a common understanding of European security that brings with it a certain number of rules and provisions that seek damaging points in so called cyber-sabotage (cyber terrorism). So, in the currently social policies from the postmodern society the stakes are not the knowledge itself but the knowledge reserves and supplies and the way in which they are manipulated positively in time and space in regarding the temporal usage of the changing societies.

### **Police/ Border police/ Border guards’ education development in the new European system of specific training**

*Globalized training* is addressing, at present, especially to the two categories of students who show best both *professional intelligence* and *technical intelligence*, according to their own domain of references. This type of education is mostly providing the system with actors that are willing to perform a pragmatic role, in a convenient way, in the jobs that many different units or institutions are in need of because of the new type of society and the new requests for defining capabilities. As professional actors that are performing and doing their best in achieving the social capital in police networking all police officers should prove not only knowledge but also the way they implemented their knowledge and practical solutions in everyday missions.

Another concept, the *universality*, is that which guides the practices and policies of training and education of police and border guard personnel, imposing different strategies for obtaining the competences and the connected learning

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<sup>6</sup> Jean François Lyotard, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

outcomes. As obvious, the learning outcomes are the ones that are showing the type of tasks and activities that should be performed by professionals in any domain, but with a specific touch when it comes out of policing. Furthermore, while discussing about universality, we have to realize the secondary effects and have a vision upon the core of the adopted curriculum. A new concern which emerged in the European context only in 2007, is *flexicurity*, which is the combination of flexibility and security. Flexicurity according to Collin dictionary, is a welfare-state model, originating in Denmark in the 1990s, that combines labour-market flexibility, social security, and a proactive labour market<sup>7</sup>. And as far as the community mentality is concerned, education for police/ border guarding sector is needed specially to bring to the forefront of society the moral values police officers have to prove, from professional point of view as civil servants with special status. The importance of a very well-trained civil servant is the concern of European Commission too and it is stipulated legislation that it should be evaluated while checking Schengen conditions. The training of border police/ border guard officers has an important role in mapping the border activity especially at the external borders with the aim to find out to what extent border guards/ border police officers specific training is a part of the border guard training curriculum and what are the available training tools and methods to work with in real life situations in performing their tasks at the best, according to the highest professional standards.

### **European education and training systems in the police/ border police/ border and coast guard organizations**

In different countries, the service may be called “police”, “guard”, “troops” or “sentinel” and the name would refer to the nation's official term for the state border<sup>8</sup>. The issue of training and professional training in the police cannot be treated unitarily and undifferentiated, but it assumes a concrete arrangement by categories of functions. This training is very important, the basic requirements are those set by the law. Thus, depending on the national specificity, there are several models of basic and continuous training of the policeman at European level. Because we have been involved in various projects with the Frontex European Agency since 2007, we consider eloquently this example of interest in police education and training.

Thus, in the framework of three programs containing 20 projects, in 2011, the Training Unit organized 223 activities with the participation of some 3,500 participants (trainers and experts). The Agency has organized training activities for

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<sup>7</sup> Collins English Dictionary, *Definition on 'flexicurity'*, available at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/flexicurity>, [accessed in October 2020].

<sup>8</sup> For example: Czech Republic - Alien Police Service; Finland - Finnish Border Guard; Germany - Federal Police; Hungary - Hungarian Police; Italy - Guardia di Finanza; Lithuania - State Border Guard Service; Romania - Border Police; Spain - Guardia Civil; United Kingdom - Border Force.

a common working methodology and materials design, new manuals such as “Trainer's Manual on Combating THB for Border Guards” and “Air Crew Training Manual”, and English as basic training in airports and continue to harmonize English language skills for border guards and border guards for their interoperability at European level. Another important tool for basic education was the Joint European Curriculum (JCC) - which has been implemented in all EU countries, being constantly updated and improved. Implementation of Erasmus teacher exchange continued, with the introduction of the Sectoral Qualifications Program, which combines different education and training systems and allows the comparison of competences by level. Thus, we find in countries that are part of the European Union countries in which the police system has average level of police training, higher level of police training, higher level of licensed police training, higher level of police training with a master's degree and a doctorate, a level of professional training in institutions subordinated to the police.

When referring to the average level of professional training we have to take into account the European legislation and the national legislation, because they are countries in the European Union that have not correlated the standard and the level of national training at the European level (for example in Romania, in the post-secondary schools of the Ministry of Interior the level is 3 advanced, while at the European level this is 4. Reverting to the average level the concept is either for training in post-secondary or vocational schools, or training courses at the workplace, training under the system, with or without accreditation, with or without a baccalaureate diploma, aged 18 to 35, with or without transferable credits, with modules or disciplines, with simple skills or assessments, with contracts or not, in equally diverse environments, in a positive multiculturalism, which nevertheless generates effects.

As a result of research undertaken in 1996 by Milan Pagon et al., in 17 European countries (Pagon Milan et al., 1996), 10 police officers were found to have high-level police education, a high level of police training<sup>9</sup>. The length and structure of police high school education differs and there are substantial

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<sup>9</sup> These countries are Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey, although they have a medium level of training (level 3 or 4) on competencies or disciplines, either in institutions subordinated to the police or in the workplace, or in institutions of the Ministry of the Interior, or within the Ministry of Education, with credit transferability and without. In five countries (Croatia, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, and the Slovak Republic), students have the obligation to become Police employees when they pass the admission exam (through recruitment and selection) at school. In seven countries (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Macedonia, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia) training and training at police schools are carried out by the police organizations themselves. In Hungary, the training school for officers is not part of the Police, but it provides police training programs. In the Netherlands, the police school is administered separately from the Government-funded Police Institute. In Turkey, the Police College also provides a higher education level. See M. Pagon, B. Virjent-Novak, M. Djuric, B. Lobnikar,

differences between countries in all aspects of police education. In some countries (Germany, Turkey, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic), the curriculum is more or less general, depending on whether the subjects have law training or very few related police skills, while in others (The Slovak Republic, the Netherlands, Macedonia, Croatia) law, forensics and police tactics constitute a large part of the curriculum<sup>10</sup>.

These curricula last between one and four years to complete the police training of the subjects, whether they are designed by each institution or are worked by centralized specialists, and will be recommended to all those in the system at that level<sup>11</sup>. Today, the police training curriculum differs in many European countries, even if we are talking about police schools that are basically aligned to the Bologna model for different levels. Compared to these curricula, we can see a significantly lower proportion of legal subjects in the case of the Slovak Republic, and the rise of criminal and other police-related topics for Finland<sup>12</sup>. The

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> Milan and his colleagues give the example of Croatia, where students complete two years of high school (“foreign”) training, after which they continue their studies at the Police School. Also, half of the high-school police schools require students to work for the police after graduation (from 3 to 8 years), while the other half does not require such a requirement. In all but one country (the Netherlands), the high school diploma is valid outside (it is recognized as a high school diploma outside the police). Both male and female students are eligible to study at police schools in all countries, except for Turkey, Croatia and Slovenia, where enrolment is only valid for male students. The researchers found that after graduating from the high school, graduates from the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic can start working as police officers immediately. In four other countries (Germany, Turkey, Hungary and the Czech Republic), graduates must be enrolled in a form of police training before they start working as police officers. They identified that the associated police training at national education level is achieved in five countries: Germany, Belgium (for the gendarmerie, but not for the police), Finland, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. Furthermore, the level of police education can be obtained in educational institutions (colleges, academies) that are operated by the Police. In order to enrol in education related to the level of training required in the police, candidates from five countries must be employed by the Police, and all countries, except for Ukraine, require at least two years of previous police experience. In Germany and Finland, graduates of the associated level (police schools) have no obligation to work for the police, in the Slovak Republic graduates have to work for 10 years for the Police or the Gendarmerie. *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, in Finland, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine, education at this level is valid outside and is recognized outside the Police. In Belgium, this procedure is currently being regulated, while the associated level of police education is valid only within the police in Germany. In all five countries, training at this level of police education is available for both male and female students. After completing their studies, graduates in Germany, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine can immediately start police work, while in Finland and Belgium (Gendarmerie) graduates receive a job at work. In three countries, the level of police education partner is guaranteed to a certain degree in the police hierarchy (in Germany – “Polizei/Kriminalrad”, in Belgium – “Opperwachtmeester”; in

ideal of higher education, even if in the police sector, is the Bologna process with transferable, common, recognizable and visible competencies. The Frontex Agency in all training workshops mentions that the basic documents from which they are headed are those related to the Bologna process and the Copenhagen process on vocational education<sup>13</sup>.

Curricula for professional police higher education can generally be divided into three groups. In the first group, the topics related to the law (in Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Ukraine) are dominant. In the second group, there is no police curriculum that focuses on subjects related to law, forensics and criminology, while missing or even omitted are those related to police administration and management issues (in Germany - police uniforms, in Germany - judicial police, and Hungary). In the third group, there is a curriculum with a balanced mix of all subjects (Belgium-Gendarmerie, Croatia, Greece, Finland and Norway). The only exception in the last group is Norway, with no general subject in its curriculum. At this level of education, training is accessible to both male and female students. After completing their studies, graduates from Norway, Poland, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Ukraine begin to work as police officers immediately without any further training. In Germany, Greece, Finland and Croatia, graduates receive the first / the hack at the workplace. In Belgium, the senior professional police program is part of the BA study. In Slovenia, additional police training takes account of previous work experience. The degree of these schools guarantees a certain rank in the police hierarchy in Germany (“Polizei / Kriminalkommissar”), Greece, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Croatia. In other countries, this does not apply<sup>14</sup>.

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Ukraine – “lieutenant”). In Finland and the Slovak Republic, there is no professional degree at graduation from the police school. **Sursa bibliografică**

<sup>13</sup> Higher education training is carried out in 12 European countries: Germany, Norway, Belgium (gendarmerie), Greece, Finland, Poland, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Croatia and Slovenia. This is done by the institutions (colleges, academies, etc.) that are coordinated by the Police or the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In Slovenia, the Police and Security Studies College, which is part of the Ministry of the Interior, is at the same time an affiliate member of the University of Ljubljana. In order to enrol in a school providing professional higher education, pupils in Norway, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia must not be employed by the Police. In other countries, students from the senior professional police are, or have to become, police officers. In seven European countries (Norway, Belgium - Gendarmerie, Greece, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovenia), pupils do not need any prior work experience to enrol in school. In other countries, at least two years of police experience are mandatory. In Germany, professional police higher education is also provided by the higher education institutions (“Fachhochschulen”) for the administration. These schools, independently of the Police, only allow police officers with a certain degree to continue their police education programs. In all 12 countries, the police education diploma obtained is valid and recognized externally outside the police station. The proportion of different areas included in the curriculum is different.

**Sursa bibliografică**  
<sup>14</sup> (Pagon Milat et al., 1996).

The Bologna process requires some working methodology on binding documents, so we are talking about “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education”, “European Qualifications Framework”, „Global EHEA Strategy” “Bologna process report globally”, “Eurydice: Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe. National Trends in the Bologna Process 2006/07,” etc. Within the framework of police training, nine countries (the Netherlands, Belgium-Gendarmerie, Turkey, Greece, Switzerland, Finland, the Slovak Republic, Ukraine and Croatia) undertake police education at police level. In Hungary, candidates who have graduated from the police college must pass the state examinations to obtain a bachelor's degree. The program for this level of education is carried out in the above-mentioned countries in institutions (colleges or academies), managed by the Police, except the Netherlands, because the institution is managed by the government, and Finland, because the police college is coordinated by the Police, in cooperation with the University. In all countries, except for Turkey, Switzerland and Croatia, candidates must be enrolled in police-licensed education only if candidates are or become employees of the Police. Previous police experience is required in Finland and the Slovak Republic. In Turkey graduates have to work for 4 years for the Police, in Croatia 5 years, and in Greece and the Slovak Republic 10 years. In other countries, there is no obligation to work for the Police after graduation. The bachelor degree program in the Slovak Republic lasts three years. The content of licensing programs is much more balanced. Although all curricula contain a mix of different disciplines, programs in Croatia and the Czech Republic focus on forensics and criminology, the program in Ukraine emphasizes the right, the program in Finland focuses on police administration and management, while the program in Turkey focuses on more general topics<sup>15</sup>.

In all countries, except for the Netherlands, grades are valid and recognized externally outside the police system. Training is available for male and female students in all countries. The degree of police licensed schools guarantees a certain rank in the police hierarchy in Belgium, Turkey, Greece, Ukraine and Croatia. Further training depends on past police experience and in most cases, the graduate makes this workplace preparation.

Education with a level of police master training can be found in five of the 17 countries studied by Slovenian researchers (Switzerland, Finland, Slovak Republic, Ukraine and Croatia). The level of education with doctoral students is carried out in Switzerland, Finland, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. In the Slovak Republic, Ukraine and Croatia postgraduate studies are organized in coordinated police institutions<sup>16</sup>. In Switzerland, postgraduate studies are organized at an educational institution that is not associated with the Police but offers a postgraduate program of police. In Finland, postgraduate studies are carried out in collaboration with the university. Candidates enrolling for postgraduate studies in Finland, the Slovak Republic, and Ukraine must be employed by the Police. This is

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>16</sup> (Kratkoski Peter C, Das Dilip C., 2011)- nu se regaseste la bibliografie

not the case in Switzerland and Croatia. Previous police experience is a prerequisite for master and PhD studies in Finland, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. In Switzerland and Croatia, no previous police experience is needed<sup>17</sup> The Master and Doctorate are valid externally in all the countries mentioned above. The Master's program lasts between two and four years, while the doctoral degree lasts three to five years after obtaining the master's degree. Postgraduate studies are available to male and female candidates. The Master and Doctorate degrees do not guarantee a certain rank in the police hierarchy in any of these countries.

“The shift to European cooperation has inevitably brought with it more demands for training and education”, said Piet van Reenen, the former director of the Dutch Police Academy. The idea argued that a European police academy could be created to serve to train police officers from different countries. Given the current differences in training and police philosophies, an agreement to share a common curriculum it would not be easy, and Van Reenen thinks his proposal to set up a European Police Institute could be limited to high-level officers with management responsibilities. Despite the difficulties, “the fact that borders in Europe are open is a reason sufficient and necessary to start a facility for police training at European level, no matter how different structures and cultures are today”<sup>18</sup>. CEPOL then presents the common training curriculum with the appropriate recommendations for all European countries. Similarly, the JRC in the Frontex Agency, if it came up with the implementation recommendation, has been implemented in all Partner Law Enforcement Agencies in line with European Commission legislation.

The advantages of training are that it focuses on the level of expertise, provides a clear European perspective, and that it is more effective if it eliminates the need for each country to promote its own in-house own European path. The Institute was supposed to be a central unit, a secretariat that could organize courses across Europe, or a mix of the two, with funds coming from Member States or the EC. Van Reenen is aware that countries are prudent in setting up the European Police Institute and notes that the TREVI group has temporarily refused the idea, but it has no doubt that it will “be done in the end”<sup>19</sup>. Allied to the idea of a central European academic police institution is the British proposal, that of the European Police Council. This proposal was seen as another way to improve cooperation in police practice and the breakdown, isolation of individual nation forces<sup>20</sup>.

CEPOL is in charge of preparing police officers at European level and aims at encouraging cross-border cooperation in the fight against crime and maintaining public security, law and order. It was set up in 2005 and the secretariat is at Bramhall in the UK and the institution organizes between 60 and 100 annual

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<sup>17</sup> (Pagon Milan et al, 1996) – informații incomplete

<sup>18</sup> Piet van Reen, *Urban Crisis Management and Police Force: The Case of Amsterdam*, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, 1981.

<sup>19</sup> Milan Pagon et al., *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem.*



courses, seminars and conferences covering a wide range of topics relevant for police activity at European level<sup>21</sup>.

### **Borderguarding vs policing**

According to Colling English dictionary, “policing is defined as being the activities carried out by police officers in order to preserve law and order”<sup>22</sup>. We couldn’t find a definition for borderguarding because the term is not used as being official but we can understand it in association with the activities carried out by border guards in order to preserve law and order at the borders. Robert Reiner, forensic and political sciences professor from London School of Economics, identified police “first, as being a body of people that are patrolling in public spaces in blue uniform having a limited mandate of control over the crimes, maintaining public order and having some attributions referring to negotiation within the social service”<sup>23</sup>. Also, the professor mentioned that policing theory should answer to some questions, but the main ones still remain “Who?” and “Whom?”. He mentioned following eight theoretical dimensions required for the concept definition: what is policing; who is involved in policing; what do they actually do; what are the means and powers of policing; what social functions do they achieve; how does policing impact on different groups; by whom are the police themselves policed, by what means, and to what ends; how can the developing purposes and practices of policing be understood; developing the theory of “policing”<sup>24</sup>.

In Western culture, the concept of modern police paid by the government was developed by French researchers in the law domain. Practitioners of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, especially Nicolas Delamare in *Traité de la Politie* (Treaty on Police), first published in 1705 mentioned about *the conceptual appearance of the Polizeiwissenschaft* (police science), which was an important theoretical wording for the theory of “policing”<sup>25</sup>. The concept of developing modern police was contemporary with state formation, which was later defined by sociologist Max Weber as reaching a “monopoly on the legitimate use

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<sup>21</sup> The acronym of CEPOL is French - Collège Européen de Police. The College has a budget of € 8.451 million for 2012. See Council of the European Union, *Council Decision 2005/68/JHA establishing the European Police College (CEPOL) and repealing Decision 2000/820/JHA*, 20 September 2005, available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eudn/2005/681/resources>, [accessed in May 2021]; [www.cepola.eu](http://www.cepola.eu).

<sup>22</sup> Collins English Dictionary, *Definition on ‘policing’*, available at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/policing>, [accessed in October 2020].

<sup>23</sup> Robert Reiner, *The Politics of the Police. Theory of Policing: The Analytical Dimension*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the College de France, 1977-1978*, edited by Michel Senellart, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2007, p. 23.

of physical force<sup>26</sup>. As mentioned above, here are a few theories that have been noted in studying police activity: theory of broken windows<sup>27</sup>; theory of social learning<sup>28</sup>; social learning and social structure – SSSL; CP theory<sup>29</sup>; theory of social resources - SRT<sup>30</sup>; theory of social contract<sup>31</sup>; borderguarding concept to be developed<sup>32</sup>.

European Commission established the manual to be compulsory for all the countries in the project (28 plus) for having a harmonized education. Basic and further training education in the border guard's system not to be seen unitary and undifferentiated. This implies a concrete approach to function categories and the basic requests are settled by the law. According to the national specifications, at the European level, there are many modules of training both for the basic and for the further training of the border guards (with different model of contracts, in or out of the police area).

### **European education and training systems in the police**

Depending on the national specificity, there are several models of basic and further training of the police officers at European level. I have been involved in various projects with the Frontex European Agency since 2007, so I consider eloquently this example of interest in police education and training.

Thus, in 2011, in the framework of three programs containing 20 projects, the Training Unit in Frontex organized 223 activities with the participation of some 3,500 participants (trainers and experts)<sup>33</sup>. We can find countries that are part of the European Union where the police system has different levels: a medium level of police training; higher level of police training; higher level of licensed police training; higher level of police training with a master's degree and a doctorate; a level of professional training in institutions subordinated to the police. Pagon's research in 1996 showed that from the 17 European countries, 10 countries have medium highschool level of police education. These countries are Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey, although they have a medium level of

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<sup>26</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Bedminster Press, New York, 1968.

<sup>27</sup> James Q. Wilson, George L. Kelling, *Broken Windows. The Police and Neighbourhood Safety*, Atlantic Monthly, 1982.

<sup>28</sup> Ronald L. Akers, *Social Learning and Social Structure. A General Theory of Crime and Deviance*, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1998, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Kam C. Wong, *Policing in Hong Kong. Research and Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Kjell Törnblom, Ali Kazemi (eds.), *Handbook of Social Resource Theory. Theoretical Extensions, Empirical Insights, and Social Applications*, Springer, New York, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.

<sup>32</sup> Frontex Agency, *Common Core Curriculum for Basic Training of Border Guards at the European Level*, first edition, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Frontex, TME exercise, CCC project, 2011, CCC updated workshop, 2012.

training (level 3 or 4) on competencies or disciplines, some of them do not have transferable credits.

There are five types that we can be aware about:

1. *Medium level of professional police training* (10 countries) - Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, Netherlands, Slovak Republic, Slovenia (which even if they have middle level training of 3 or 4 at the national level, they have different systems);

2. *Superior level of police professional training* (12 European countries) - Germany, Norway, Belgium (Gendarmery), Greece, Finland, Poland, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Croatia and Slovenia;

3. *Superior level of professional training with a bachelor degree* (9 countries) - The Netherlands, Belgium - Gendarmery, Greece, Switzerland, Finland, Slovak Republic, Ukraine and Croatia;

4. *Superior level of professional training of police with master and doctorate diploma* - Master degree (5 countries): Switzerland, Finland, Slovak Republic, Ukraine and Croatia), PhD. level (4 countries): Switzerland, Finland, Slovak Republic and Ukraine;

5. *Level of professional training of police in institutions subordinated to police.*

There are two items to support the training and CEPOL and FRONTEX are working further in developing and sustaining the basic documents, updating and developing tools and more for good practices and further results: Common Core Curriculum with recommendations for all European states (CEPOL); CCC Frontex implemented in all Law enforcement agencies according to European Commission legislation. After implementing the Common Core Curriculum for border guards at the European level a certain degree of interoperability has been gained. In order to evaluate this level of interoperability, *The Common Core Curriculum - Interoperability Assessment Programme (CCC-IAP)* was implemented. Kevin Heubusch defines concept of interoperability as “the ability of different information technology systems and software applications to communicate, to exchange data accurately, effectively, and consistently, and to use the information that has been exchanged”<sup>34</sup>. Jan van Til distinguishes between technical interoperability and human interoperability. So, “technical artefacts need to be interoperable at the technical level. Meaningless bits and bytes need to be transported and reproduced again in exactly the same sequences as they were produced. And connected machines need to be able to robustly communicate with each other in order to secure this”. On the other hand, “humans need to be interoperable at the human level. Therefore information needs to be organised systematically in order to be able to provide any human being with situational meaning at every moment

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<sup>34</sup> Kevin Heubusch, “Interoperability. What It Means, Why It Matters”, in *Journal of AHIMA*, vol. 77, no.1/ January 2006, p. 26-30.

and where ever he/she needs it”<sup>35</sup>. In other words, human interoperability means the non-technical ability of forces and their individual people to provide services, to accept services and to work responsively, safely and effectively together with other forces and individual people in the field of border guarding in order to reach commonly accepted result.

If we try to answer to the question “why interoperability”, we should bare in mind the aspects such: common legal basis, Integrated Border Management model which requires that border guard activities should be compatible, joint operations the statement which stipulates that a citizen should be treated in the same way at all EU external borders and common culture: European borderguardship forms of cooperation among the EU states. For border police system, there are two forms of cooperation that are supporting the system which are the narrow (traditional), meaning that border guards in joint operations should be able to work together and wide, meaning a single border guard is cooperating with other EU-colleagues even when (s)he is working alone at her/his “own” border post and is not physically connected with other EU-colleagues.

Regarding CCC-IAP Programme, the registered partners in 2017 are part of the CCC agreement and all of them agreed in implementing the content of the CCC which include the 28 EU Member States, Schengen associated countries (Island, Norway, Switzerland) and working arrangement countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, The Russian Federation, Turkey, Tunisia, Ukraine). The training and assessment system include training version for all border guards, which can be used also for national purposes and an assessment version with 30 questions, randomly selected from the pool of 160 questions only in English. Between 2013 and 2015, the main assessment consisted of an online test on Frontex Virtual Aula Learning Platform, with 70 multiple choice questions written by the EU Member States, Partner Countries and Fundamental Rights Organisations. The date of participation could be chosen by the student and the session was supervised by the designated national multiplier. Also, an Frontex' representative could be invited during the assessment. After Graduation, a Certificate of Acknowledgement was sent to the assessed student.

There are many benefits in implementing the CCC-IAP Programme and we can say that these are important landmarks for developing a harmonized training. For Frontex it helps strategic planning in the field of border guard training and guides CCC further development, for participating organizations and academies it helps in planning and adjusting the national training and it functions as a quality instrument. For trainers it shows the standing point of their students in the European wide perspective and for students it offers a possibility to be involved in European wide study and it offers direct feedback of their performance.

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<sup>35</sup> Jan van Til, “Human Interoperability”, in *Information Roundabout*, September 2011, available at <https://information-roundabout.eu/presentations/human-interoperability-2/>, [accessed in May 2021].

## **Conclusion**

Border guards' education development in the new European education system of specific training is a subject that is emphasized more and more, nowadays. Globalized training is addressing, at present, especially to the two categories of students who show best, professional intelligence and technical intelligence. This type of education is providing the system with actors that are willing to perform a pragmatic role, in a convenient way, in the jobs that different units or institutions are in need of, in our case the border and coast guard training. The central tool of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes is European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). This is in relation with learning standards for a better comparison of levels (from level 1 to level 8) and between learning system, in different states. The Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding is a framework of job competences and learning outcomes for border and coast guards, in EU, in the field of border security and management. At the national level there are different training structures, so therefore SQF for BG is ensuring a harmonized training and education. Developing common standards for border and coast guard training is important in achieving interoperability. At the EU level was developed a common tool for ensuring job competencies, CCC which covers the SQF for BG, level 4 job competences.

Seville European Council decided upon elaboration of a common training tool for border guards: the first CCC, in 2002. Common Core Curriculum for Border and Coast Guard Basic Training in the EU is a curriculum establishing learning standards for the border guards and the coast guards at the operational level in European Union Member States. The implementation of the CCC, between 2013 and 2019 was a success and borderguarding activities were harmonized under the same umbrella. The updated Common Core Curriculum for Border and Coast Guard Basic Training in the EU – 2019 is underlining the importance of an integrated approach to education and training policies at European level. It also meeting the challenges when relating to Copenhagen Process (basic vocational border and coast guard education) and to Bologna Process (midlevel officers training). After completing the vocational training any student has access to the European higher education level being competent to continue in Bologna Process because of the recognised credits.

# NEW CHALLENGES, OLD CONCEPTS. THE EU'S PURSUIT OF DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY IN THE PANDEMIC AGE

Mirela MĂRCUȚ\*

***Abstract.** This article details the changing narratives surrounding sovereignty that surface in the post-sovereign world. Faced with unprecedented challenges, the European Union has focused its digital policy on achieving digital sovereignty. The research uses insights from neofunctionalism to assert that the EU is building path dependency in digital affairs by using the digital sovereignty discourse. Far from being a mere catchphrase, digital sovereignty has become a priority for EU leaders as a means of further integration, fueled by the previous regulatory efforts that helped build the Digital Single Market. Once this new space has been built, the EU is asserting its authority and control over its resources and tools. As such, the aim of the article is to detail the main drivers for EU digital sovereignty. The research identifies internal drivers (the need for further integration post-Brexit, convergence) and external drivers (competition with the US and China, Big Tech companies).*

***Keywords:** European Union, digital sovereignty, neofunctionalism, path dependency*

## **Introduction**

The pandemic age is characterized by numerous shifts that have not been conceived before. Initial responses to the pandemic brought back older responses to international threats, such as the closure of national borders in the European Union. In the era of supranationalism, globalization, and the Internet, the closure of borders against a virus is just a small patch on a large wound. The example of border closures during the initial stages of the pandemic illustrates a human tendency, namely, to reverberate to the known, the familiar in unprecedented times. After the initial shock, emergency solutions, discussions on resilience and assistance have been the main responses of the European Union (EU) and the Member States (MS).

The pandemic age is also unprecedented in our modern times, because of the scale of the contagion and the transformations it has caused. States, companies, and individuals alike have had to rethink their institutions, relations, and norms. The unprecedented nature determined a pendulation between the “old” and “new”,

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in the sense of “before” and “after/during” the pandemic, as a means of emphasizing the challenging nature of the times. The challenges are unprecedented, but the public discourse resorted to established concepts and terminology, such as “new normal”, “smart working”, “home office”.

Digital sovereignty is inscribed in this trend, as well. The commitment of the European Union to “build back better” and to ensure its resilience reached into the digital space with the commitment to secure the EU’s digital sovereignty. This is coupled with the promotion of the “European digital society” model in the European public discourse, as being different from other models promoted at the international level.

The EU is reclaiming an old concept and aims to adapt it to the current context marked by the pandemic age. This article aims to explore the reasoning behind this commitment towards digital sovereignty, especially considering that the sovereignty of Member States has oftentimes hindered further integration within the EU. Applying neofunctionalist theory, this article proposes that the EU is taking advantage of unprecedented times to advance digital sovereignty in the name of further integration. As such, the quest for integration is a driver of digital sovereignty. To do this, the EU is using internal and external drivers to create path dependency. The main research questions are:

- Is digital sovereignty fundamentally different from sovereignty?
- What drives the EU’s search for digital sovereignty?

The research is a contribution to European integration studies by deconstructing the drivers to achieve digital sovereignty as means of creating path dependency. Methodologically, the research uses theoretical insights from neofunctionalism in an empirical analysis of digital sovereignty in the European Union. First, the article provides a brief evolution of the concept of sovereignty, then it details the research behind digital sovereignty. Finally, the article deconstructs EU’s internal and external drivers for digital sovereignty as a means of further integration.

## **Digital sovereignty**

### **Brief discussion on sovereignty**

Digital sovereignty has been cited quite a lot in public discourse in recent times. The narrative surrounding it relates to a sense of control and power over the things that help make the digital space. These connotations emulate from the core of the term, namely *sovereignty*. To provide proper foundation, this section discusses a series of conceptualizations of sovereignty, then moves towards the debate over digital sovereignty. It aims to reveal that sovereignty is a fluid concept, with a myriad of connotations and definitions that adapt with the ages.

The pervasiveness of sovereignty goes back to the development of the Westphalian order with the establishment of the system of sovereign states and it culminated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. A core term in political thought, sovereignty first

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel, Philpott “Sovereignty”, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020, available at

relates to the control that an authority has over a territory<sup>2</sup>. The authority exerts control internally and externally. Internally, it does so by the act of governing with power to it given by the citizens. Rousseau linked sovereignty with the power given by the people. Externally, sovereignty acts as an umbrella for the authority, in the sense that there is no other higher power that challenges it<sup>3</sup>. Ultimately, these two manifestations provide two connotations also for digital sovereignty: autonomy and authority/control.

The other key term in the definition of sovereignty relates to territory, implying that sovereignty has a geographical connotation as a limitation, but also as a condition for the effective exercise of authority<sup>4</sup>. Closures of borders in the beginning of the pandemic were a manifestation of sovereignty on territorial grounds, but the exertion of digital sovereignty bears no real logic in this connotation. Digital refers to an abstract space, while sovereignty is exerted over a real territory. While the traditional sense of sovereignty cannot be imagined without a focus on territory, other researchers disagree and imagine the term in relation to what is above and beneath the surface<sup>5</sup>. The third key connotation is independence to act within a definite territory, based on the control that the entity has over that territory and on the power bestowed upon it.

Indeed, the 20<sup>th</sup> century marks another evolution in the conceptualization of sovereignty, namely a reconfiguration of the term due to the reshaping of spaces and territories, as well as globalization. The ‘post-sovereign world’ reconfigured the territory, which reconfigured sovereignty, as the European Union began to take form and technology started shrinking the world and creating new spaces<sup>6</sup>. The reality of the European integration process shows that a state can willingly submit to this higher power, but it still holds sovereignty in other areas.

Hence, sovereignty has become a fluid term, driven also by the desires of states to remain relevant in these new circumstances<sup>7</sup>. The literature also references

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[https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall\\_2020/entries/sovereignty/](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall_2020/entries/sovereignty/), [accessed in August, 30, 2021].

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Christakis, *‘European Digital Sovereignty’: Successfully Navigating between the ‘Brussels Effect’ and Europe’s Quest for Strategic Autonomy*, Multidisciplinary Institute on Artificial Intelligence/ Grenoble Alpes Data Institute, December 2020, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3748098>, [accessed in August, 30, 2021], p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Dieter Grimm, *Sovereignty: The Origin and Future of a Political and Legal Concept*, translated by Belinda Cooper, Columbia University Press, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Duncan B. Hollis, *Stewardship versus Sovereignty? International Law and the Apportionment of Cyberspace*, Temple University Beasley School of Law, Legal Studies Research Paper Series, Research Paper no. 2012-25, 2012, available at <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2038523>, [accessed in July, 12, 2021].

<sup>6</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, vol. 1, John Wiley & Sons Publishing House, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Mirela Mărcuț, “Multilevel Governance, Digital Transformation, and Transformation of the State”, in *Der Staat in Der Großen Transformation. Jahrbuch Normative Und Institutionelle Grundfragen Der Ökonomik*, Vol. 19/2021, Marburg: Metropolis



different applications of the term, not necessarily in direct relationship to the territory, as well as other actors that might assert sovereignty. Food sovereignty and personal sovereignty within the discussion of social movements and indigenous communities are two such examples<sup>8</sup>.

### **Digital sovereignty**

Although part of the public discourse now, the concept has actually evolved in tandem with the evolution of the Internet. The initial utopian vision of the Internet brought about the famous Declaration of Independence of the Cyberspace by John Perry Barlow, written as a response to a controversial law in the United States. The declaration states the following: “Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. You have neither solicited nor received ours. We did not invite you. You do not know us, nor do you know our world. Cyberspace does not lie within your borders. Do not think that you can build it, as though it were a public construction project”<sup>9</sup>. Essentially, this declaration asserted the uniqueness of the digital space, which escapes the powers of the state. However, this vision remained utopian and not applicable because of the way in which the state has reinvented itself and the sheer transformation of the digital space<sup>10</sup>. Pohle and Thiel call this trend *cyber exceptionalism* that still extends into the current debates on regulating the digital space because of the libertarian groups that created digital currency.

Considering the challenges from the digital space that extend into real life, states and international organizations have assumed the challenge of building or at least redesigning the former. The current governance forum takes place within the *multilevel stakeholder model*, a venue where states work together to shape the main brush strokes of Internet governance. The discussion veers into the current debates on digital or technological sovereignty and to the contradictions that this term entails.

Firstly, from a theoretical standpoint, the appeal to digital sovereignty makes little sense, according to the literature, because of the close connection between sovereignty and territory<sup>11</sup>. Since the digital space is an abstract

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Verlag, available at <https://www.metropolis-verlag.de/Multilevel-Governance%2C-Digital-Transformation%2C-and-Transformation-of-the-State/14894/book.do>, [accessed in August, 30, 2021].

<sup>8</sup> Stephane Couture, Toupin Sophie, “What Does the Notion of ‘Sovereignty’ Mean When Referring to the Digital?”, in *New Media & Society*, 21 (10)/2019, available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819865984>, [accessed in August, 30, 2021], p. 2305–2322.

<sup>9</sup> John Perry Barlow, “A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace”, in *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, 1996, available at <https://www.eff.org/cyberspace-independence>, [accessed in February, 20, 2021].

<sup>10</sup> Julia Pohle, Thorsten Thiel, “Digital Sovereignty”, in *Internet Policy Review*, 9 (4)/2020, available at <https://policyreview.info/concepts/digital-sovereignty>, [accessed in February, 21, 2021].

<sup>11</sup> Theodore Christakis, *op. cit.*

construction, with no real boundaries within, the assertion that an entity might claim sovereignty over it can be considered a contradiction. Nevertheless, as said before, sovereignty in itself has become a fluid concept that can garner different connotations that are adapted to the age in which we currently live, namely this post-sovereign world.

Secondly, from an empirical standpoint, mostly authoritarian states, such as Russia and China, have a history of asserting technological sovereignty. They campaign for a larger control of the digital space, both internally and externally within the multilevel stakeholder model<sup>12</sup>. While China has implemented “The Great Firewall” to control and filter Internet traffic, Russia has tested its controlled version of the Internet, RUNET<sup>13</sup>. The notion that an entity like the European Union might aim for digital sovereignty points to another contradiction with two facets. First, the UE was born out of this post-sovereign world because of the willingness of states to transfer sovereignty to a higher level that corresponds to a different territory. Secondly and contrary to Russia and China, the EU is a democratic entity controlled by the competences given to it by the European Union by means of the principle of attribution.

Thirdly, research indicates also that the discourse on sovereignty is more prevalent among those that may have not acquired it<sup>14</sup>. The constant development of the digital space may make it difficult for entities to achieve complete digital sovereignty, especially in the case of democratic entities that do not aim for a top-down control of the digital space from traffic to content. The prevalent discourse of the European Union regarding digital sovereignty would suggest that it does not have either control or autonomy within the digital space. The evolution of the information society and the drivers behind the previous effort to build the Digital Single Market suggest this also<sup>15</sup>.

Based on these contradictions and the theoretical insights into sovereignty, this article proposes the following main components of digital sovereignty as a characteristic of the post-sovereign world: the search by actors in the international system for autonomy within the ever-changing and evolving digital space. The post-sovereign world does not entail the control of a defined territory, but rather the autonomy of the resources and tools within the digital space and the independence resulting from this autonomy. Additionally, EU leaders have spoken widely about the EU’s digital sovereignty and, based on their discourses, it entails the following

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<sup>12</sup> Julia Pohle, Thorsten Thiel, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Reuters, “Russia Disconnects from Internet in Tests as It Bolsters Security - RBC Daily”, in *Reuters*, July 22, 2021, sec. Technology, available at <https://www.reuters.com/technology/russia-disconnected-global-internet-tests-rbc-daily-2021-07-22/>, [accessed in August, 30, 2021].

<sup>14</sup> Wouter G. Werner, Jaap H. De Wilde, “The Endurance of Sovereignty”, in *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 7 (3)/2001, available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066101007003001>, [accessed in December, 11, 2020], p. 283–313.

<sup>15</sup> Mirela Mărcuț, *Crystalizing the EU Digital Policy. An Exploration into the Digital Single Market*, Cham, Springer, 2017.

tools and resources: computing power, control over data, secure and fast connectivity, and the idea of EU values<sup>16</sup>.

In the attempt to eliminate some of the contradictions mentioned above, the next session explores the EU's search for digital sovereignty by focusing on internal and external drivers in the context of the pandemic age.

### **Drivers for EU digital sovereignty**

This section starts from the idea that indeed, the EU has not achieved digital sovereignty, but it has started a concerted effort to build it. Additionally, in the post-sovereign world, the EU is well-suited to channel such effort considering the resurgence of the states and authoritarianism. In its quest, the EU aims to become an example for the future digital society, but also for the regulatory efforts of other states<sup>17</sup>. The pandemic age has triggered the quest for digital sovereignty, as the EU has seen its vulnerabilities exposed, from the technological gaps in comparison to the US and China to the lack of control in its supply chains, especially as regards emergency medical supplies and semiconductors. The current position of the EU in tandem with the current pandemic crisis creates the conditions for further integration, according to neofunctionalist theory.

According to it, crises are excellent drivers for integration, considering that the EU is faced with unprecedented challenges and has to act. The only way for the EU to mitigate the effects is to move forward, albeit with small steps<sup>18</sup>. The pandemic crisis represents the background for the current effort for further integration, although it is not necessarily a formal one. Path dependency is the mechanism that moves the EU bloc forward<sup>19</sup>.

The path for further integration as regards digital policy has already been established by the EU with the Digital Single Market strategy that aimed to harmonize the legislation to create a single space for the movement of content, information, data etc. The current prioritization of Digital Europe, along with the discourse regarding the European style digital society as a differentiation from other models, are meant to increase path dependency to foster further European

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<sup>16</sup> Thierry Breton, *Europe: The Keys to Sovereignty*, September 11, 2020, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/breton/announcements/europe-keys-sovereignty\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/breton/announcements/europe-keys-sovereignty_en), [accessed in December, 20, 2020]; Ursula von der Leyen, *Statement by the President at 'Internet, a New Human Right'*, October 28, 2020, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT\\_20\\_1999](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_20_1999), [accessed in December, 20, 2020].

<sup>17</sup> Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World*, Oxford University Press Oxford, New York, 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks, "Grand Theories of European Integration in the Twenty-First Century", in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26 (8)/2019, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1569711>, [accessed in February, 20, 2021], p. 1113 – 1133.

<sup>19</sup> Antje Wiener, Thomas Diez, *European Integration Theory*, Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 2009.

integration. These are two internal and political drivers that fuel the priority of digital sovereignty. **Table no. 1** provides an overview of these drivers.

**Table 1.** Drivers for EU digital sovereignty

	Political	Socio-Economic
Internal	Integration at the EU level	Convergence of the MS to the digital society (DESI)
	European values and principles	No European unicorns Encouragement of European high-tech research
External	Digital leadership at the global level (more assertiveness in relation to the US)	Data governance
	Security of critical infrastructure (Huawei and China)	Big Tech companies and their monopolies

When looking at the internal and socio-economic drivers, the EU’s lack of competitiveness and harmonization stands out. Although the EU has created the Digital Single Market by means of harmonization of legislation, MS still play an active role in digital policy, from the promotion of digital skills to digital transformation of public services. At present, there is still a lack of convergence among them in terms of digital skills, digital business, or digital public services, according to the Digital Economy and Society Index. While DESI tracks the individual progress of MS, the Digital Compass, the newest policy instrument of the Commission, tracks their progress at the European scale based on a series of strategic indicators, such as supercomputers, European unicorns, and high-tech research. This compass tracks a series of elements that build digital sovereignty, such as the boost of the semiconductor production capacity in Europe in the next decade<sup>20</sup>. Additionally, the post-Covid recovery within the Next Generation EU framework mandates that every state must spend at least 20% of its allocated funds to digital projects.

**Table 1** also details external drivers, since external pressure also acts as a catalyzer for further integration. Mostly, political drivers relate to the EU’s position in comparison to the US and China. Both countries are technological powers and represent different visions of the digital society and policy, from a more liberal one (US) to the authoritarian version (China). Struggling to find its place, the EU is focusing on being more assertive in global digital policy, aiming to secure transcontinental Internet cables and promoting its principles in Africa or Latin America. Additionally, the discourse on technological competition between the US

<sup>20</sup> European Commission, *2030 Digital Compass. The European Way for the Digital Decade*, March 2021, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc\\_id=75375](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=75375), [accessed in July 20, 2021].

and China leaves the EU aside, but also makes it dependent on foreign digital tools. Although the EU does not have technological giants at the scale of American or Chinese ones, it has committed to protect the security of its critical infrastructure by issuing guidelines for MS regarding the establishment of 5G infrastructure<sup>21</sup>. This toolbox practically excludes Huawei from providing equipment to national telecom providers for 5G, because it urges MS to eliminate companies that might be considered agents of foreign powers. Indirectly, it also favors European competitors of Huawei, such as Nokia and Ericsson.

Finally, there are also external socio-economic drivers that contribute to the EU's quest for digital sovereignty and further integration. **Table no. 1** refers to Big Tech companies and their quasi-monopoly in the digital space, as well as differences in data governance that differentiate the EU from other states.

The head of the Commission has criticized the business models of Big Tech companies, as the EU is going further with its proposals to regulate digital markets. The scrutiny that the companies are facing is a direct result of the explosion of disinformation online that has culminated with the January 6 riots in the United States<sup>22</sup>. As a result, they may also affect the EU's autonomy regarding the digital space precisely because of disinformation. The Cambridge Analytica scandal and Brexit are two examples of political consequences to disinformation campaigns. Misuse of data is at the core of this discussion, given that the unethical processing of data within the framework of Facebook has helped fuel disinformation in both examples. The challenges posed by Big Tech companies have determined a concerted effort for the EU to be more assertive, based also on its data governance background regarding the protection of personal data, with its newest proposals to regulate digital services and digital markets, but also with its push for taxation of digital companies<sup>23</sup>. Such moves show a commitment from the EU to gain more control over the digital space, albeit a soft form of control.

## Conclusions

This article has focused on the EU's quest for digital sovereignty and the internal and external factors that have driven it. On the backdrop of the pandemic, the EU has become more assertive internationally and nationally as regards digital policy. The context of the health and economy crisis is a proper booster for further integration, according to the neofunctionalist theory. As such, the EU is building more path dependency towards further integration as regards digital policy. Digital

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<sup>21</sup> European Commission, *Cybersecurity of 5G Networks - EU Toolbox of Risk Mitigating Measures*, January 2020, available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/cybersecurity-5g-networks-eu-toolbox-risk-mitigating-measures>, [accessed in February, 20, 2021].

<sup>22</sup> European Commission, *Special Address by the President at the Davos Agenda Week*, January 26, 2021, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech\\_21\\_221](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_21_221), [accessed in July 20, 2021].

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, *Communication. Shaping Europe's Digital Future*, February 19, 2020, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-shaping-europes-digital-future-feb-2020\\_en\\_4.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-shaping-europes-digital-future-feb-2020_en_4.pdf), [accessed in February 20, 2021].

sovereignty is a key component of path dependency, since it proclaims that the EU, as the supranational entity, has autonomy and control over the resources and tools essential for the digital space (infrastructure, research, supply chains, etc.).

Digital sovereignty is different from the traditional sense of sovereignty, as the article explores the idea of the post-sovereign world where the key component that has marked political history since the Treaty of Westphalia has become more fluid and adaptive. This article contends that digital sovereignty is based on some of the key components of sovereignty, namely autonomy and control, but it has moved past the idea of control over a particular space. In case of the digital space, the EU aims to have more autonomy and control over the tools and strategic resources within the digital space, from connectivity to the respect for its values. Finally, to deconstruct the path dependency, the article details the internal and external drivers for digital sovereignty, from political to socio-economic ones. Values, convergence, and other actors in the international system are powerful drivers for the EU.



# TRANSLATIONS IN REGIONAL LANGUAGES – MARK OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mariana Viorica BUDA\*

**Abstract:** *In a world where we try to simplify everything, translation can seem like a provocation for nonprofessionals. Besides, English has always had the role of lingua franca and many consider that multilingual translation could be avoided, thereby reducing costs, if only English were used in the European institutions. In the European Union, there are clear language policies for the use of all the languages, including regional or less used languages. The aim of this article is to stress the fact that translating into a regional language is a proof of the development of a region and even if the process of development isn't linear, the existence of translations is a very important step.*

**Keywords:** *regional languages, translation in regional languages, language policy, measures for regional languages*

For decades now, the European Union is developing, it's building itself patiently and laboriously, with difficulties some times, but we have to admit that on one point at least it seems that all the Member States have the same opinion: the language of each country must be respected and promoted. This common position is old, it does not change, even with the arrival of new States within the Community. And this European's Union desire for linguistic plurality doesn't stop here. This linguistic dynamic had the effect of provoking a renewal, a rebirth of regional languages within each Member State of the Union.

In such way that, in this Europe where had been formed during the previous centuries the nation-states (Italy, Spain, France, Germany, etc) with the motto "one nation-one language", we are currently witnessing nowadays to a certain questioning of these nation-states and to the rebirth of nations that recognize and identify through their language and their culture independently of states. It is obvious that these changes are happening with certain socio-political turbulence. Thus, for example, we can observe, under the guise of linguistic and cultural convergences, the regular creation of cross-border institutions between the

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Spanish and French Catalonia, between the Spanish and French Basque countries, between Alsace (the Germanic speaking) and Germany, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Our departing point in this paper is the idea that in the European Union we give the same importance to all the languages in order to preserve the cultural diversity and, of course, the linguistic diversity which is so important in such extended space. The thesis that we assume is the fact that by translating the documents used at the level of the European Union also in regional languages, we obtain the vitality of these languages, we avoid their extinction and we obtain the development of the regions. Throughout our paper we will take into consideration the linguistic policy of the European Union by analyzing the strengths and the weaknesses and then we will analyze the measures taken in the favor of regional languages.

### **Conceptualization. Type of languages**

The European Union of 27 member states is in favor of linguistic diversity and this fact can be seen in different documents regulating the EU's legal basis. For example, the linguistic diversity is hold and mentioned in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights: "The Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity"<sup>2</sup>, and in Article 3 of the Treaty of European Union: "It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced."<sup>3</sup>

The successive enlargements of the European Union have caused the rise of the number of EU official languages from four to twenty-four. The 24 official languages are Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish. Each expansion of the European Union brings a new official language. As an EU citizen, we have the right to use any of these languages in correspondence with the EU institutions, which have to reply in the same language. EU regulations and other legislative texts are published in all official languages except Irish (only regulations adopted by both the EU Council and the European Parliament are currently translated into Irish)<sup>4</sup>. Even more, in the European Parliament, the people's elected representatives also have the right to speak in any of the EU's

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Duverger, *Politique linguistique de l'Union Européenne et langues régionales*, available at <https://gerflint.fr/Base/Chili1/Duverger.pdf>, [accessed in May 5,2021].

<sup>2</sup> *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, October 26, 2012, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN>, [accessed in May 2, 2021].

<sup>3</sup> Official Journal of the European Union, *Consolidated version of the Treaty of European Union*, available at [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF), [accessed in May 2, 2021].

<sup>4</sup> Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, "Regional and Minority Languages in the European Union", in *Briefing*, September 2016, available at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-Briefing-589794-Regional-minority-languages-EU-FINAL.pdf>, [accessed in May 2, 2021].

official languages and the EU provides general information about its policies in all its official languages. More specialized content is provided in the most widely spoken EU languages. Linguistic diversity is seen as a pillar of Europe's cultural inheritance, as an asset that is of paramount importance when it comes to achieving the intercultural understanding on which a trans-European civil society has to rely.

English, French and German are the three languages which have the higher status of "procedural" languages of the European Commission. Procedural languages are those languages used in the day-to-day workings of the institutions of the European Union.<sup>5</sup> Currently, Irish is an official and working language, after being upgraded in 2007, but previously had the lower status of "treaty language", being the only one with this kind of status.

The European Union takes plenty of measures to respect equally its member states, thus the linguistic diversity of its member states represents a norm that must be accepted. All official languages of the EU are considered to be equal. A European Union member state does not automatically have its language recognized as an EU official language. To be considered as the official language of that state, the member state files a request to the EU and the EU decides whether to accept the national language as an official EU language. Sometimes not all official languages of a country (when there is more than one) are accepted as official EU languages. The state chooses which language(s) to request, but it is at the discretion of the Council to decide which language(s) to accept. An example of such a situation is Cyprus, which has two official languages – Greek and Turkish, but only Greek is an EU official language<sup>6</sup>.

Another category of languages are the regional and minority languages. It is estimated that there are over 60 minority and regional languages in the European Union. In 1992 was adopted the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages which entered into force in 1998 with the role to protect the Europe's linguistic legacy. However, it does not take into consideration the languages of newly arrived non-EU migrants who speak languages that are not traditionally spoken in Europe<sup>7</sup>. If we have to make the distinction between regional and minority languages, the minority languages are defined in function of the number of population who speak the language (for example the Hungarian is a minority language in Romania), while regional languages are defined in relation to the area where they are spoken (for example the Catalan or Basque languages in Spain). There is another notion introduced in the Charter, that of 'non-territorial language' and is defined as an idiom spoken by minority populations that cannot be identified with a particular area, such as the languages of east European Jews and Roma populations<sup>8</sup>.

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages opted to use both terms together in the abbreviation RMLs. Regional Minority Languages are

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<sup>5</sup> *Consolidated version of the Treaty of European Union*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

the ones that are different from the official language or languages of a given state, and usually they are traditionally used within a part or region of this state by a group of its nationals that is smaller than the rest of the population, or shortly, a minority. In the past years, Regional and Minority Languages are considered in terms of the conservation of Europe's cultural wealth and traditions in the context of European unity, excluding the possible threat on the status of all the official languages. Nowhere is the ethnicity issue mentioned, and Article 5 explicitly states that the charter provisions cannot be a basis for any actions against the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its states parties<sup>9</sup>.

Galician, Catalan and Basque (Spain) remained the only regional languages in the European Union which enjoy the status of a semi-official (or co-official) languages, after the withdrawal of UK which had two semi-official languages (Scottish Gaelic and Welsh). This status means that the language can be officially used under an administrative arrangement between the Council and the requesting Member State. On the other hand, Catalan and Basque together with, among others, Corsican, Occitan and Breton, are regional languages in France but do not enjoy official status there<sup>10</sup>. While the national governments determine these languages' legal status and the extent to which they receive support, the European Commission maintains an open dialogue, encouraging linguistic diversity to the extent possible.

### **Translations in the European Union**

At the level of the European Union, the cooperation of the Member states with the Institutions that provide translations, especially with the Commission's Directorate for Translation and Interpretation plays a very important role. Inside the European Union the majority of the translations of documents are provided in-house by the translation services. Although, EU translation also covers translations outsourced to external contractors and paid for and, to some extent, controlled by EU institutions.

EU translation may also be defined through genres or text types which are translated. EU translation is often perceived stereotypically as legal translation. While legal translation, (the translation of EU legislation), is a special constituent category of EU translation which is critically central to the functioning of the European Union, it comprises also a salient minority of documents translated by EU translation services. EU translation is diverse and covers a continuum from expert-to-expert and expert-to-lay communication<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/text-of-the-charter>, [accessed in May 7, 2021].

<sup>10</sup> Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, *DGT Translation Quality Guidelines*, November 26, 2015, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/translation/maltese/guidelines/documents/dgt\\_translation\\_quality\\_guidelines\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/translation/maltese/guidelines/documents/dgt_translation_quality_guidelines_en.pdf), [accessed in May 3, 2021].

In addition to law, specialized (expert-to-expert) genres include official communications, institutional reports, minutes, and international agreements, whereby institutions communicate with experts, such as national governments and MEPs. In expert-to-lay communication, institutions communicate with the general public (citizens, through such genres as booklets, letters to citizens, press releases, as well as multimodal genres, such as institutional websites or even tweets)<sup>12</sup>.

All laws and legal documents are translated into all 24 official languages. That means all EU documents are available in three separate alphabets: Latin, Greek and Cyrillic. This, however, generates a number of costs. The total cost of translation and interpretation in all the EU institutions (including the European Commission, European Parliament, the Council and Court of Justice of the European Union, European Court of Auditors, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of Regions) is around €1 billion per year. This represents less than 1% of the EU budget or just over €2 per citizen. More than a million pages a year have been translated in Parliament. On average, more than 2,000 translators and 80 interpreters a day are needed in the EU's institutional system<sup>13</sup>. Obviously, the benefits of multilingualism outweigh the costs. The EU institutions operate with the largest translation and interpretation service in the world in order to ensure the essence of the Union. A Union in which only one universal language, a lingua franca, would be officially used, cannot be imagined. Therefore, the institutions seek to promote cultural and linguistic diversity within the community but also abroad, while trying to avoid a universal European language.

Translation contributes to social inclusion, especially of two types of community: minority native linguistic communities in a territory and migrant linguistic communities. The role of translation is primarily to allow access to all basic services such as education or health and to justice, thus ensuring equal treatment of individuals and favoring a better quality of life for everyone. In the workplace, the translation of the instructions improves the employability of monolingual individuals, especially when they are also less qualified. Finally, and more generally, translation allows access to resources and services that would otherwise be reserved for a multilingual fringe of society – often the wealthiest – in a territory<sup>14</sup>.

According to the General Translation Directorate of the European Commission, in 2012 a total of 1 760 615 pages were translated. The greatest percentage of translated pages was into English – 14,92%, followed by French (8,25%) and German (6,45%). Only 0,38% (6,680 pages) were translated into other languages apart from the official EU languages. The least translated target EU

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, *Frequently Asked Questions on Languages in Europe*, September 26, 2013, available at file:/Frequently\_asked\_questions\_on\_languages\_in\_Europe.pdf, [accessed in May 3, 2021].

<sup>14</sup> European Commission, *Etudes sur la traduction et le multilinguisme. Légiférer dans l'environnement multilingue de l'UE*, 1/2010, available at [https://graspe.eu/document/EU\\_multilingual.pdf](https://graspe.eu/document/EU_multilingual.pdf), [accessed in May 4, 2021].

languages were Latvian and Estonian (3,41% each), Maltese (3,37%), and Irish (only 0,41%). In 2012 a total of 2 273 permanent and temporary staff was employed in translation, translators being 64,8% (1 474)<sup>15</sup>.

The use of working languages of the EU saves a lot of translation efforts and reduces the burden, as it is not possible to translate all EU documentation into all the 24 official languages. The European Commission uses English, French and German in general as procedural languages, whereas the European Parliament provides translation into different languages according to the needs of its Members. But as was mentioned above, English, French and German are widely accepted as working languages of the EU<sup>16</sup>.

On the *Official Journal of the European Union* which makes references on the Council Conclusions on the official use of additional languages within the Council and possibly other Institutions and bodies of the European Union, it is mentioned that some translations of certain documents into languages other than official EU languages it is possible if these languages enjoy official status in a given Member State or are officially recognized.<sup>17</sup> Translations must be provided and paid for by the given Member State, thus a special arrangement between the EU institutions and Spain, for example, it exists. There are translations into Basque, Catalan and Galician, the regional languages of Spain. The Council encouraged other institutions to conclude such agreements. Scottish Gaelic and Welsh recognized regional languages in the United Kingdom also enjoyed such a status and could potentially be used in formal EU meetings and EU documents.

The existence of translations in regional languages is a clear proof of the development of regions and a clear support of the multilingualism in the European Union. This also brings closer the UE to its citizens, because communicating with citizens in their own language is essential for the transparency, legitimacy and efficiency of the EU.

### **Linguistic policy in the European Union**

Within the EU, language policy is one of the responsibilities of each individual Member State. On the other hand, EU institutions play a supporting role in this field, based on the ‘principle of subsidiary’. Part of their role is to promote co-operation between the Member States and maintain European dimension in national language policies. Starting with the three constituent bodies of the EU, shortly, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, and the European Parliament, multilingualism has been a key area of focus for a large

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<sup>15</sup> Interinstitutional Committee for Translation and Interpretation, *Interpreting and Translating for Europe*, 2016, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/en\\_print\\_2016.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/en_print_2016.pdf), [accessed in May 4, 2021].

<sup>16</sup> European Commission, 1/2010, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> European Union Council, *Council Conclusions of 13 June 2005 on the Official Use of Additional Languages within the Council and Possibly other Institutions and Bodies of the European Union*, available at [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52005XG0618\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52005XG0618(01)&from=EN), [accessed in May 5, 2021].

number of years. European Union's language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity and promote knowledge of languages, reasons for the formation of cultural identity and social integration, but also because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the educational, professional and economic opportunities created by an integrated European space<sup>18</sup>. The European Union has made available to all countries the legal framework for adopting language policies, because it is obvious the linguistic diversity existing on the continent and the fact that this linguistic diversity allows the preservation of the identity and culture of a nation.

In order to better understand the translation policy in the European Union, we shall take a look to the linguistic policy of the Union. During the time, the European Union kept three main principles for the development of the linguistic diversity: language learning, healthy multilingual economy and development of legislation in all the languages of the Union. We will analyze therefore each principle of the linguistic policy.

Regarding the language learning and teaching in all EU countries, the policy provides that each European should learn two or more languages in addition to his or her mother tongue<sup>19</sup>. This policy is quite old, since it can be found in the official documents even of 1995, such as the White Paper on Education and Training. In recent years, the European multilingualism policy has followed the objective set at the Barcelona European Council in March 2002, namely to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from an early age. It was also determined by the Commission's Communication on "Multilingualism, an asset for Europe" and a common commitment regarding the Council Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism. In this sense, after years, the European Commission conducted and published in 2012 a very complex survey of 54,000 students and their foreign language skills in 14 European countries. The results show significant differences between countries, but suggest common strategies for the development of language learning policies<sup>20</sup>. An important aspect to be taken into account with regard to language policies in the European Union has been the creation and use of the European Common Framework of Reference for Languages, which provides a common basis for the development of language programmes, textbooks and language assessment in Europe. This framework provides a comprehensive description of what language learners need to learn in order to use the purpose of oral and written

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<sup>18</sup> Guus Extra, Kutlay Yagmur, *Language Rich Europe - Trends in Policies and Practices for Multilingualism in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299338187\\_Language\\_Rich\\_Europe\\_Trends\\_in\\_policies\\_and\\_practices\\_for\\_multilingualism\\_in\\_Europe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299338187_Language_Rich_Europe_Trends_in_policies_and_practices_for_multilingualism_in_Europe), [accessed in May 7, 2021].

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, *Base de données de communiqués de presse. Education et jeunesse*, 2012, available at [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_PRES-01-437\\_fr.htm?locale=FR](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-01-437_fr.htm?locale=FR), [accessed in May 10, 2021].

<sup>20</sup> European Commission, *Première enquête européenne sur les compétences linguistiques. Résumé*, available at <https://www.slideshare.net/FactaMedia/premiere-enquete-europenne-sur-les-comptences-linguistiques-commission-europenne>, [accessed in May 10, 2021].

communication. Also, the Framework lists the knowledge and skills a learner must acquire in order to have an effective language behavior. Finally, the European Common Framework for Languages defines the levels of competence that make it possible to measure the learner's progress at every stage of learning and at every moment of life<sup>21</sup>.

The multilingual economy of the European Union has been and still is very relevant. In an increasingly competitive European market, intercultural communication skills as well as cross-curricular skills play an increasingly important role in business and sales strategies. European companies cannot lose money and customers and they need people who are competent to speak in the languages of the European Union, but also in those of the Union's trading partners. The Erasmus exchange programme for students is one of the best language policies for the multilingual economy of the European Union. This is because the skills acquired during the study period abroad are the same as the skills required by the employer companies nowadays<sup>22</sup>. For the single market to be effective, the Union needs a mobile workforce. Skills in several languages increase employment opportunities, particularly through the possibility of working or studying in another Member State.

If we look at the multilingualism in the institutions of the European Union, the challenge has been over the time to find the balance between costs and benefits, but having all the documentation in all official languages, because the official policy was to translate all the documents, speeches and communications into all the languages. Different measures were considered, such as using English only or even the English-French-German triangle, or finding another better solution<sup>23</sup>. However, it seems that there is still work to be done to establish a coherent policy. This is why language policies remain a topical issue, a subject to be debated and an area that still needs solutions.

If we analyze these linguistic policies of the European Union and if we think about the translations in regional languages, we can see their strengths and their weaknesses. As strength we could mention the fact that it's very important that the linguistic diversity doesn't mean for the European Union only official languages, but all the languages spoken in the EU. So, the EU gave the same importance to an official, known language as to a less spoken language. Another important strength from our point of view is the fact that, during the time, several

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<sup>21</sup> Council of Europe, *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues : Apprendre, Enseigner, Evaluer*, 2001, available at [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_FR.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_FR.pdf), [accessed May 11, 2021].

<sup>22</sup> Uwe Brandenburg (coord.), *The Erasmus Impact Study. Effects of Mobility on the Skills and Employability of Students and the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2014, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf), [accessed in May 11, 2021].

<sup>23</sup> François Grin, *Coûts et justice linguistique dans l'élargissement de l'Union Européenne*, 2006, available at <http://www.sat-amikaro.org/article657.html>, [accessed May 12, 2021].

documents on the protection of languages were created at the level of the European Union (The European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, Resolutions and Recommendations for Regional and Minority Languages, Studies, etc). Despite this, we can encounter at least two very obvious weaknesses. The regional and minority languages are in competition with official languages, for multiple reasons, even if they have all the protection of the EU. The reasons that we could mention are the fact that they are suffering from a declining number of users, lack of transmission between generations, assimilation by other languages, their economic importance for the citizens is sometimes reduced or even the cultural aspect that plays an important role. The second weakness would be the fact that we confront with the risk of disappearance of certain regional languages. For example, the Basque and the Welsh languages are considered vulnerable languages<sup>24</sup> by the Atlas of the world's languages made by UNESCO.

### **Special measures in favor of the regional languages at the EU level**

Multilingual translations in European Union and particularly the translations in regional languages are of a great importance for the European Union, since Europe is seen as the most complex continent in terms of language diversity. The European Union is founded on the principle of respecting linguistic diversity and ensures special policy for multilingualism. This topic has relevance for the EU since multilingualism leads to better cooperation, improves the intercultural dialogue and helps to the creation of more cohesive and more sustainable societies. At the same time, multilingualism promotes openness and tolerance between EU's citizens and between EU's institutions and citizens, since acceptance and appreciation of different cultures and languages leads to the construction of a peaceful and powerful Union.

But it would be of great importance to see what are exactly the measures taken in favor of the regional languages and their translation. In our opinion, these measures are a real proof of the development level of the regions.

The first measure is the fact that the European Council adopted a Resolution to promote linguistic diversity and language learning, making the Member States responsible for introducing regional languages into their projects. In this way, each country is responsible for their regional languages, their promotion and their vitality<sup>25</sup>. By this measure the European Council gives the power to the Member States in order to be the responsible to preserve their cultural richness with European support. Nevertheless, the European Commission, over the time, has financed various projects by supporting the regional and minority languages, but never translations. Or, in our research, we have not found any project financed by a European institution with regard to the translation in regional

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<sup>24</sup> UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, available at <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>, [accessed May 10, 2021].

<sup>25</sup> Council of Europe, *Language Education Policy*, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/language-policies>, [accessed in May 10, 2021].



languages. From our point of view, this kind of project would be very welcomed and revitalizing for these languages.

During the time, the Committee of Regions was interested in linguistic minorities and opine that “regional identity is strengthened by the safeguarding and promotion of minority (lesser used) and regional languages”<sup>26</sup>, “the availability of goods and services in minority (lesser used) and regional languages and access to new information and communication technologies is an essential factor in language promotion”<sup>27</sup> or the Committee “regards cultural and language diversity as an appropriate field in which to promote European territorial cohesion, as it is a multiplying factor and provides added value in regional — the undertaking that a series of steps in promoting and local development projects”<sup>28</sup>.

The European Parliament was also interested in regional and minority languages, stating that these languages should be present in new technologies, such as translation software. The new technologies and the software for translation are very discussed subjects in the European institutions. Our point of view is that if we would be able to introduce the regional languages in the translations software, it could be a starting point for their revitalization, transmission to others and protection. Maybe in the future we will see such a project in the European institutions. Actually, we should mention that the Council of the European Union allows the translation of certain documents into a language which is not official but which is officially recognized in a Member State. On the other hand, translations are paid for by the Member State – this is the case for the 5 regional languages if we still take UK into consideration.

We would like to find more information about translations in regional languages, but since we could not, we encourage as potential future directions of research, the access to libraries or the submitting of petition to the European Parliament in order to publish more information or documents about translation in regional and minority languages, if it is possible. And also encourage other Member States to reach administrative agreements with EU’s institutions in order to translate documents in their regional languages, in this way keeping alive the cultural and linguistical diversity of European Union.

As a conclusion to our paper we could say that the translations in regional languages within the European institutions, is something wanted, required and a good idea for a project. As already mentioned this would give vitality to languages and prevent their disappearance. By this conclusion we see that our thesis from the beginning is confirmed, so the translation in regional languages in the framework of the European Union is a sign of the development of regions in the European space. These translations highlight the freedom of expression that European Union

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<sup>26</sup> Official Journal of the European Communities, *Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the ‘Promotion and Protection of Regional and Minority Languages’*, 2001, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52001IR0086&from=EN>, [accessed in May 11, 2021].

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

offers to its citizens. This democratic feature of the European Union also ensures a better relation of EU institutions and citizens. Translation in regional languages can be seen as a step forward towards a better Union, with better organization and more people being satisfied because their rights are fully respected. Each of these languages reflects a unique world-view and culture complex which shows the manner in which its speech community has formulated its thinking and understanding of the surrounding world.



# THE *BRAIN DRAIN* PHENOMENON IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND ITS EFFECTS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mihaela CREȚU\*, Alina STOICA\*\*

**Abstract.** *The fall of the communist bloc in 1990 generated major political-economic and spiritual changes with a drastic impact on the society of ex-communist states, but especially on those who were part of the USSR, such as the case of the Republic of Moldova, which gained independence in August 1991. The lack of clear political ideologies and the preoccupation with the rhetoric of pan-Romanism and pan-Slavism generated serious problems in the society of the Republic. These in turn determined the sharpening of the brain drain phenomenon towards the West, but also that of the emigration of labor force abroad in search of a decent living.*

*Migration is an evolving, multilateral and intense phenomenon on the eastern border of the European Union, and obviously in the Republic of Moldova. Almost a quarter of the population of the Republic of Moldova currently lives abroad, whether it is a temporary stay or a longer period of time - with the desire to return to Moldova or to remain permanently in the country where they settled. more years.*

*The present study performs a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the emigration of creative power, but also of the young labor force from the Republic of Moldova, especially from the Peresecina-Orhei region, considered relevant by us because it is one of the largest localities in the Republic of Moldova. The paper brings to the attention of those interested the causes of increased emigration and the lack of adequate policies to reduce it. In the center of our attention being the young people and the newly formed families.*

**Keywords:** *globalization, brain drain, Republic of Moldova, emigration, labour force*

## **Introduction**

Many researchers argue that empirical evidence shows that globalization is more “socially embedded” than critics claim and is based on a number of profound factors. These include the changing infrastructure of global communications related to the IT revolution; the development of global markets for goods and services,

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related to the global distribution of information; the new global division of labour led by multinational corporations; the end of the Cold War and the spread of democratic and consumer values in many regions of the world (along with some marked reactions to it); and increasing migration and the movement of peoples, linked to changing patterns of economic demand, demography and environmental degradation. The social facts of globalization, observes Ronaldo Munck, “are innumerable, from transnational migration to the growth of the global city, from new forms of community to the flourishing of global crime”<sup>1</sup>.

The fall of the communist bloc in 1990 generated major political-economic and spiritual changes with a drastic impact on the society of ex-communist states, but especially on those who were part of the USSR, such as the case of the Republic of Moldova, which gained independence in August 1991. The lack of clear political ideologies and concern for the rhetoric of pan-Romanism and pan-Slavism generated serious problems in the society of the Republic. These in turn determined the sharpening of the brain drain phenomenon towards the West, but also that of the emigration of labour force abroad in search of a decent living.

The present study started from our desire to establish the reasons that determine young people in the Republic of Moldova to leave the country sometimes permanently and rarely only during their studies. Our analysis has as a case study the situation of Peresecina locality, Orhei county. The basis of our research is the analysis of data from the National Bureau of Statistics and the headquarters of Peresecina City Hall. We tried to identify, statistically speaking, the number of people who emigrated, the conditions in which they did it, as well as the experience of several young Moldovans who left the Republic of Moldova abroad. Many of them were interviewed to find out the details of their experience during their studies in the Netherlands, Denmark and France. We were particularly interested in the difficulties encountered in the integration process, the experience itself, but also the prospects of returning home.

On the other hand, we tried to follow the social and economic aspects and problems of young Moldovans in general that determine, accompany and are in fact causes of migration, as we said not only the brain drain phenomenon, but the labour force. In general, to the West, to the countries of the European Union in particular, but also to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Therefore, this emigration process was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively based on the information collected by the method of the individual interview applied on an appreciable number of young people aged between 21-25 years. For results and more information, we chose students from different universities, with different fields of activity. Thanks to this study, we had the opportunity to highlight the social situation, the main factors that in one way or another determine or impose the departure of young people from the country, their expectations, dynamics and directions of the flow of emigrants.

In addition, conducting a comparative analysis of the reality and problems faced by migrant workers, including in the field of social integration in the new

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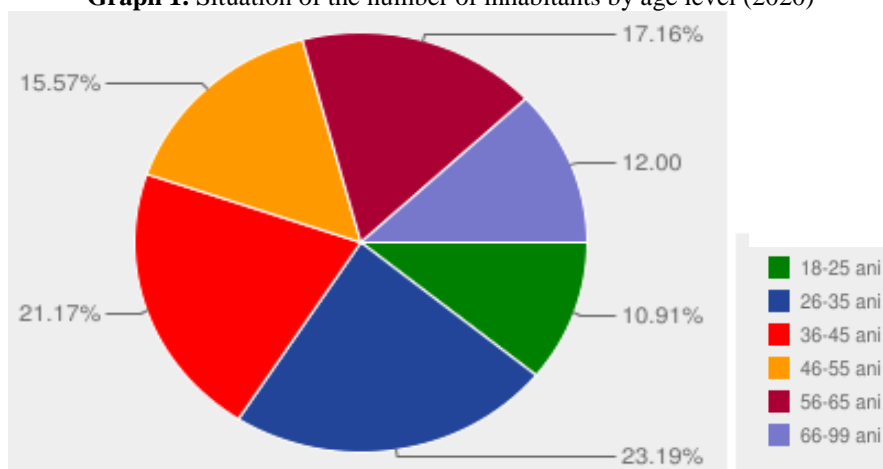
<sup>1</sup> Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization and Contestation*, Routledge, London, 2007, p. 16.

society in which they left, gave us a clearer idea of the effects of the departure phenomenon on economic grounds - economic emigration.

### Peresecina, Orhei

Therefore, Peresecina is located in Orhei district, Republic of Moldova. The locality is located in a hilly and lowland region, in Valea Micleştilor, on the Ichel river, along the Orhei – Chişinău road, surrounded by Codrii Moldovei. The distance from the locality to Chişinău is 28 km, to Orhei 18 km.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the largest settlements in the Republic of Moldova, its composition includes a single locality with a population of 7,430 inhabitants, according to the latest census, in 2014. Peresecina is located in the centre of the country, on the international route M-2 Chişinău – Soroca, as we can see in the image below<sup>3</sup>.

**Graph 1.** Situation of the number of inhabitants by age level (2020)



**Source:** Peresecina City Hall official website, *Registrul de Evidență a persoanelor* (Register of persons), available at <http://peresecina.md/>, [accessed April 12, 2021].

Labour migration from the Republic of Moldova, implicitly from Peresecina has two directions: the countries of the European Union (EU) and the CIS countries. Each direction has specific peculiarities, observing an increasing dynamic of the emigration flow. In support of the argument as relevant as possible for our case study, we studied the electoral lists for 2020, in order to know precisely the number of inhabitants in Peresecina.

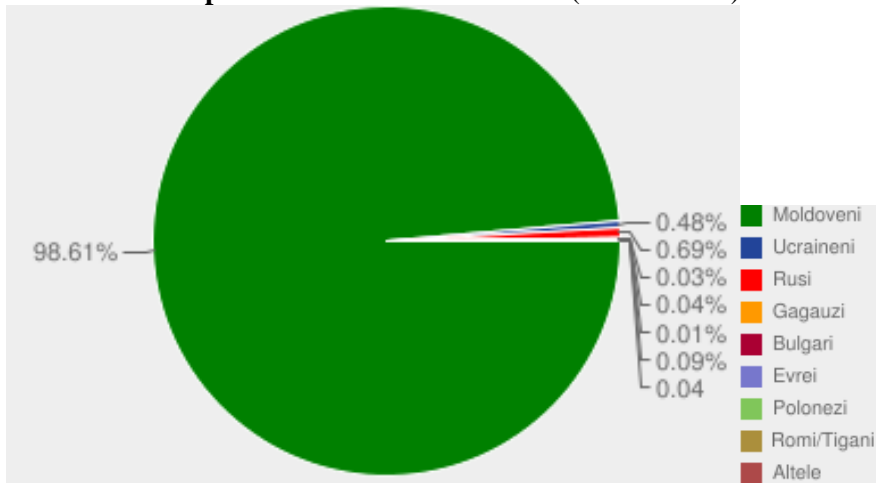
For a possible analysis as relevant as possible, we decided that it is useful to obtain as much information as possible about the nationalities in the locality, but

<sup>2</sup> CASATA - Real estate portal from the Republic of Moldova, *Peresecina*, available at <https://localitati.casata.md/index.php?action=viewlocalitate&id=6453>, [accessed in June 10, 2021].

<sup>3</sup> The official website of Peresecina City Hall, available at <http://peresecina.md/>, [accessed in June 10, 2021].

also about the gender of the population. We relied in this approach on the data from the last census, the one from 2014, according to which we established that in the locality there are 7430 inhabitants, of which men - 3 660, and women - 3 770, the situation being quite balanced 49.26% - men and 50.74% - women. In terms of nationalities, the chart below is the most relevant.

**Graph 2.** Situation of nationalities (2014 Census)



**Source:** Peresecina City Hall official website, Registrul de Evidență a persoanelor (Register of persons), available at <http://peresecina.md/>, [accessed April 12, 2021].

The ethnic structure of the population within the village is therefore as follows: 98.61% - Moldovans, 0.48% - Ukrainians, 0.69% - Russians, 0.03% - Gagauz, 0.04% - Bulgarians, 0.01% - Jews, 0.09% - Gypsies, 0.04% - others ethnicities.<sup>4</sup>

According to the data obtained from the City Hall and those taken from the Register of Persons in the village of Peresecina, the population has decreased considerably since 2001. This is also explained by the low number of births, for example in 2001 84 children were born, 2002 - 75 births were registered, 2004 - 75, 2007 - 84, and since 2008 the number of births did not exceed 80, 2008 - 71, 2009 - 56, 2010 - 54, 2018 - 46, 2019 - 49, 2020 - 50, and for 2021 the latest updated data show 17 births (July 2021 being included).<sup>5</sup>

All these data are an eloquent proof that the families, after formalizing their marriages in the village, obtain marriage certificates and choose to go abroad, where usually one of the spouses was already established. The births of children

<sup>4</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, *Census Data from 2004*, available at <https://statistica.gov.md/category.php?l=ro&idc=103>, [accessed in March 23, 2021].

<sup>5</sup> Peresecina City Hall official website, Registrul de Evidență a persoanelor (Register of persons), available at <http://peresecina.md/>, [accessed April 12, 2021].

take place abroad. This phenomenon of the emigration of the whole family is very alarming, if we take into account the fact that until 2001, only one member of the family lived in the locality. Its purpose was to support the family and once the financial situation improved, he returned home. An interview with the mayor and officials of the town hall confirmed the concern of mass emigration of young families, which in the long run has serious effects on the town, including aging population, increasingly serious economic effects and lack of “brain power” (Brain power).

If at the beginning of 2018 there were 8224 inhabitants, their number in 2021 is about 7000, according to the statistical data mentioned by the mayor, and the number of young people leaving after high school is increasing, this being explained by the fact that more and more many choose to go to the cities and then leave the country.

Another important aspect to mention in the context of the massive departures of the young population is felt in schools, for example in the Theoretical High School “Alexandru Donici” in the locality if in 2009 - 2012 there were over 1200 students in grades I-XII, being functional and complete with at least three high school classes, currently high schools X-XII no longer exist, and the number of students is 750, according to data confirmed by the high school principal, which means that after high school, students choose to go to high schools in the capital - Chişinău, and then abroad to study at college, leaving in the village a declining number of students.

For a better understanding of the cause-effect relationship, we set out to present the information obtained from interviewing young people in the locality, in addition to those who study abroad, whose history is similar to that of many students, young people who went to the search for a better future, abroad, for the generation born after 1990, being particularly specific to this<sup>6</sup>.

One of the 27-year-olds, who has been living in England for three years, said that except for homesickness, the longing for traditional food, family and friends, it has nothing to do with Moldova or the place where he was born and raised. childhood. The disappointment of the situation at home results from his statements, but also from the tone of voice and non-verbal language. In the Republic of Moldova he worked as a data analyst in the financial field. Arriving in London, he needed a year to improve his English, during which time he worked in the insurance field. However, his goal was constant – to recognize his studies and find a job according to them. According to his statements, the main cause of his decision to emigrate was the acts of corruption in which he was pushed and refused to participate, despite his generous salary<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Victor Moraru, *Overview of Current Migration in Moldova and Development Challenges and Opportunities*, Institutul de Cercetări Juridice, Politice și Sociologice al Academiei de Științe ale Moldovei, Chişinău, 2016, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> The young man received a higher monthly salary than the average salary per economy in the Republic of Moldova.



In this regard, the correlation between corruption and emigration can be highlighted, given that people do not want to stay in a country where the situation of giving and taking bribes is considered normal, especially in the case of young people with potential professional, who want to advance in their career, on their own. Getting out of this vicious circle of corruption, through the contribution of all citizens, is the best solution that the young man in question considered viable. Until then, however, the young man was pessimistic about returning home.

Another 22-year-old interviewee has been in Switzerland for about three years. The reason for emigration was the lack of economic stability in the country, irresponsible governance, the lack of opportunity to evolve professionally and the problems in the medical system that he personally faced. We therefore see, along with corruption, the reason for a sick society, in which the main pillars, both education and health, are in precarious conditions. The young interviewee suggested the need to increase investment in Moldova as an essential reason for keeping or bringing young people home.

According to data published in 2016 by the UN Population Fund, every third young person aged between 16 and 30 works in the informal sector of the economy, and over 16% went in search of a job,<sup>8</sup> as is the case of the third young man, aged 23, who is settled in Brasov, Romania, after several attempts to officially work at home, in Moldova, trying even in the locality to find a stable place for work. Disappointed by the salary offered by Moldovan employers, which did not exceed 300 USD, he decided to emigrate. He currently works for a Swedish company, where he is responsible for managing part of the production. The decision came after he also worked in Moldova as a black taxi driver, then as a courier for a pharmaceutical company, and at another point in his professional career he sold solar panels to a phantom company, which was not legally registered and could not be found in official sources, therefore all jobs were black, with no employment contract.

When asked if he would like to return home, the young man replied that he would return to the Republic of Moldova only for a ten-day vacation, ie for a very short period of time, having no good reason to return home, as family and friends they are all abroad. In Brasov, according to him, the young man has financial satisfaction, but also decent professional and personal evolution. At home, in the Republic of Moldova, he earns only enough to support himself, the care of tomorrow being almost everything.

In conclusion, the young people I talked to do not want to return home, finding no significant motivation in this regard. The Moldovan authorities are concerned about the effects of this crisis in the medium and long term – the loss of roots and full connection with the country of origin.

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<sup>8</sup> Data published in 2016 by the UN Population Fund, available at <https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/>, [accessed in May 12, 2021].

### ***Brain Drain Phenomenon***

The concept of *brain drain*, as it is perceived today, has its roots in Greek antiquity. An example is the Athenians' dissatisfaction with the exodus of enlightened minds to Alexandria. The term itself, however, was first used in a 1962 Royal Society of London report mentioning the exodus of scientists and specialists from Britain to the United States. Initially, the phenomenon was analysed only from an economic perspective, taking into account the differences between “muscle power” and “brain power”. With the clarification of the role of human capital in the economy, the concept of brain drain is analysed especially from a sociological perspective.<sup>9</sup>

Brain drain is one of the indicators of the World Economic Forum for estimating labour market efficiency. The Republic of Moldova has accumulated only two points, on a scale from 1 to 7 (where 1 means - highly qualified people who go abroad, looking for greater opportunities to capitalize on their skills, and 7 - country of origin offers excellent opportunities). The Republic of Moldova scored only 2 points, so the country's labour market is virtually inefficient in terms of capitalizing on the country's human potential, which determines young people, especially those qualified to leave Moldova.

The success of Moldovan emigrants in the host countries is of course conditioned by their level of education. Thus, Moldovan citizens with higher education are, more often, in more “prestigious” areas of activity, find it easier to work in the long run, are better paid and, respectively, are more socially protected.

Considering the study period a process that involves an important stage with development opportunities, but also constraints, in the continuation of our study we analysed the phenomenon - brain drain, in relation to migration for studies and prospects of return to the country of origin, both in terms of determining factors, as well as to form a clearer picture of the condition that could favour the option of returning to Moldova of local students studying at universities in Denmark (Aarhus University, IT University of Copenhagen, Academy of Business from Aarhus), France (Louis Pasteur University in Strasbourg) and the Netherlands (Erasmus University in Rotterdam and the University of Amsterdam).

In order to illustrate the complexity of the emigration phenomenon in order to study abroad, we used the method of qualitative analysis, thus conducting ten interviews with Moldovan students from Peresecina, studying at the three universities in Europe. The interviewed respondents are between 22-31 years old, and the duration of their stay abroad is from 6 months to 5 years.

The interviews were conducted on the basis of an interview guide focusing on four basic topics, which covers, in fact, two phases of migration for studies, the first being that of studying abroad and the decision to leave Moldova, as well as arriving in France, The Netherlands and Denmark respectively: initial perception

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<sup>9</sup> Simona Stănică, “Apariția și evoluția fenomenului *Brain Drain*” [The emergence and development of the *Brain Drain* phenomenon], available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/25939869.pdf>, [accessed in May 12, 2021].

and adaptation period. Their fields of activity are economics, sociology, medicine, law, IT, European studies and international business.

Moreover, we also emphasized their constraints and the possibilities to grow and evolve personally and professionally during the years of studies, as well as the option to return to the Republic of Moldova. We also considered identifying the reasons for the decision to study abroad, as well as the conditions that favour the decision to emigrate for study abroad of young Moldovans. The elements that allow a more detailed understanding of this phenomenon are constituted by: the choice of the study discipline and what was its basis, the perception of the value of the diploma obtained abroad, the problems in the university environment, the difficulties encountered and the professional aspirations.

Therefore, the choice of study programs and dissatisfaction with the curriculum and the level of education in the country are other basic elements that we followed closely in the interviews. For example, one of the interviewees, who has been interested in sociological research since high school and is dissatisfied with the study program on this discipline at the State University of Moldova after a year of bachelor's degree, was motivated to look for different opportunities to go abroad for to receive a much more serious training in the field of sociology. In this case, it can be stated that the choice of studies abroad is, first of all, a rational choice, which is based on the interest in a certain discipline or study program and on the aspiration for a better social and professional inclusion. Another nuanced element is the lack of confidence of young people targeted by Moldovan diplomas and the belief that studies and diplomas obtained abroad could provide access to prestigious and economically better paid jobs, as well as a different social status than it can be obtained at home, with the same graduation diploma. Therefore, another element on which the decision to study abroad of these students is based is on the idea of the relevance of the diploma, its recognition and the success associated with studying abroad. For some respondents, the idea of studying abroad is related to an ideal from adolescence, to know and study in a Western country or from the desire to gain a different experience than in the country and thus to know the education system. European. The choice of France, for example, as the destination country, is explained in some of these cases by the knowledge of the French language. This is an element that both promotes obtaining a scholarship in France and ensures a good university integration in this country. Many people studying in France, as well as four of the respondents to this analysis, are former students of foreign language faculties in Moldova, French being the basic language or students from French-speaking branches of educational institutions in Moldova, such as would be the Network of the French Alliance in the Republic of Moldova<sup>10</sup>.

These students either choose to continue their studies started in Moldova, or choose another specialization in order to better professional integration, which is an advantage for them in obtaining the certificate of language proficiency. For some of the respondents, France, the Netherlands and Denmark became the

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<sup>10</sup> See the official site of the L'Alliance Française Moldavie, available at <https://www.alf.fr/md/ro/>, [accessed in May 17, 2021].

destination for studies following internships and research, professional or linguistic, which gave them the chance to get to know this country, thus being able to get acquainted with the system. French, Danish and Dutch education<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, we found that the presence of some is not so well-founded, insofar as they did not choose on their own, but rather were influenced by certain factors, namely: having close people in the Netherlands, Denmark. and France (friend, sister, aunt, etc.), which is also a “starting point”, especially when the decision is made to go alone to a completely unknown country, for a longer period. long time.

### **What made the young people leave?**

First of all corruption, poor governance, then the theft of the billion, which took place in 2014, money missing from the banking system, but representing the equal amount of 12% of the country's GDP, these were the answers noted, young people being very sceptical on the changes in the near future, but on the other hand they are optimistic about the new president and are interested, involved in everything that is going to happen in the early parliamentary elections<sup>12</sup>. In short, this helps us to understand that young people, although they are gone, are already in other environments, they return home less and less, however, they show interest in the political situation in the country, most likely born of hope.

The respondents' speech reflects a feeling of amazement and enthusiasm at the first contact with the reality abroad. Their first impressions are caused by technological advances, socio-cultural and economic advantages associated with these advances, living conditions and the quality of higher education, compared to those in the Republic of Moldova. Most of the interviewees are impressed primarily by the freedom of expression of foreign citizens, the kindness and high quality of service in these countries, noting that their mentality is completely different from that of Moldovans, by their way of life, the opportunities they have or simply put, the quality of life. Most respondents initially face several difficulties, including the language barrier, as French spoken in France, especially in informal settings, differs greatly from French learned at school or compared to foreign language courses, as well as French. It is also in the case of Dutch and Danish, unlike French, in the case of both, students have the opportunity to choose the full-time program in English.

We were also interested in looking at the degree of integration of respondents in academia and what is the impact of years of study on their personality, finally finding out that everyone is satisfied with the decision and want to work in the country where they studied, due it is very easy to get involved in new social groups.

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<sup>11</sup> Official Erasmus University Rotterdam website, available at <https://www.eur.nl/over-de-eur/beleid-en-reglementen>, [accessed in June 16, 2021].

<sup>12</sup> Ivana Kottasova, “How to Steal \$1 Billion in Three Days”, in *CNN Business*, on-line version, May 7, 2015, available at <https://money.cnn.com/2015/05/07/news/economy/moldova-stolen-billion>, [accessed on April 25, 2021].

### **Positive aspects identified in the practical analysis**

The students' perception of the French, Dutch and Danish education system highlights many positive aspects, if we compare them, then - we have identified more of the positive ones, than the negative ones. One of the positive aspects of the French educational system, highlighted by the interviewees, related to the student-teacher relationship, which is perceived as a relationship based on peer attitude, mutual respect, respect for the opinion or solution proposed by student, which also contributes a lot to the faster integration of Moldovan students.

Another positive element evoked by Moldovan students is the tendency of the education system to combine theory and practice, as well as the possibility for students to independently organize their study process and manage it so that they can succeed and learn, but also to have free time. This trend is manifested both by organizing conferences with specialists from outside the university, employees of various companies or public institutions, and by the obligation to complete internships during undergraduate studies, which gives students the opportunity to know in detail the offers on labour market and gain experience in the field<sup>13</sup>.

Regarding the evaluation system, the respondents notice a higher objectivity of the French system compared to the Moldovan one, noting in most of the respondents and the easy integration of Moldovan students studying abroad, due to this advantage.

To complete the statements, we can add that the study period for most respondents is not only a useful opportunity to gain knowledge, but also an opportunity to develop new skills in a new environment, develop self-confidence and assimilate certain European values, learning how to manage crisis situations, developing the ability not to give up, an important step at the beginning of a professional career especially. For some interviewees, “maturity” means responsibility for decisions made, independence, decision-making power, perseverance, freedom of thought, tolerance, so we can deduce a good emotional preparation of students, in addition to academia. It is noteworthy that none of the interviewees felt marginalized or intimidated by the fact that they come from the Republic of Moldova – such a small and poor state. On the contrary, it is a source of pride for them and a source of curiosity and wonder on the part of strangers.

If we were to refer to the challenges of young people who have emigrated for educational purposes, then we can say with certainty that the problem of financial resources is the most common for most respondents. Financial difficulties are encountered both by people who study on their own and by those who benefit from scholarships abroad. For those who do not have a scholarship, looking for a job and practicing a certain economic activity is a first solution for further studies.

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<sup>13</sup> Official website of the “Louis Pasteur” University of Strasbourg, available at <https://www.unistra.fr/recherche/colloques-et-manifestations>, [accessed on May 12, 2021].

These positions are accessible either through certain recommendations or through announcements from Universities or Student Centres<sup>14</sup>.

It also highlights joint research projects related to the development of social protection systems and new educational standards in academia, projects where they can become paid interns, representing a new source of income<sup>15</sup>.

### **Would young people from the Republic of Moldova return home in the future?**

Moldova is visited in response, generally once every 1-2 years. This is due to this lack of sufficient financial resources to visit several, but also to situations beyond their control, as is the case of the current pandemic situation. There are also young people who, due to the pandemic and the online study, have decided to return home temporarily. The cost of flights Paris, Copenhagen, or Amsterdam – Chişinău, are usually excessively high and there is no discount for students. In addition, we noticed that during the visits to Moldova, most of the answers experience a shock caused by negative perception of the socio-economic situation in Moldova compared to the perception of realities abroad, therefore, most respondents are pessimistic about achieving a positive change in the short and medium term in Moldova. Over the years, career – far from Moldova. Similarly, we found that most respondents show great uncertainty regarding their employment on the Moldovan labour market, the interviewees repeatedly mentioning the small number of vacancies, very low wages, instability and lack of opportunity for professional advancement in Moldova. Moldova, and often the option of not returning to the country is actually explained by a negative experience lived in Moldova before leaving<sup>16</sup>.

For these respondents, emigration is the only alternative to the difficulties of integration in Moldova, and the uncertainty of the opportunity to pursue a professional career in Moldova is often expressed by the desire or hope that the government will work for the benefit of citizens. In addition to the advantage of the acquired knowledge, the respondents also ask about the interest that the Moldovan state has towards the students who went to study abroad. The answer was largely that governments do not make enough effort to motivate young people to return home. In other words, the possible difficulties of professional integration in France would be a factor that would favour the return to Moldova of some of the departed students. These difficulties relate to foreign status, to the competition that exists in Denmark, France and the Netherlands.

Therefore, the option to return depends both on the perception that the experience and training received abroad would be more useful for Moldova, and on a certain optimism regarding obtaining a job in the country of origin. At the same

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<sup>14</sup> Official website of Aarhus University, available at <https://jobbank.au.dk/>, [accessed in May 18, 2021].

<sup>15</sup> William W. Brickman, *Denmark's Educational System and Problems*, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1967, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> Victor Moraru, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

time, this intention is also influenced by the negative attitude towards the country of training regarding the conditions of access to jobs, professional promotions and social integration<sup>17</sup>. Through this case study, partly part of the bachelor's thesis, we cannot formulate certain generalized conclusions regarding the prospects of Moldovan students returning to Moldova studying abroad, but this research provides specific perceptions that influence either the option to emigrate abroad, or the return to Moldova of some of the young Moldovans, which allows a deeper understanding of the subject and the problem itself.

In other words, a set of truly complex factors conditions, on the one hand, the decision of young people to go abroad to study abroad, the choice of studies not only allowing them to gain knowledge, but also an opportunity to gain personal maturity. to discover other ways of managing social relations, to acquire new educational practices, new life skills and behavioural changes<sup>18</sup>.

At the same time, it is a period in which those who left are experiencing uprooting from the social environment in Moldova. Precisely for these reasons, the option to return to the country of origin is not only related to professional difficulties, but also to attitudes and mentalities formed, as well as to a general conduct formed during the years of study, through interaction with people from different backgrounds. Therefore, the option not to return to the country of origin is influenced, on the one hand, by the positive perception and valorisation of the country of training and, on the other hand, by the negative perception of the social and economic situation, as well as the pessimism about possible positive change in Moldova - in at least five years. It is also essential to reiterate that a good social and professional integration in the new academic, cultural, social environment - significantly favors the decision to stay abroad.

Thus, this applied case study shows that the migration for studies of young people from the Republic of Moldova and the brain drain phenomenon is due not only to global factors but also to perceptions involving objective and subjective elements regarding certain constraints and educational, economic and social difficulties. and certain individual aspirations for gradual training and professional careers. The young Moldovans interviewed who are working or studying abroad mentioned that in Moldova, with the income they had, they could not provide for their daily needs, but in the country where they are currently, even if they face certain problems, such as: high cost of rent, language barriers, overtime, etc., they can enjoy, instead, a decent life that they could not afford working, even in two places work in Moldova. It is relevant to know these stories when we refer to the phenomenon of migration, because this is the only way we can understand, without judging the bigger houses, too expensive cars, potentially gone young people and

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<sup>17</sup> OECD, *A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement*, available at <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver>, [accessed on June 15, 2021].

<sup>18</sup> Petra Stanat, Gayle Christensen, *Where Immigrant Students Succeed - A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement in PISA 2003*, OECD Publishing, 2006, available at [https://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/ew/bf/bf\\_veranstaltungen/ss06/HS\\_Bildungssoziologie/9806021E.pdf](https://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/ew/bf/bf_veranstaltungen/ss06/HS_Bildungssoziologie/9806021E.pdf), [accessed in June 15, 2021], p. 118.

parents who left their children alone at home, who left to be able to raise and maintain them.

In this order of ideas, we can conclude that the return to the country is conditioned by the following factors, identified in the study: ensuring decent wages, improving infrastructure, increasing the level of culture and education of the population, restoring hope, confidence for a better life at home, and the main benefits of labour migration are those related primarily to income. At the same time, the research results show that the existence of a mismatch in practical skills, especially in the Moldovan labour market, especially for highly skilled workers, prevents young people from getting employed in the country. Also, the practical part of the paper clearly demonstrates that students prefer to stay in the country and develop a career, rather than go abroad, but are forced to resort to migration due to limited and prospective job offers. Republic of Moldova. Abroad, they are involved, for the most part, in activities for which they are overqualified, but some of them accept the waste of their own accumulated intellectual capital, in favour of financial stability and well-being.

### **Identified solutions**

Concluding the given analysis, we can mention that the essential priority is to raise the level of economic and legal culture of the workers of the economic agents and the population of Orhei, as it was a target group, but also of the entire Republic. We consider it useful to set up a career planning centre, a vocational training centre for the unemployed in higher education institutions, with the organization of seminars and courses, the aim of which is to focus on stimulating the spirit of private initiative, small business and creating new jobs and concluding collaboration agreements with various EU countries to make it possible to employ as many people as possible return to the country to invest their savings in a safe environment, or to offer the population jobs and wages that ensure at least a living wage to reduce, to some extent, the number of people willing to go abroad to work, this would be a first step towards motivating young people or people in general to return - home, to invest, to develop and to contribute to economic growth of the country.

Although the state wants to keep them at home, Moldovans prefer to create a future abroad, where wages are higher and living conditions clearly higher. One third of the able-bodied population in the Republic of Moldova does not want to work at home, considering that here the salaries are low and the prospect of professional growth is directly proportional. According to the NBS / National Bureau of Statistics, 31.5% of the total number of inactive people aged 15 and over work or plan to go to work in the labour market in other countries. On the other hand, we can also identify opportunities regarding the migration phenomenon in Rep. Moldova. Since 2015, UNDP Moldova / United Nations Development Program in Moldova, with the support of Switzerland, has made efforts to change the perspective on migration. Instead of considering it a loss of human capital, we can also see it as an opportunity for development, especially in rural areas.



The UN program in Moldova has managed to work on remittances from migrants from private consumption, to projects to improve local services, with the involvement of migrants in local development processes through Native Associations. About one-fifth of the communities in the Republic of Moldova are supported by migrants through remittances. They support development initiatives such as: street lighting, pedestrian infrastructure and road maintenance. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank estimates a 20% decline in remittances in low- and middle-income countries, and about 28% in European and CIS countries. This will affect the economy of the Republic of Moldova, so it is relevant to focus on capitalizing on the potential of migration for the development of the country. This involves working with local communities to support them on the path to economic recovery by directing diaspora support and helping migrants to use their skills and knowledge productively here on the Moldovan labour market.

Although UNFPA / UN Population Fund in the Republic of Moldova works with the Government of Chisinau, together with the academic community and civil society to develop public policies on population and development, which are evidence-based and people-centred, we believe that, as long as the Republic of Moldova does not solve its internal socio-economic problems and does not fight insistently against corruption, the citizens of this country will continue to go where their lives are assured. We consider it relevant to reiterate that migration is not a threat to the state, this process on the contrary allows Moldovans to make savings, which they can spend or invest in the country, to gain experience in various fields, a threat representing rather migration in the country, one direction, final, irreversible, a phenomenon more and more common. The phenomenon of migration is a natural one, what seems useful is for the rulers to make sure that people do not go abroad forever.

Political instability and lack of consistency in forming a vision has, unfortunately, repercussions in attracting investment, but on the other hand I strongly believe and support that a new generation is needed in the Republic of Moldova, with a new mentality, with a new vision, and if the state stagnates in providing opportunities to grow and develop professionally, we can create them ourselves. Not in vain did Mahatma Gandhi say, “be the change you want to see in the world”. Thus, among the identified solutions are: providing development opportunities for young people, support for their employment by stimulating employers and young people, diversification and expansion of entrepreneurial programs for young people, including a period of training and mentoring, civic education.

Another aspect related to this process is that the citizens of the Republic of Moldova must be aware that in order to benefit from the pension they must contribute to the social protection system. Informal work, the partial salary paid in the envelope, perceived as a momentary benefit, represents a great disadvantage in

the long and medium term<sup>19</sup>. In fact, adequate and thorough information is one of the main goals in preparing to go to work abroad. People who are less informed are also the most vulnerable, and here the target groups would be the potential migrants. To begin with, we believe that a relevant solution would be for diplomas to be recognized abroad, because an internationally recognized diploma brings more employment opportunities.

Young people will be able to open a business or work in partnership with specialists from other countries. Another solution would be for the state to provide students with larger scholarships. Currently, Moldovan students receive the smallest scholarships compared to young people in nearby countries. In our country there are three types of scholarships: from 500 to 650 Moldovan lei. Young people who pay a tuition fee can be exempted from paying or receiving a scholarship if they have achieved great success in school. By comparison, in Romania students receive almost double state allowances, and in Russia scholarships are offered even more than ten times higher.

To achieve all this, it is necessary, first of all, to promote in the coming years a policy which would include accelerating efforts to promote first contact with working life among young people and their participation in the labour market: the aim should be to whether, a few months after graduation, young people are presented with a good quality job offer, the option to continue their studies, or an internship, supporting young people's initiatives in all areas of activity to stimulate economic growth and sustainable development of society Moldovans, being also another priority.

### **Conclusions**

Faced with economic instability, low incomes and the rapid rise in unemployment that accompanied the fall of the Soviet Union, people began to emigrate from Moldova on a large scale in the first half of the 1990s. With the first waves of emigration, the brain drain phenomenon became more and more apparent, a phenomenon that continues to this day. If at the beginning of 1994, the number of students at the three levels of vocational and technical education was approximately equal, the demand for secondary education decreasing dramatically, higher education becoming disadvantageous, against the background of the economic collapse of that period. Over the last 20 years, emigration has seen a massive increase in young people's interest in higher education, which has become more accessible due to the improved financial situation of departed families, free movement, signing of international agreements between universities and the multitude of student opportunities.

The phenomenon of emigration is not new and does not happen only in the former Soviet member states, as is the case of the Republic of Moldova. The thing that is important to reflect on is that the phenomenon itself is a multilateral one and

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<sup>19</sup> UNDP Moldova, official page of the project “Migration and Local Development”, available at [https://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/projects/MIDL\\_Project\\_2.html](https://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/projects/MIDL_Project_2.html), [accessed in June 15, 2021].

there is a direct link between emigration and opportunities for young people, corruption, unemployment, irregularities in education and health. The number of citizens who remain abroad after completing higher education is unfortunately growing. More and more Moldovan citizens are choosing to study abroad, obtain internationally recognized diplomas and create the conditions to settle there, often making efforts in the field of integration into the community that adopted them. The number of cases of family reunification in host countries is also constantly increasing, which means that the birth rate in the Republic of Moldova will decrease more and more in the future.

Migration and education are interconnected processes, with a major effect on society. Gaps in the education system can create favourable conditions for young people to emigrate, education being a key factor in the field of modern emigration, whether we speak at the national level, in the case of the Republic of Moldova or internationally. We are witnessing a continuous process of increasing the number of emigrants, especially among people with higher education, this decision being a convenient alternative. On the other hand, going abroad was greatly facilitated by factors and opportunities, such as: social networks, international treaties on education, to which the Republic of Moldova has acceded, being a beneficiary, academic and student exchange programs, and multiple citizenship held by many graduates. In other words, people can emigrate because they have managed to gain knowledge that can be applied to foreign labour markets or because they want to continue their studies and gain skills abroad to progress and develop their professional skills.

On the other hand, it should be mentioned here that the Moldovan diaspora has created communities where the departed Moldovans promote the cultural heritage, traditions and gastronomy, this representing a continuity of keeping the specifics of the country for those who decided to stay away from home. secondly, Moldova - abroad, and well-established networks of Moldovan emigrants in the host countries do nothing but facilitate the decision to migrate and seek employment abroad for many other citizens.

As for regional development, things are still moving quite hard. We cannot know what the future challenges will be in this regard, it is certain that following the research we can conclude that Maia Sandu, through her actions from the beginning of her term, gave hope first of all to the young people who left. Perhaps it would be ideal for the current policies of the Republic to consider keeping the remaining young people at home, and then to create real and strong opportunities and motivations for the young people who have left. After all, after all, Simion Mehedinți was right, the power of nations increases and decreases, just as their population increases and decreases.

# THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION IN UKRAINE: EAST OR WEST?

Zsófia SZANISZLÓ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** *The relationship between the European Union and the countries of the Eastern Partnership, the results and the impact of cooperation are of high relevance in the current geopolitical discussions. The countries of the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) include those countries that are although under Russian influence (to a certain extent) but are also open towards the European Union. The EU has clearly defined goals with these eastern countries where north sides benefit from making cooperation stronger. The paper describes the geopolitical situation of Ukraine through its historical vicissitudes and recent events, covering both the great power interests and the natural basis of it all.*

**Keywords:** *Ukraine, Russia, European Union, geopolitics, geography*

## **Introduction**

The paper discusses the relationship between the European Union and the countries of the Eastern Partnership, the results and the impact of cooperation. The countries of the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) include those countries that are although under Russian influence (to a certain extent) but are also open towards the European Union. The aim of the EU's neighbourhood policy with these eastern countries is to establish "the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration"<sup>2</sup>. The paper describes the geopolitical situation of Ukraine through its historical vicissitudes and recent events, covering both the great power interests and the natural basis of it all.

The natural image and endowments of a country are important, as they can be used by the social and economic spheres to draw conclusions related to various issues and their impacts.

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission, *Features of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/international-economic-relations/enlargement-and-neighbouring-countries/neighbouring-countries-eu/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/international-economic-relations/enlargement-and-neighbouring-countries/neighbouring-countries-eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en), [accessed in september 2021].

Why is Ukraine interesting in this respect? What are the natural assets of this country that could be of interest from the aspect of other countries? Is there a potential in Ukraine? If yes, what kind of potential is that?

First of all, it is a large country (over 603 000 km<sup>2</sup>), being the second in Europe behind Russia, then followed by Spain and France, and the third largest with respect to the CIS countries (Kazakhstan is ahead). It is located in the western part of Eurasia and the eastern part of Europe, with the longest land borders with Russia (1955 km), Belarus (1 084 km) and Moldova (939 km), and among the EU Member States, Romania (608 km), Poland (542 km), Hungary (135 km) and Slovakia (98 km)<sup>3</sup>. In total, it shares borders with seven countries for a total length of some 4663 km. Ukraine's topography is mainly defined by the Eastern European Plain, in the southern part of which 95% of its territory is located, most of it is lowland and the rest is highland. More than half of these lowland areas have black soils (chernozem), the most fertile soil type, covering more than 6 million hectares in Ukraine. The Eastern Carpathians are the highest point in Ukraine, and the Crimea is one of the highest mountain ranges (Crimea is currently a disputed territory, more on that later). Mineral resources are important for the economy and industry, with more than 200 types of them being mined in Ukraine, in 8,000 quarries. These represent only the known sites or quarries, but further exploration and advanced technology could open up even more opportunities for mineral exploration. Geographically, they are located in the north-western, central and south-eastern part of Ukraine, but in the future, the oil and gas that can be extracted from the Black Sea and Azov Sea could become even more important. Important coal basins (in addition to the Lviv-Voliny coal basin) are the Dnieper-Donets depression and the north-western part of the Donets Basin, which is also a source of oil and gas<sup>4</sup>.

### **The historical roots of geopolitical influence**

Ukraine's location and history as a buffer state on the border between Europe and Asia have greatly influenced the geopolitical situation of the country and continue to do so today. Throughout Ukrainian history, the interests of different powers have been present and have influenced the life of the country. The Kievan Rus was a unified Eastern Slavic polity, which by the 1340s had become part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. From the late 1560s, the Ukrainian territories came under Polish rule, which was replaced by Russian influence from 1654 onwards, with Ukraine not being seen as a fully sovereign and equal state. The territories west of the Dnieper River were returned to the Polish-Lithuanian

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<sup>3</sup> T. Izsák, *Ukrajna természeti földrajza* [Physical geography of Ukraine], Rákóczi-füzetek XXVII., PoliPrint, Ujgorod, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

Commonwealth in 1667, when the river divided the Ukrainian territories not only geographically but also regionally<sup>5</sup>.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, eastern Ukraine was integrated into the Russian Empire, and in the western areas the Polish nobility kept the Ukrainian peasants dependent. The noble ranks of the Ukrainian elite were recognised by Catherine II and treated as Russian imperial ranks, thus reinforcing the Russian imperial unity and preventing the emergence of a strong national movement. Petro Doroshenko's attempt to free western Ukraine from the hands of the two powers with Tatar-Turkish help found itself in the middle of a three-power wheel of action by the second half of the seventeenth century. Under the Treaty of Karlovy Vary of 1699, the territory of western Ukraine was returned to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In the eighteenth century, the Ukrainian territories came under new powers: 20% (Galicia) to the Habsburg Monarchy and 80% to the Russian Empire. Until the end of the century, the Turkish-ruled southern Ukraine (including the Crimea) was settled by Russians. Under Maria Theresa and Joseph II, reforms improved living conditions and created a sense of dynastic loyalty among Ukrainians.

During the First World War, the inhabitants of the territories under the two great powers often had to fight against each other, and the break-up of the two empires provided an opportunity to unite the two territories. The Ukrainians in Galicia had sought autonomy in 1914, but after the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917, they created the Ukrainian People's Republic on a federal basis, belonging to Russia. In 1918, a German-Austrian army marched into Kiev, where Ukraine's richest landowner was appointed to unify the Ukrainian territories, but after the collapse of the Western Front, these plans were also thwarted. In January 1919, the unification of the "Two Ukraines" was announced, but Eastern Galicia was also claimed by the Poles, and at the end of the year, the Soviet forces occupied Kiev, and the following year Odessa, and in 1921 the Soviets and the Poles divided Ukraine between them in the Peace of Riga. Ukrainians then lived in four states: the Soviet Union - the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic - Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The Stalinist collectivisation led to one of the most serious periods in Ukrainian history: under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, Germany ceded the western Ukrainian territories to the Soviet Union, and after Poland was partitioned, the Soviet army invaded the western Ukrainian territories.

During the Second World War, the Ukrainian territories became a theatre of war, the hope of independence was revived, they were caught between two fires, and the Germans were driven out of eastern Ukraine. After 1945, the Ukrainian territories were united, but as part of the Soviet Union, with limited sovereignty.

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<sup>5</sup> Varga Beáta, "Két Ukrajna? – Ukrajna megosztottságának történeti gyökerei", [Two Ukraines? – Historical roots of the division of Ukraine], in *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, vol. X, no.1/2017, p. 155-167.

Ukrainians became the largest ethnic group, and their territory was dominated by the Russians and their interests<sup>6</sup>.

Ukraine's borders were drawn by the decisions of the Great Powers, and in 1954 it was given the Russian-majority Crimea, which had only symbolic significance in the Soviet period. It is an important exit to the warm seas, a strategic point for controlling the Black Sea, Asia Minor, the Eastern Balkans and the Bosphorus<sup>7</sup>.

The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-91 brought about a radical change in international relations, the consequence of which was the creation of geopolitical vacuum zones on the Eurasian periphery, for which the struggle between regional and major powers was initiated. From a geostrategic point of view, the independence of Ukraine was a problem for Russia for several reasons<sup>8</sup>:

- Russian minority in a population of 52 million (17% Russians in 1991);
- Eastern industrial potential;
- Ukraine's geographical links with the former Soviet sphere of interest in Central and Eastern Europe;
- Russia's retrenchment in the Black Sea region (Sevastopol Soviet naval base).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow wanted to keep Ukraine in the Commonwealth of Independent States to maintain close economic ties<sup>9</sup>. In the independent Ukraine, the territorial structure was transformed, and economic interest groups led by so-called oligarchs emerged, which established their influence in the economic and political spheres through privatisation. This configuration can be observed in the Donetsk Basin, Kiev and Dnipropetrovsk: they are not interested in a strong central power, but rather in regional local autonomy<sup>10</sup>. In the 2000s, they shifted their focus from the CIS to the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU), which was created as a counter-pole to the European Union<sup>11</sup>.

Due to geographical, historical and ethnic divisions, the western part of the country supported Yushchenko in the December 2004 elections, while pro-Russian

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, "A társadalmi tagoltság és a régiók eredete, arculata Ukrajnában" [The origin and image of social fragmentation and regions in Ukraine], in *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Földrajztudományi Kutatóintézetének folyóirata. Földrajzi Értesítő*, vol. 55, no. 3–4/2006, p. 375–391.

<sup>8</sup> Lechner Zoltán, "A Krími válság geopolitikai és geoökonómiai előzményei", [Geopolitical and geoeconomic antecedents of the Crimean crisis], in *Politikatudományi és Nemzetközi Tanulmányok Tanszék, Pécsi Tudományegyetem. Pólusok folyóirat*, vol. I, no. 1/2020, p. 83-106.

<sup>9</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, "Felosztás vagy felemelkedés? Ukrajna, Európa nagy tortája". [Division or ascension? Ukraine: the "large cake of Europe"], in *Közgazdaság- és Regionális Tudományi Kutatóközpont, Regionális Kutatások Intézete. Tér és Társadalom*, vol. 32, no. 4/2018, p. 54-83.

<sup>11</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, *op. cit.*, 2006.

Yanukovych was supported by more than half of the population in southern and eastern Ukraine, and 90% in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk provinces<sup>12</sup>. In 2004, the Orange Revolution in Kiev and the accession of the Baltic states to NATO upset the balance in the post-Soviet space<sup>13</sup>.

The majority of the Ukrainian population did not support NATO membership until 2014, in 2010 the Yanukovych presidency committed itself to neutrality, was open to both sides (both the EU and the EaEU), but in 2013 it backed away from signing an association agreement with the EU<sup>14</sup>. The negotiations with the EU had been much anticipated by economic experts, and after the withdrawal, Yanukovych fled to Russia, and political chaos ensued at the end of 2013<sup>15</sup>. This led to a series of protests, first in Kiev and then in the country's major cities, and then to a revolution. Moscow interpreted these events as a coup and attacked Crimea, to the surprise of the West, but a referendum in March 2014 resulted in Russia annexing Crimea, losing Ukraine to the EaEU project. The new Kiev leadership moved towards the EU, but the EU had no strategy for Ukraine<sup>16</sup>.

### **Elements directly affecting geopolitical significance in Ukraine**

Analysing the physical geographical conditions of Ukraine, we can see that, besides its large size, it also harbours a variety of economic resources in addition to its location. It must now maintain the independence it gained in 1991, against the adversities of history and the past, while its largest neighbour, Russia, seeks to keep it in its sphere of interest and economically dependent.

How do the major power's view Ukraine? Why is this territory so important and for whom? What kinds of resources does it have? The possible answers to these questions are grouped into different themes, most of which have geopolitical relevance.

1. Labour force, population. Ukraine's population is declining, partly as a result of natural decrease and partly due to emigration, which has been further exacerbated by war conflicts. In addition, the Visegrad countries have been absorbing mobile labour from the border areas, which, in addition to historical and geographical factors, is also due to economic reasons, with legal benefits to help war refugees to work. Inland areas, rural areas, distance from the border and ageing populations make them less of a labour pool<sup>17</sup>. Ukraine had a population of 52 million in 1991, of

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<sup>12</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, *op. cit.*, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, *op. cit.*, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>15</sup> A. Bendarzszevszkij, "Külföldi befektetések Belaruszban és Ukrajnában" [Foreign investments in Belarus and Ukraine], in *Eurázsia a 21. században – A tőkebefektetések tükrében* [Eurasia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – In the light of capital investments], edited by Szunomár Ágnes, Világgazdasági Intézet, Budapest, 2015, p. 54-77.

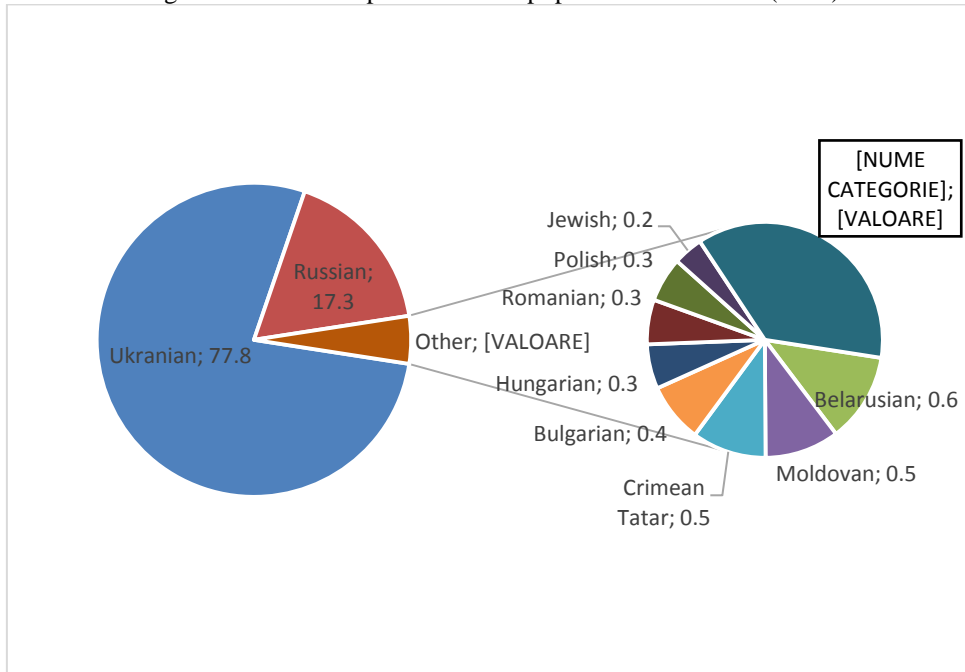
<sup>16</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, *op. cit.*, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem.*



which 17% was Russian (Figure 1), a minority of Russian nationality that Russia is reluctant to give up<sup>18</sup>.

Figure 1. Ethnic composition of the population in Ukraine (1991)



**Source:** U.S. Government, *The World Factbook. Ukraine*, available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/#people-and-society>. [accessed in August 2021]

2. Soil - A country with huge agricultural potential, 86% of its territory is arable land, 32 million hectares of 52 million hectares are arable (one third of the EU's total arable land), but these are under-utilised land reserves as the sale of agricultural land is prohibited. Releasing restrictions is on the agenda, and would be a condition for an IMF loan. In 2016, a quarter of land was in state hands, while a quarter was privatised to smallholders, mainly elderly people who rent out land to grow cereals and oilseeds. The number of foreign tenants is also high, with a dual purpose<sup>19</sup>:
  - 1) they produce biodiesel feedstock (mainly EU countries, including Germany);
  - 2) access to land for future pre-emption rights (mainly China - 5% of land leased - USA, Canada, Saudi Arabia). The Chinese are mainly maize producers, making Ukraine the largest exporter of maize to China.

<sup>18</sup> Lechner Zoltán, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Dávid Karácsonyi, *op. cit.*, 2006.

3. Industry. Since 2014, Russia has used Ukrainian gas imports as a tool for political pressure. The shale gas fields discovered in the 2010s have little role to play in reducing import dependence, with technology, environmental concerns and fighting in eastern Ukraine hindering the possibility of extraction. Heavy industry has been concentrated in the strife-torn eastern Ukraine, with some companies in areas essentially controlled from Moscow having been taken from their former owners, closed down or abandoned. Metallurgy and machinery production in the breakaway territories almost stopped. The prospects for the German engineering industry in particular could be in western Ukraine, where they could build up an assembly base on cheap, skilled and experienced labour. If they succeed in linking up with the cross-border western production chains, it could be a loss for the Visegrad countries, but as long as the road network is inadequate and corruption and bureaucracy are rife, this prospect seems remote<sup>20</sup>.
4. NATO enlargement issue. At a NATO summit in 2008, the prospect of Georgia and Ukraine joining the organisation was raised. Russia expressed its displeasure by intervening militarily, warning that it would not accept the accession of post-Soviet states in Moscow's sphere of interest. NATO was created during the Cold War to counter the Soviet threat. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, its objectives had to be redefined: the new direction was to defend and deliver democracy, thus expanding the alliance system. Russia, in turn, interprets this as a threat as countries closer and closer to its borders join, and this does not bode well for West-Russian relations. This is also reflected in his comments after the annexation of Crimea, which is geopolitically important: if Ukraine were a member of NATO and Crimea were part of Ukraine, Russia would be forced out of the Black Sea region and out of its control<sup>21</sup>.
5. European Union. The EU has also been steadily extending its borders to the east and south, and since the 2004 eastern enlargement has been building relations with the post-Soviet countries, establishing a neighbourhood policy and, in 2009, a more structured system, the Eastern Partnership, which aims to strengthen economic, political and legal relations and promote democratisation. (Lechner, 2020) In addition to political harmonisation, there is also significant financial support and loans to make these countries more attractive to potential foreign investors, so it is an investment in the future, as companies in the donor countries benefit

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> Lechner Zoltán, *op. cit.*

from the orders<sup>22</sup>. However, Russia interpreted this move as a move against it, calling the process of turning the EU into its own sphere of interest. In response, it created its own economic integration: the Eurasian Customs Union (2010), the Common Economic Space (2012), the Eurasian Economic Union (2015)<sup>23</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Ukraine's situation and the course of its development have historically served the interests of the Great Powers. Its geographical location, on the border between Europe and Asia, has not been a link between the two continents, but rather a buffer zone. It was/is less able to exploit its natural resources to the extent possible, and these factors were also more suited to serving the various powers than to increasing its own strength.

Looking at Ukraine from several aspects, it is clear that it is not in an easy position in the twenty-first century. Russia views Ukraine from a geostrategic point of view and, as we have seen in recent years, is ready to impose its will with arms, while the West, because of its geographical proximity, has been able to respond to this intervention by the European Union, mainly through economic sanctions, but without any real military assistance. Ukraine is also seeing the emergence of a new Great Power, China, which is moving ever closer to Europe especially through land leases. The European Union also has political and economic objectives with Ukraine, but as long as Ukraine's domestic politics remains divided, there is no possibility of achieving major results, and tensions within the European Union could have repercussions for activities outside the Union.

All in all, we can see that Ukraine's situation today is still very much influenced by geopolitical changes, movements and interests in the world.

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<sup>22</sup> K. Grüber, T. Vaszari, “A keleti partnerség helyzete, avagy dilemmák az EU és Oroszország közötti geopolitikai és geogazdasági térben” [The situation of the Eastern Partnership, or dilemmas in the geopolitical and geoeconomics space between the EU and Russia], in *Külügyi Szemle*, Külügyi és Külgazdasági Intézet, no. Winter/2018, p. 3-26.

<sup>23</sup> Lechner Zoltán, *op. cit.*

Secțiunea II –

**DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN UNION'S  
EASTERN BORDER REGIONS**

Gabriela Goudenhoofd – *Towards more Social Legitimacy in the European Union: Addressing Inequalities at the Eastern Border of the EU*

Polgar Istvan – *Intercultural Dialogue and Corporate Identity. Tools for Promoting Cross-Border Employment in the Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Region*

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# TOWARDS MORE SOCIAL LEGITIMACY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AT THE EASTERN BORDER OF THE EU

Gabriela GOUDENHOFT\*

***Abstract:** Even in terms of procedure the EU's legal acquis and the primacy of union law is fully legitimized and it's rebound it is to be found due the mechanisms of its multi-level governance system, there are some doubts regarding economic inequalities in terms of income, living conditions and working conditions in several regions of the EU. Citizens from the EU, in the name of democracy, in a formal legitimacy mandate their state to negotiate supranational policies, laws and regulations in their behalf. The European Social Model, where social dialogue has been entrusted with the role of a central pillar, endured some challenges lately and therefor needs to make big efforts balancing the inequalities and addressing a lot of issues as it is youth unemployment, solidarity, poverty and life quality, inclusiveness and so on. Europe new social agenda and EU social future means has to find way to sustain standards of living, to create more and better jobs, to promote cross-border movements of people regulating social security rights for mobile citizens, on cross-border health care and last but not least recognition of diplomas. A more social Europe means that EU would support Member State action in the area of social convergence for better outcomes.*

***Keywords:** legitimacy, inequality, solidarity*

## **Legitimacy and solidarity**

Concepts such as legitimacy and solidarity are key terms in the construction of the European Union, used in the language of treaties and in the Community law. Today, most philosophical, legal, sociological, political theories on legitimacy rely on citizens' perceptions on leadership and governance, so that from the point of view of legitimacy, will generate obedience. Seymour Lipset defined legitimacy as the ability of the political system to “engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society”<sup>1</sup>. At the level of perceptions or beliefs, the concept of legitimacy suffers a certain relativization, a “relativity in substance,” the concept

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<sup>1</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, 2nd Edition, Heinemann Publishing House, London, 1983, p. 64.

makes sense only with reference to the value or set of normative values (which may be different, sometimes even contradictory) accepted by some or all citizens.

Although the concept has never been applied to international organizations, where (legal) relations are established between states as subjects and not between state and citizens. However, nowadays we are debating legitimacy and its avatars in a context where criticism is increasingly targeted and the prospect of lack of legitimacy is beginning to become problematic. But what legitimacy is meant to be when we refer to the European Union? In the Treaties' discourse and, more general, in the entire literature related to the European Union, the concept of legitimacy does not appear alone, by itself, but it's an attribute of democracy, justifying the presupposition that only democratic processes are legitimate. So, legitimacy in the EU perspective is an attribute of democratic processes and becomes "democratic legitimacy". The attribute is also attached to openness and transparency, institutional efficiency, subsidiarity, enlargement, European citizenship, co-decision procedure, etc. Moreover, by "closing the loop", the European Union sees itself as a source of legitimacy for the Member States and their legal order<sup>2</sup>.

First, "democratic legitimacy" means the participation of citizens in the conduct of the affairs of the European Union through the only institution that directly represents the citizens of the Member States of the Union: the European Parliament. The increase in legitimacy thus viewed has been stimulated, for example, by measures such as increasing the powers of the European Parliament and extending the legislative co-decision procedure.

Secondly, linking the concept of legitimacy to other concepts means both a better understanding and control over citizens over the action of the Community institutions and an increase in the support given by citizens to these institutions. It is clear, in any case, that the notion of legitimacy cannot be applied without distinction to everything that makes up the European Union. The EU is a complex entity, made up of a series of fragile equilibrium reports, in which the consolidation of some elements can only be done to the detriment of others. Thus, if we understand the European Union as a complex system, which has in its composition a strong intergovernmental element, in which the international legal nature predominates (the European Council, the Council and the policies of the former Pillars II and III) and an element of community dominated by the supranational element (the European Parliament and the Commission and the former Pillar I), the notion of legitimacy and that of "democratic legitimacy" is functioning differently in each of these frameworks.

From this perspective, the increase of democratic legitimacy at the expense of the intergovernmental component would be to the detriment of the legitimacy of the supranational element, and the increase of its legitimacy and power (European Parliament) would be to the detriment of Member States' national parliaments. Of course, we can comment on the failure of the Constitutional Treaty, on the one

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<sup>2</sup> Gabriela Goudenhoft, *Legitimitatea. Ritualuri ale legalității și autoritate discursivă* [Legitimacy. Rituals of legality and discursive authority], Editura Adenium, Iași, 2014.

hand, and on the relative successes of the reforms supported by the Lisbon Treaty, but this only proves that decision-makers at European level are aware of the lack of legitimacy and that solutions compromises are not necessarily lasting. These shortcomings of legitimacy have been put on the agenda, still trying to be addressed by the Reform Treaty (Amsterdam). As the enlargement process intensifies, more and more powers are being transferred to the Community institutions to the detriment of national parliaments and, at the same time, to increasing the power of the European Parliament. It is often said that the loss of sovereignty of states is offset by increased Community powers, but this compensation is to the detriment of democratic legitimacy, as the transfer is not made directly to the European Parliament (which is the depository of citizens' representation), but especially to the Council and Commission. However, the executive, the governments, play a key role, both through participation in the Council and through the development and application of Community law at national level. Control in the EU Parliament is rather weak. The support of European citizens for the EU is debatable. It rose sharply until the 1990s, but declined with the economic and monetary crisis. The Community institutions, aware of this issue of trust and legitimacy, have opened the debate and started a process of reforming the EU institutions in order to increase their legitimacy. The Reform Treaty contains innovations on citizenship, provisions on the issue of rights and increasing the power of the European Parliament and extends the scope of co-decision. Much more timid steps have been taken in openness and transparency, as well as in matters related to the disclosure of documents. As regards the efficiency of the institutions, as a source of legitimacy, the reform of the Treaty reduced the number of legislative procedures to three (assent/consent, codecision and consultation), extended the operating framework and simplified the phases of the codecision procedure. It included in a Treaty protocol the issue of the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in the Birmingham and Edinburgh European Council; re-established the principle of flexibility as an instrument operating in the integration process, specifying the limits of this flexibility (by introducing a new title in the treaty); Finally, it recognized the need to improve Community law by adding to the Treaty declarations on the improvement of Community legislation, as well as simplifying and strengthening the form of the Treaties.

The alleged lack of legitimacy of the EU is also highlighted by the lack of information, knowledge, control and support from citizens for the EU institutions and their actions. This shortcoming was not fully addressed by the reform introduced by the Amsterdam European Council in June 1997. European public opinion is dangerously far from the old aspirations of the Union. This is not just a consequence of a change in the historical position and views of European citizens for or against the EU; it is primarily a consequence of the inability displayed by the European institutions to inform the public about its actions and objectives, as well as the necessity and inevitability of the European integration process. Uninformed citizens, according to Eurobarometer data, show a lack of interest in the EU.

The EU's claim to be a major player on the world stage imposes major requirements for legitimacy, and legitimacy cannot be based solely on economic



sources, by virtue of efficiency, but must be sought in strengthening the democratic character of the Union, through a policy of openness and institutional information, by bringing the EU institutions closer to citizens, thus going beyond mere rhetoric of legal declarations or texts. As stated in the European Commission's report to the 1995 Intergovernmental Conference, "Democracy dries up if it does not function effectively; and effectiveness must find its reason for being in a democracy, otherwise it is reduced to technocracy".

The Lisbon Treaty responds, at least as an intention, to many of these problems, one of the objectives being to support "a more democratic and transparent Europe, in which the European Parliament and national parliaments enjoy a stronger role, in which citizens have more many chances to be heard". Increasing the powers of the European Parliament and extending the co-decision procedure, increasing the involvement of national parliaments, the more frequent application of the principle of subsidiarity are measures aimed at enhancing both the democratic character of the European Union and its legitimacy. The citizens' initiative, used as a lever in policy-making, on the one hand, and the introduction of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in primary European law, as well as the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, on the other, are measures to set and justify European Union a legitimacy that the European citizen should give to the Union and its institutions.

But these measures, whose effectiveness remains to be proven over time, cannot counterbalance the economic problems, the legitimacy of the performance of European policies and the dissatisfaction of citizens, which makes the EU's social deficit growing, the reality revealing a alienated and quasi-absent citizen in EU political life<sup>3</sup>.

The Solidarity Principle it is to be searched between the European discourse and the national responses to the objectives of the European Union, because otherwise, we are trapped in the pitfall of meaningless goals, without the possibility of being achieved.

An analysis on the social objectives of the European Union should start from a discussion on the European public space, from questioning public and political discourse and not ultimately the problem of legitimacy. What legitimacy means in terms of national, regional and European policy? It is maybe a result of a social agreement or only a favourable perception on social policy coordination? Questioning authority status, we have to consider the persistence of strong cleavages between various European regions, between different countries, not only economically speaking, but also, they from their perspective on social protection and practices in social systems. Despite the fact that social welfare is a value commonly accepted and tracked, the paths in achieving this objective appear to be

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<sup>3</sup> Ruxandra Ivan, "Criză economică sau criză democratică? Evoluția «deficitului democratic» al UE" [Economic crisis or democratic crisis? The evolution of the EU's 'democratic deficit'], în *Sfera politicii*, no. 172, at <http://www.sferapoliticii.ro/sfera/172/art18-Ivan.php> [accessed in 12.12.2020].

very different and the economic crisis worsens existing problems of the labour market and social services.

In these circumstances is still there yet a guiding principle of solidarity? To what extent depends the solidarity on the existence of a common identity? Or maybe it is enough to have just sufficient common experiences in the labour market? How does the public discourse handle in promoting solidarity principle? Lest solidarity begins to be dethroned by the more pressing interest nowadays and the idea of a single European Social Model is inconceivable in this world of differences?

This paper attempts to problematize such topics, challenging various scenarios and analyzing their implications, without neglecting the huge distance between optimistic discourses promoting solidarity and equality and on the other side, discourses intruding intolerance and discrimination, indifference, lack of compassion or care for other.

Solidarity sometimes can target different levels, so what we call universal can mean various meanings of the universal. “For most of the 20th century ‘universal’ meant ‘national’”. The reason for this was an amalgam of pragmatic reasoning (the nation state was the level at which democracy could be most effectively established) and appeals “to solidarities based on blood and soil.”<sup>4</sup> These things are important because the ambiguity about solidarity, or rather about its levels of coverage, can lead to many misunderstandings, challenging the very idea of convergence in social approaches.

Jürgen Habermas described the way public opinion was affecting the perception of togetherness: “new challenges affect each and every country in the same way and therefore could best be overcome together”<sup>5</sup>. The progress envisaged by the liberal elites should be made in European co-operation in three key areas, according to the same author: “Under the heading European foreign and defence policy, they demand a boost to the military self-assertiveness that would allow Europe “to step out of the shadows of the USA”; under the motto of a common European asylum policy, they further demand robust protection of Europe’s external borders and the establishment of dubious reception centres in North Africa; and, under the slogan “free trade”, they wish to pursue a common European trade policy in the Brexit negotiations as well as in the negotiations with Trump”<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, it is to be noticed there is an unbroken nation-state selfishness grown together with the increases of right-wing populism.

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<sup>4</sup> Colin Crouch, “Why the Left must Resist Wanting a Piece of the Xenophobic Action”, in *Social Europe*, vol. I, Social Europe Publishing, 2019, p. 26, <https://attachments.convertkitcdn.com/46456/88da0d58-7e16-4ad1-b5c1-0dd8ceaf8ae9/One%20Social%20Europe-Print.pdf>, [accessed in 18.11.2020].

<sup>5</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “New Perspectives for Europe”, in *Social Europe*, vol. I, Social Europe Publishing, 2019, p. 53, at <https://attachments.convertkitcdn.com/46456/88da0d58-7e16-4ad1-b5c1-0dd8ceaf8ae9/One%20Social%20Europe-Print.pdf>, [accessed in 16.10.2020].

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

Transnational solidarity it is seen as a possible solution to the consecutive waves of crises threatening the European Union lately: financial, migration, political, legitimacy. The declining trust in public institutions has been doubled the emergence of populist parties' agenda. Different solidarity concepts divided nowadays society in those how show concern for all humankind and different groups feared only by their own provincialist views.

### **Social policies - the issue of inequalities**

Addressing European policies has never been more difficult than today, when social goals seem to seem to be outweighed more and more by security reasons and measures.

In 1993, the Commission's Green Paper on European social policy started by asking a question: "*What sort of a society do the Europeans want?*"

The values promoted by the European Union are stipulated by Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail"<sup>7</sup>.

This should be completed by the social goals that the European Union which has been given by its Members; the objectives of the European Union is to promote harmonious and balanced development of economic activities sustainable and noninflationary growth respecting the environment high degree convergence of economic performance high level employment and of social protection the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and economic and social cohesion and solidarity among Member States.

There is/are a number of shared values which form the basis of the European social model. These include democracy and individual rights free collective bargaining, the market economy, equality of opportunity for all and social welfare and solidarity.

The European Social Model isn't just a paradigm but a part of the EU construction and according to some voices, the soul of the European Union, issues on social dimensions being addressed and challenged by various tests: the financial crisis, the refugee one, they all measured the European consensus on the social values. Many reforms were been made by member states on social protection, worker's rights and working conditions, public services, social dialogue, pensions, health system.

Questions are raised regarding the ability of European Union of keeping its legacy on the social area.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Treaty on European Union, Consolidated Version*, la [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF), [accessed in 16.10.2020].

Now, looking at the Europe 2020 growth strategy for the coming decade, one can notice that still, in a changing world, we pretend from the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

The Union has set five ambitious objectives – on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy – to be reached by 2020.

But social policy goes beyond employment, it affects people at work and in their family environment, their health and their old age and the entire educational system. The complex interaction of policies should be assessed and addressed<sup>8</sup>.

Income inequality has become a major problem in Central and Eastern European countries since the transition to a market economy. Of course, there are different categories of factors that influence inequality: economic, demographic, political and cultural and environmental.

Equality was one of the high goals of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. It is a laudable goal, but it proved unrealistic and even bankrupt, even though the levels of income inequality in these countries were much lower during the communist period than at present. Reducing the level of inequality is an important issue, but how should it be approached in the context of different countries and especially how could the European Union contribute to reducing these inequalities?

Economic development and growth without social growth can become a problem. The social legacy of the financial crisis is deeply worrying, the wide difference in the performance of EU members continues and despite certain reforms, “there is a risk of radical destabilisation of the EU”<sup>9</sup>.

The concept of inequality and the problem of income inequality is concerned since the issue of inequality has risen in importance in recent years and with the burden and strain on social protection system and triggering concerns both for the sustainability of growth and for social cohesion. Inclusiveness it is also challenged, when growth is not inclusive and its benefits are not being felt by all. While the Europe 2020 strategy focuses on reducing poverty, the challenge of reducing poverty risk is linked to the inequality debate since an essential reality and a particularity of manifestation of the existence of human societies is the phenomenon of social inequality. Social differences can overlap with natural ones. Still, addressing the issue of inequality EU approach highlights its multidimensional feature: there is an income inequality, inequality of wealth and inequality of opportunity. The European Pillar of Social Rights focussed the European Commission effort in addressing income inequality in an explicit way. The third principle of the Pillar for instance sets out the right to equal opportunities

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<sup>8</sup> Gabriela Goudenhoft, “Education and Politics in and Near the Borders of the European Union”, in *Education, Social Values and European Integration*, Debrecen University Press, Debrecen, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> David Natali, Bart Vanhercke, *Social Policy in the European Union: State of Play 2015*, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), Brussels, 2015, p. 20.

for all and many other provisions of the document address policy areas closely related to combatting rising income inequality and providing more equal chances<sup>10</sup>.

When we talk about inequality that transcends national borders, we really often have in mind not one but three different concepts—even when we are not fully aware of it: inequality between nations of the world, country averages concerning population's size and the global inequality, which is the most important concept for those interested in the world as composed of individuals, not nations<sup>11</sup>. Branko Milanovic noticed the specific situation of the post-communist countries: “The relative declines of Africa, and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union confirm the failure of these two parts of the world to adjust well to globalization, at least up to the early years of the 21st century”<sup>12</sup>.

An illustration of the situation can be made by looking at one of the most used indicators of inequality, GINI index, or GINI coefficient. This is a measure of the distribution of income across a population; it is often used as a gauge of economic inequality, measuring income distribution or, less commonly, wealth distribution among a population. The coefficient ranges from 0 (or 0%) to 1 (or 100%), with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality. Values over 1 are theoretically possible due to negative income or wealth. Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution.

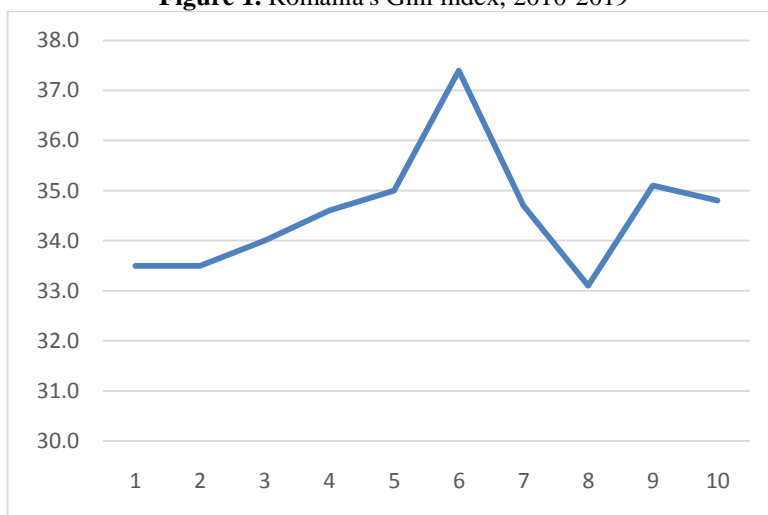
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<sup>10</sup> European Commission, *European Semester Thematic Factsheet. Addressing Inequalities*, 2017, at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/european-semester-thematic-factsheet\\_addressing-inequalities\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/european-semester-thematic-factsheet_addressing-inequalities_en_0.pdf), [accessed in 16.10.2020].

<sup>11</sup> Branko Milanovic, “Global Income Inequality by the Numbers: In History And Now”, policy research working paper 6259, The World Bank Development Research Group Poverty and Inequality Team, November 2012, at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/959251468176687085/pdf/wps6259.pdf>, [accessed in 16.10.2020].

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

**Figure 1.** Romania's Gini index, 2010-2019



*Source: Eurostat*

According to Eurostat, Romania has one of the highest indices of inequality in the EU. In the period 2010-2019, the Gini index remained between 33.1 and 37%, Romania being in the same period in the top 5 of the highest inequalities in the EU.

**Table 1.** Romania Gini index and position in the EU

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
33.5	33.5	34	34.6	35	37.4	34.7	33.1	35.1	34.8
4 <sup>th</sup> place	4 <sup>th</sup> place	4 <sup>th</sup> place	5 <sup>th</sup> place	3 <sup>rd</sup> place	2 <sup>nd</sup> place	3 <sup>rd</sup> place	6 <sup>th</sup> place	4 <sup>th</sup> place	4 <sup>th</sup> place

*Source: Eurostat*

The top 20% of Romania's population (with the highest income) received 7 times as much income as the bottom 20% in 2017, according to data from Eurostat.

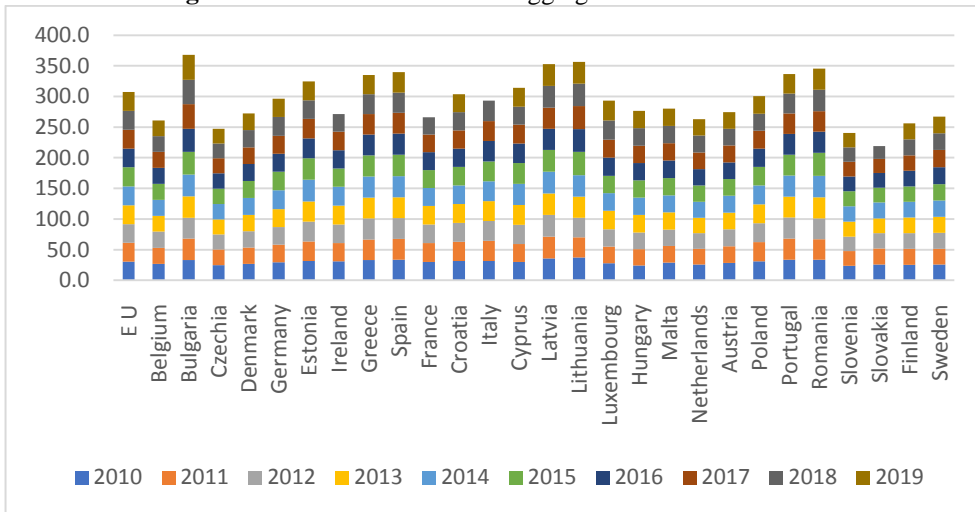
In the EU, the top 20% inhabitants with the highest income received 5.2 times as much income as the bottom 20%. The ratio "varied considerably across the Member States, from 3.5 in the Czech Republic and 3.6 in Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland, to 6.0 or more in Bulgaria (8.2), Lithuania (7.1), Romania (7.0 in 2017), Spain and Greece (both 6.6), Latvia and Italy (both 6.3)," according to Eurostat.

Income inequality in Romania is a constant, poverty and inequality of opportunity also persists in education, healthcare, access to employment and to services, and is particularly paramount in rural areas. While the policy levers are within national competence, the Commission has made clear that it pursues an agenda of social fairness. The 'European Pillar of Social Rights' sets-out principles and rights relevant to tackling inequality and has a central role for the Commission in monitoring economic and social developments in the Member States. In 2018

the Commission proposed Country-specific Recommendations for Romania related to inequality, in particular focusing on the reform of the minimum inclusion income, on minimum wage setting, as well as improving access to healthcare and upskilling and the provision of quality mainstream education, in particular for Roma and children in rural areas.

Although net inequality has not increased in the EU there are several on-going factors that need to be considered as drivers of increasing market inequalities in Europe and in other advanced economies. “One has to do with aggregate demand and the labour market. With low labour force participation rates, persistently high unemployment, fading of social protection and stagnating productivity all lead to lower incomes over the entire life-cycle of individuals, with poor households being more affected. This is combined with fiscal and welfare systems under increased pressure. Another issue is linked to the increasing skill-bias in income, with low (in some countries negligible) salary increases for low-skilled and part-time workers and large income increases for high-skill occupations”<sup>13</sup>.

**Figure 2.** GINI index in the EU Aggregate indices 2010-2019



*Source: Eurostat*

There is strong evidence that important inequalities may affect growth and generates economic and political instability, poverty and exclusion.

Exclusion itself, from an economic perspective, is defined as the way in which certain individuals are excluded from the standard of living and from basic social activities. The European Union, concerned about the dynamic of this phenomenon has developed a series of programs to fight poverty, and since the

<sup>13</sup> Rocco L. Bubbico, Leon Freytag, *Inequality in Europe*, European Investment Bank 2018, p. 6, at [https://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/econ\\_inequality\\_in\\_europe\\_en.pdf](https://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/econ_inequality_in_europe_en.pdf), [accessed in 16.10.2020].

1990s social exclusion and inclusion have been integrated (mainstreaming) in all European Union policies, starting with the Maastricht Treaty and its annexed protocols, the reform of the objectives of the European Social Fund, documents of the European Parliament and the Social Action Programs of the Commission. The EU's approach to social exclusion has also been addressed through the development of national action plans and the identification of a set of statistical indicators for measuring social inclusion. There is also a substantial investment in research on this topic, as well as on the relationship between social exclusion, poverty and citizenship. Poverty refers to individual and not community resources, and the more we move from the concept of poverty to exclusion, the better we capture not only inequalities, but especially major social cleavages.

### **And again, on social solidarity**

Observing all the above, seeing there are also opinions that social solidarity, as a lever for social integration and cohesion and the fight against poverty and exclusion, would be both a form of moral responsibility embedded in the universe of citizenship and a burden of the state, especially the welfare state, justifies the grounds of institutional functions.

Nowadays the idea of social solidarity is often encountered in social policies in close connection with the economy and income redistribution. Social risks, vulnerable groups require funds and their allocation principles.

But how solidarity has become one of the principles that govern social policies and what is the future of this principle are very current issues in contexts such as globalization, migration, individualism and neoliberal ideologies, various social trends such as aging population and increasing life expectancy, etc. Since the '90s, there has been talk of a social and solidarity economy (of solidarity) as an alternative to the capitalist economy based on values such as: solidarity, social justice, inclusion, subsidiarity, equality and equity, etc. This type of economy refers to enterprises and organizations (cooperatives, mutual aid societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises) that produce goods, services and information that meet the needs of the community they serve, by meeting specific social and environmental objectives; and which seek to strengthen and encourage social solidarity.

The principle of solidarity finds its place in national and European legislation, confirming both its economic and social aspects.

From the multitude of legal regulations in Romania, one exemplifies through the Law 273 of 2006 on Local Public Finances, which defines in art. 15 the principle of solidarity as follows:

“(1) Through the local budgetary policies it is possible to help the administrative-territorial units, as well as of the natural persons in situation of extreme difficulty, by allocating amounts from the budgetary reserve fund constituted in the local budget.

(2) From the budgetary reserve fund constituted in the local budget, the local, county councils or the General Council of Bucharest Municipality, as the case may be, may approve the granting of aid to the administrative-territorial units



in extreme difficulties, at the public request of the mayors of these units. administrative-territorial or on its own initiative”.

But unfortunately, as various studies show, in Romania “the government’s disregard for the provisions of collective agreements”, frequent changes in legislation, the “alleged intimidation of union leaders have led to a decline” of some institution’s legitimacy, as trade unions and collective bargaining<sup>14</sup>.

Illustrations of the action of the principle of solidarity can be found in the institution of security and social protection, especially in the case of non-contributory benefits: helping those members of society in need without any equivalent or previous effort on their part.

The discourse of the European Union contains social solidarity as a key element of the European Social Model. The Charter of Fundamental Rights has a whole chapter / title dedicated to solidarity: Title IV (“Solidarity”) guarantees the protection of workers' rights: to information and consultation within undertaking (art. 27), rights of collective bargaining and action (art. 28), right of access to placement services (art. 29), protection in the event of unjustified dismissal (art. 30), fair and just working condition (art. 31) and so on and so forth. This title also recognizes additional rights and principles, such as the right to social security, the right of access to healthcare and the principles of environmental protection and consumer protection.

The very creation of the European Union was aimed at the common benefit of all Member States and its citizens, and therefore a joint action to ensure a fair and uniform distribution of the benefits arising from participation in the European Union. But applying the principle of solidarity is not just about allocating resources, although they play an important role such as the European Social Fund (ESF) or the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF). Solidarity is an essential organizational principle that can also be expressed in decision-making, for cohesion and the achievement of social consensus, but especially for achieving the principle of fair treatment of both members of society and EU members.

The rhetoric of social rights in the European Union is also increasingly present in public and legislative discourse, as can be seen in the European Pillar of Social Rights, which talks about intergenerational solidarity and the protection of social rights.

The European Solidarity Corps is a European Union initiative that gives young people the chance to volunteer or get involved in projects in their own country or abroad to help communities and people across Europe.

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<sup>14</sup> Aurora Trif, “The Survival of Collective Bargaining in the Manufacturing Sector in Romania”, in *Joint Regulation and Labour Market Policy in Europe during the Crisis*, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), Brussels, 2016, p. 435.

But should we agree with a general tendency of accepting and embracing inequality as a “way it is” our very society or we have to deeper examine it and to reduce it?<sup>15</sup>

Many of the documents adopted by the European Union contain the phrase “in the spirit of solidarity” and the discourse on solidarity has become even more pronounced with the refugee crisis.

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<sup>15</sup> D. B. Grusky, C. Wimer, “Is There too much Inequality?” in *The Inequality Puzzle. European and US Leaders Discuss Rising Income Inequality*, Springer, London and New York, 2010, p. 3-10.



# INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND CORPORATE IDENTITY. TOOLS FOR PROMOTING CROSS-BORDER EMPLOYMENT IN THE ROMANIAN-HUNGARIAN CROSS-BORDER REGION

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**Abstract:** *As the EU takes on new members and its external boundaries gradually shift, socio-economic and political transformations are taking place at the borders that not only adumbrate new regional development opportunities but also many potential problems and tensions. In an enlarged Europe there are necessary long-term commitments to support local and regional initiatives of cross-border cooperation. Geographic labour mobility within EU member countries – both in terms of trans-national migration as well as cross-border commuting has remained at a relatively low level until now. The topic of labour market mobility is of particular importance in border regions, as it is part of the every-day life of citizens to cross the border, either to get to their work places or for leisure purposes. Whereas much research activity has been devoted over the years to different kinds of migration, the other type of geographic labour mobility, cross-border commuting has been to a much lesser degree object of research studies. The paper explores the significance of the state border in the daily life of the border landers, the inhabitants from the Hungarian-Romanian border, focusing in details on data collected from the Bihar-Hajdu Bihar Euroregion.*

**Keywords:** *intercultural, labour, employment, cross-border, Euroregion*

The European model and its institutionalization by creating the European Union was both Europe's answer to the material and moral disaster caused by the Second World War and the project meant to promote freedom, prosperity and justice, including social justice too.

Having in view these objectives which have never been subsequently amended or abandoned, European Union has built a set of functional values, among which freedom has taken the role of polarizing all normative and institutional approaches of the European Union.

European Union and integration in the European Community developed itself on three basic ways, creation of a common market, development of common institutions and several common policies. Market integration has progressed a long way, although it stops and restarts again. The institutional integration is left behind,

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but the most difficult of all is represented by the common policies, especially where they have required founding.

With the reform of the Structural Funds, regions have gained a key role in the design and implementation of regional policy. Yet some of the weakest regions were not equipped with appropriate institutional structures and have struggled to benefit.

While the reform may have given regions an entitlement to participate, we argue that some have lacked the capacity to do so effectively. In this context, enlargement raises questions over the future of the Funds, and how far a commitment to cohesion and convergence can be maintained.

As the EU takes on new members and its external boundaries gradually shift, socio-economic and political transformations are taking place at the borders that not only adumbrate new regional development opportunities but also many potential problems and tensions. In an enlarged Europe there are necessary long-term commitments to support local and regional initiatives of cross-border cooperation<sup>2</sup>.

All this can be achieved through comprehensive cooperation that transcend political, economic and cultural dividing lines and that address socio-economic disparities, political tensions and potential conflicts of interest. The new research perspectives have contributed to the fact that borders are now largely understood to be multifaceted social institutions, rather than simple markers of state sovereignty.

Analysed through the economic lens, the “national state” in its classic sense is perceived both by the local investor, as well as the foreign investor as an obstacle to the smooth exchange of goods and consequently, a source of diminishing of profit. “Europe without borders” could provide the ideal space in which inputs could freely cooperate, in real conditions of competitiveness, and trade might move towards a market free from customs duties, excise or other protectionist means<sup>3</sup>.

National economies have proved incapable of responding within parameters of maximum efficiency to world market demands, to global exchange and to capital movement, therefore the latest solutions recommend the adoption of “borderless world” concept, developed by Kenichi Ohmae in 1995.

Regional economic policies offered for a while solutions to microeconomic problems, but not to the macroeconomic ones. However, they were the first form of cross-border cooperation and brought coherence and synergy to different economic and equity instruments<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Alexandru Athanasiu, “Foreword”, in *The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, edited by Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2013, p. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Weber, Renate, *Un concept românesc privind viitorul Uniunii Europene* [A Romanian concept regarding the future of the European Union], Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2001, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Aurel Iancu, Eugen Simion, *Dezvoltarea economică a României: competitivitatea și integrarea în Uniunea Europeană* [Romania’s economic development: competitiveness

However, the procedure for accession to the European Union is extremely difficult today because it is conditioned by a long line of institutional and economic parameters which optant states must meet in advance; there are also subjective reasons that go beyond the statutory framework of the European Union.

Along with states targeting their entry into the Union, there are countries on the continent that fall within the institutional and economic standards claimed by the Union but which are not interested in joining the organization, such as Switzerland or Norway. This does not mean that they would fall outside the circuit of cultural and economic values. It is obvious that we are dealing with two kinds of community aspirations.

It is also obvious that migration is not a modern-era phenomenon, it is the 21st Century's globalization that has rendered it a truly global topical issue. On a relatively small scale, one of the priorities of the European Union is to remove barriers to professional mobility issuing from its on integration processes, as long as workers mobility is essential for the proper operation of the internal market itself. The EU aims to raise public awareness of this right and to support jobseekers in their search at regional level through the European employment service network, the vast job database and the EURES portal are in the forefront of the EU's efforts to promote work mobility. Facilitating mobility also helps out the labour markets and therefore the workers who choose mobility should not be penalized as a consequence<sup>5</sup>.

The mobility of labour, both in the way of trans-national migration and cross-border commuting has been identified as a key element for the achievement of the revised Lisbon strategy and the implementation of the European Employment Strategy. Meantime there is broad political consensus, also on national and regional level that the compensation of the lack of competence, qualification and the demographic change is a highly crucial challenge to ensure future competitiveness and prosperity. For the EU-27 as a whole, cross-border labour mobility is likely to offer a number of advantages, by allowing a more efficient matching of workers, skills with job vacancies and facilitating the general upskilling of the European workforce<sup>6</sup>.

The topic of labour market mobility is of a particular importance in border regions, as it is part of the every-day life of citizens to cross the border, either to get to their work places or for leisure purposes. The problems related to different social security and tax regulations are particularly challenging in border areas that

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and integration in the European Union], Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, p. 6, 625.

<sup>5</sup> Claudia-Ana Costea, "The Free Movement of Workers, Challenges and Trends", in *The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, edited by Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2013, p. 13-16.

<sup>6</sup> Gernot Nerb, Franz Hitzelsberger, Andreas Woidich, Stefan Pommer, Sebastian Hemmer, Petr Heczko, *Scientific Report on the Mobility of Cross-Border Workers within the EU-27/EEA/EFTA Countries – Final Report*, MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH and Empirica Kft., Brussels, 2009, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/mkw\\_workers\\_mobility.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/mkw_workers_mobility.pdf), [accessed in January, 19, 2021], p. 7.

are confronted with complex and steadily changing legal, administrative, social and economic conditions. Information on standard solutions is in this case not sufficient, as individual situations require individual information and advice<sup>7</sup>.

If the free movement of persons is one of the four pillars of the European Union (EU), then we can say that the worker is one of the most important integrator factors of the European project. The structural development cannot be done unless by a unique, unitary and social vision upon the legislative assembly that norms the worker and his family. In the context of social and economic development of border areas, of deepening of policies determined by Schengen, the border worker is a determining factor in the cohesion of the border area<sup>8</sup>.

Geographic labour mobility within EU member countries – both in terms of trans-national migration as well as cross-border commuting has remained at a relatively low level until now.

The topic of labour market mobility is of particular importance in border regions, as it is part of the every-day life of citizens to cross the border, either to get to their work places or for leisure purposes.

Whereas much research activity has been devoted over the years to different kinds of migration, the other type of geographic labour mobility, cross-border commuting has been to a much lesser degree object of research studies.

In the process of EU-integration the Hungarian-Romanian state border is becoming even more permeable as well. Despite the fact, that Romania is not member of the Schengen Agreement, crossing the borderline between the two neighbouring countries is much easier than a few years earlier. The growing permeability of the European borders contributes to the unification of the economic potentials of the neighbouring areas supplying benefits on regional and local level.

Even if Hungary joined the European Union on 1 May 2004 and Romania on 1 January 2007, by the common European destiny of the two states, they are obliged to achieve a strengthened partnership focused on increasing their welfare and harmonious economic development<sup>9</sup>.

The border between Romania and Hungary has a total length of 448 km, of which 415.9 km land and 32.1 km river (the Mureş, Criş, Someş rivers)<sup>10</sup>. On the Romanian side there are four counties, Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiş, and on the Hungarian side there are Szabolcs-SzatmárBereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and

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<sup>7</sup> Association of European Border Regions, *Overall Report on Information Services for Cross-Border Workers in European Border Regions*, Gronau, 2012, available at [https://borderpeople.info/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/aebr\\_cb\\_information\\_provision.pdf](https://borderpeople.info/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/aebr_cb_information_provision.pdf), [accessed in January, 19, 2021].

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, “The Frontier Worker. Romania-Hungary Study Case”, in *The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, edited by Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2013, p. 25-27.

<sup>9</sup> *Ididem*.

<sup>10</sup> National Institute of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook 2011. Geography, Meteorology and Environment*, available at [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Anuar%20statistic/01/01%20Geografie\\_ro.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Anuar%20statistic/01/01%20Geografie_ro.pdf), [accessed in February 19, 2018], p. 11.

Csongrád. All the 8 counties are classified as NUTS III and are integrated in 4 regions of level NUTS II<sup>11</sup>. The Romanian Hungarian Border covers the South-Eastern and Eastern part of Hungary and the North-Western and Western part of Romania. The eight counties have a total surface of 50,454 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 43.7% Hungarian and 56.3% Romanian area. The Hungarian territory is 23.7% of the total surface of Hungary, and the Romanian part is 11.9% of Romania. The total population in 2004 was more than 4 million, of which slightly less than half lives in Hungary, and slightly more than half lives in Romania<sup>12</sup>.

**Figure 1.** *The location of counties along the Romanian-Hungarian border*



*Source:* <http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/download>

The issue of the border is becoming an interesting phenomenon for a European continent struggling to reduce social and economic disparities. The concept of working across the border, working abroad, but living at home is relatively young in the Eastern European countries.

<sup>11</sup> The counties Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar belong to Észak-Alföld Region; the counties Békés and Csongrád are part of Dél-Alföld Region; counties Arad and Timiș belong to West Region; counties Satu Mare and Bihor are part of the North-West Region. For further details it can be seen Eurostat, *Regions in the European Union, Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, NUTS 2006 /EU-27*, available at [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-020/EN/KS-RA-07-020-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-020/EN/KS-RA-07-020-EN.PDF), [accessed in February 19, 2018].

<sup>12</sup> *Programme Area. Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013*, available at [http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/programme\\_area](http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/programme_area), [accessed in November 12, 2020].



The economic development of Romanian cities was heavily driven towards a massive industrialization, most of the time against its natural course or history. The forced industrialized process created mammoth state owned companies that employed large volumes of workers. The collection basin of the work force was mostly from the inhabitants of that certain city or its surrounding, depending on the size of the company, the collection area for labour force being of sometime 60-90km but always stopping at the national border. As it was the case with many Romanian cities Oradea, located at 5 km from the national border with Hungary, had gone through the same socio-economic development process developing 3 main categories of industries: aluminium production industry, chemical industry (paint and other chemical based products) and construction of agricultural machines and parts.

The economic environment of the city absorbed most of the available work force and imported part of the necessary higher skilled work force. Due to a communist regime and its tight locked border policy the frontier worker concept would have been limited to a worker living in a region that was located next to a national border. The only scattered cross-border phenomenon found in various border regions in Romania, Oradea included, was related to small scale commerce across the border restricted to a limited number of persons, usually middle and high members of the society generally linked in some way to the communist regime. The cross-border exchange in the western part of Romania, Oradea in particular, until the 1990's is limited to small border exchanges mainly related to consumer goods inaccessible in one of the two countries<sup>13</sup>.

The fall of communism brings into broad day light, for the first time in decades, the concept of diversifying the one's offer and possibilities in obtaining the usual necessities. In the case of Bihor County (north-western part of Romania) and its neighbouring Hungarian county Hajdú-Bihar the frontiers begin to lose their attribute as impenetrable and dangerous physical barriers towards a somewhat better living and a more liberal society.

The frontier has gone through allot of changes in terms of understanding the space of a culture, race, religion, city or nation. Growing from physical walls, intense militarized areas to a formal understanding of regions with no physical boundaries or restrictions of any kind, the frontier or the border, has been an area of the utmost importance to the different branches of science. The border region is the collision point of cultures, religions, languages, administrations, legislations and economic influences. All these factors have substantial contribution to the phenomenon of people working in or over the border region<sup>14</sup>.

The Romanian – Hungarian border is located in a category of borders where we can find a free flow of goods and persons, even if Romania is not yet a

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<sup>13</sup> István Süli-Zakar, "Successes and Failures in the CBC History of East Europe (Retrospection to the three decades of my CBC activities and researches)", in *Eurolimes*, vol. 21/Spring 2016, p. 183-190.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

member of the Schengen area. In this case the labour-mobility in some cases is still under control.

At the Romanian – Hungarian border there is still a permanent custom control, personal being present in the customs points. The control point has changed and are now common, customs officers making up joint teams reducing thus the control point from two to one. This ensures a more flexible flow of persons over the national border. The customs control in case of persons is quickly processed even if the customs officers still request the traveling documents.

This is an important aspect when analysing the frontier worker phenomenon in the area of Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar counties. The border activity, even if it functions under national and international laws, is adapted to a certain context and cultural relation. It is important to mention that due to cultural differences and/or recent history the idea and the existence of the frontier workers may be a taboo subject.

**Figure 2.** *Map of the Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar custom points*



*Source: ArcGis base map edited for the purpose of this paper*

The most important and transited customs point in Bihor County is Borş border point. Being a border point on E60, a major European road, this is one of the most important customs points in Romania. E60 is the correspondence of

National Road 1; the most transited and busy road in Romania according to the traffic study of the National Road Authority (CNADNR)<sup>15</sup>.

The other custom points are low transit areas with a micro regional impact in terms of person mobility. These aspects are very important when considering labour force mobility over the border. Being a big customs point, Borş, is obviously the first choice for most of the traffic entering the country, but also the chosen point for possible frontier workers because of distance and cost efficiency reasons.

The other customs points presented in **Figure 2** are located at a consistent distance from Oradea, the main economic centre that may absorb the border workers.

In the opposite way frontier workers that would consider the opposite development pole, Debrecen, have two possibilities: Borş and Valea lui Mihai customs points. In this case even if the map presents a more direct route through Valea lui Mihai, the facts present that a crushing percentage of people from Oradea a surrounding area have chosen Bors as the main exit point towards Debrecen. This is mainly caused because of road and customs infrastructure. The main customs point (Borş) benefits from a 4-lane road that eases traffic inflow and a big number of customs officers that will process a large number of vehicles hourly. These assets will cause in some points waiting times or a longer route for a frontier worker, for whom the time and economic efficiency are essential.

### **The prototype of the border worker:**

In order to establish a common level of understanding while analysing cross-border issues, a definition of basic terms is essential. Although often subsumed under one coherent paradigm “mobility of workforce”, cross-border commuting as a social phenomenon has to be considered as quite different from trans-national migration<sup>16</sup>.

There are different kinds of cross-national workers, mobility generally subsumed under the designation of job migration, but we can declare that cross-border commuting between neighbouring countries takes place within smaller geographical areas and in short, regular periods up to a weekly level, migration mainly describes a wide-ranging process of permanent relocation of workers residence with a view to improve both income and the standard of living<sup>17</sup>.

Because there are a multitude of definitions for the term “cross-border commuter” therefore, a unified description of cross-border mobility is only possible to a limited extent. Using the EU-terminology, cross-border commuters or

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<sup>15</sup> *The data from the prefeasibility study for construction a Metropolitan Ring Road for Oradea Metropolitan Area*, official letter of the regional point of the National Road Authority, 2016, p. 245.

<sup>16</sup> Gernot Nerb, Franz Hitzelsberger, Andreas Woidich, Stefan Pommer, Sebastian Hemmer, Petr Heczko, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

cross-border workers are characterized on the basis of two criteria, a political and a temporal one<sup>18</sup>.

Leaning on these principles, cross-border commuters are workers including the self-employed who pursue their occupation within the territory of a Member State and reside in another neighbouring Member State.

Compared to the place of residence, nationality cannot be taken as a significant indicator classifying cross-border workers because there are cases where workers from one country move to a neighbouring state by reason of lower costs for renting and living and commute back to their home state virtually as in-commuting nationals.

Basically, the border worker or cross-national workers is mainly summarized by a short definition: national of country A, living in country A, but working in country B. In general terms this is the most common form, of a border worker. This aspect is found and valid in most of the areas where the phenomenon of working abroad but living at home happens<sup>19</sup>.

### **Factors for the movement of the border worker**

There are a various number of factors that contribute to the mobility across the border. We can speak of factors that are perceived and generated at the level of individuals (real estate prices, shopping prices, etc.) and factors that generate mobility or support it<sup>20</sup>.

This last category is generally governed by local or national authorities that want and invest in creating a more familiar space in border areas. Nevertheless, private companies can also be part of this category by creating cross border services and service infrastructure.

One of the preliminary needs when speaking of the frontier worker is a certain familiarity with the border itself and with the neighbouring culture. Going from a physical boundary an insurmountable obstacle to a psychological barrier is the evolution of the border in most cases. Even if the European Union is the integrated border land area the border retains in a mental perspective the former barriers and contributes to a cross-border immobility situation.

The cultural differences and what people see as an acceptable unfamiliarity are key ingredients for increasing the cross-border mobility<sup>21</sup>.

The border activity between Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar in terms of border mobility has a particular history. Immediately after 1989, and also before, the majority of traffic was towards Hungary. This is because of the fact that the

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<sup>18</sup> Eliasson Kent, Urban Lindgren, Olle Westerlund, "Geographical Labour Mobility: Migration or Commuting?", in *Regional Studies*, Vol. 37, p. 827-837.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> Oscar J. Martinez, *Border People. Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1994, p. 73-150.

<sup>21</sup> Bas Spierings, Martin van der Velde, "Consumer Mobility and the Communication of Difference: Reflecting on Cross-Border Shopping Practices and Experiences in the Dutch-German Borderland", in *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. 25 / 2010, p. 191-205.

neighbouring country is the natural course towards Western Europe, because of its proximity to western cultures and values was to a certain extent more relaxed concerning public policies and public availability of goods. In the 1990's there was huge volume of border traffic driven by commercial or shopping purposes from Romanian settlements to Hungarian commercial area. The same situation happened after 2005 but in the opposite way. Due price reorganization after accessing the European Union in 2004 Hungarians living near the border reoriented towards the Romanian market<sup>22</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

Starting from the observation that apparent abolishing of borders has not led to the expected cross-border interaction and those borders are not only tangible barriers and other concepts and factors like cultural differences, previous historic happenings and lack of infrastructure, can be a trigger or a stop button for the border worker phenomenon.

Cross-border marketing, evolution of economies, better understanding markets have limited a lot the unacceptable, the unfamiliarity and contributed to transform unfamiliarity as an acceptable barrier, therefore creating and supporting the border movements from Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar.

In order to get the people mobile, especially across borders, there should be a reason to do so, in other words, some kind of attracting force is needed. Efforts for stimulating and enhancing European integration have had not reached their set bar.

Cross-border programs and development are relevant to the extent that they do not consider the borders as almost exclusively barriers that have to be overcome. What has to be done is to make the inhabitants of the border-regions aware of these differences along the border, and consequently of each other. The other side should stay and/or be made relevant and attractive. In that case people should be encouraged to change their mental disposition towards the border, or to be more precise, towards the other side. To consider the other side, including its differences and unfamiliarity, is as relevant as it is a necessary, albeit insufficient, precondition for interaction.

Freedom in all its forms, freedom of movement of persons, goods, capital, services, in time has integrated a double function, on one hand, a fundamental value that has established all other organizational principles of the European Union and, on the other hand, an essential premise in improving the normative framework of the European Union. Of course, freedom is neither at community nor at individual level a value by itself, not even a negation of national identity or any

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<sup>22</sup> Mihai Jurca, "Frontier Worker. Isolated Phenomenon or Regional Economic Asset", in *The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, ed. Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, Bucharest, C.H. Beck, 2013, p. 25-27.

other human needs<sup>23</sup>. The European Union must not be built as a model of social and political organization upon the ruin of the nation states. On the contrary, the European model founded on the basic value of freedom is enhanced by re-joining freedom with social solidarity and human rights<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Alexandru Athanasiu, "Foreword", in *The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, ed. Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2013, p. 7-8.

<sup>24</sup> Anthony Giddens, Patrick Diamond, Roger Liddle, *Global Europe, Social Europe*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2006.



# EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION AT THE ROMANIAN – HUNGARIAN BORDER

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**Abstract:** *The Romanian – Hungarian border is a facilitator for the various NUTS forms, which, through the wide range of instruments and forms of cross-border cooperation facilitated by the European Union's programs and policies, develops various forms of cross-border cooperation with beneficial results on both sides of the border.*

*In this direction we will carry out an evaluation of the Romanian-Hungarian border regions, trying to identify the various forms of cooperation, such as Euroregions or cross-border cooperation programs which are instruments that can add value to this region and provide sustainable development in the target region.*

**Keywords:** *Evaluation, border regions, Romanian-Hungarian Borders, CBC*

## Introduction

The Romanian-Hungarian border can be defined as a closed, cold border, until the revolution in 1989, because from the point of view of cross-border cooperation, of different forms of cooperation (e.g. Euroregions), or of European cross-border cooperation programs can be defined as a region without such elements of cross-border cooperation<sup>1</sup>.

Along the Romanian-Hungarian border, taking into account the NUTS system, we find several structures on both sides of the studied border which are found within various forms of cross-border cooperation, plus the Euroregions, which are not included in the NUTS system, but there are forms where we find at least two entities, structures, organizations on either side of the border that pursue common goals for different purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Constantin Țoca, Klára Czimre, “Cross-border Cooperation at the EU Internal and External Borders”, in *EuroTimes*, vol. 21, Spring 2016, p. 7-19.



In order to be able to evaluate the Romanian-Hungarian border region we will identify 3 major forms of cross-border cooperation, on which we will take our methodological approach so that we can study the regions on both sides of the border of the two neighbouring States Romania and Hungary.

The three major forms of cooperation<sup>2</sup> that we will operationalize are: Euroregions<sup>3</sup>, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation EGTC<sup>4</sup>; Cross-border Cooperation Program Hungary - Romania 2007-2013 (HU - RO 2007 -2013)<sup>5</sup>. They are based on developing neighbourhood relations and cross-border collaborations between two development regions on Romania's side (the North - West Development Region and the Western Development Region) and two statistical Hungarian regions (Észak Alföld and Dél Alföld). This territory consists of four Romanian counties (Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș) and four Hungarian counties (Szatmár Bereg, Hajdú Bihar, Bekes and Csongrád), located near to the common border. Thus, from the perspective of the Euroregions, on the Romanian-Hungarian border are several such forms of cross-border cooperation, but some of them extend to the level of neighbouring countries. So, the Euroregions that cross the Romanian-Hungarian border are:

- Bihor (Romania) - Hajdú Bihar (Hungary)<sup>6</sup>;

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<sup>2</sup> Constantin Țoca, "Different Territorial Levels of Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Cooperation", in *The Frontier Worker - New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, edited by Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2013, p. 71-80.

<sup>3</sup> Alexandru Ilieș, *România. Euroregiuni* [Romania. Euroregions], University of Oradea Publishing House, Oradea, 2004, p. 163-164.

<sup>4</sup> Constantin-Vasile Țoca, Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, "The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), Instrument of Cross-border Cooperation. Case Study Romania-Hungary", in *Eurolimes*, vol. 10, Autumn 2010; Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, Constantin-Vasile Țoca, "Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Cooperation through a Possible EGTC Oradea-Debrecen", in *Regional and Cohesion Policy: Insights into the Role of the Partnership Principle in the New Policy Design*, edited by I. Horga, I. Bărbulescu, A. Ivan, M. Palinchak, I. Süli-Zakar, University of Debrecen Press, University of Oradea Press, Debrecen-Oradea, 2011, p. 241-261; Constantin-Vasile Țoca, "Projet of the Debrecen-Oradea Cross-border Agglomeration", in *The European Parliament, Intercultural Dialogue and European Neighbourhood Policy*, edited by Ioan Horga, Grigore Silași, István Süli-Zakar, Stanisław Sagan, University of Oradea Press, Oradea, 2009, p. 253-260; Constantin-Vasile Țoca, Edina Lilla Mészáros, "The Existing EGTC Models of Territorial Cohesion and Their Applicability in the Debrecen-Oradea Agglomeration", in *Central European Regional Policy and Human Geography*, no. 1-2012, p. 23-40.

<sup>5</sup> Klára Czimre, Constantin-Vasile Țoca, "Cross-Border Co-operation Tendering: Actors and Activities (Focus: Hungary-Romania Crossborder Co-operation Programme 2007-2013)", in *Sustainable Development and Resilience of Local Communities and Public Sector*, edited by Cristina Haruța, Cristina M. Hîntea, Octavian Moldovan, Accent Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2019, p. 196-215.

<sup>6</sup> Cristina Dogot, *Euroregiunea Bihor – Hajdú Bihar*, available at [https://www.academia.edu/22191177/Euroregiunea\\_Bihor\\_Hajdu\\_Biharia](https://www.academia.edu/22191177/Euroregiunea_Bihor_Hajdu_Biharia), [accessed

- The Carpathian Euroregion<sup>7</sup>, one of the biggest Euroregions in Europe with the participation of 5 European States: Romania, Hungary, Ukraine, Slovakia and Poland<sup>8</sup>;

- Euroregion Danube - Criş - Mureş - Tisa, with the participation of Romania, Hungary and Serbia.

From the point of view of the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation, according to the official list of groupings the establishment of which has been notified to the Committee of the Regions on the basis of Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council published in Brussels on 6 January 2006, the **Table 1** shows the forms of EGTC which have been identified with the participation of Romania and Hungary. The third form of cooperation of the Romanian – Hungarian border regions will be operationalized through the Hungarian cross-border cooperation program Hungary – Romania 2007-2013 (HU-RO2007-2013).

**Table 1.** European groupings of territorial cooperation at the Romanian – Hungarian border  
CAS No: 134

Nr. Crt.	EGTC	Registered office	Member States	Date of establishment
1	Bánát – Triplex Confinium Limited Liability EGTC (EN)	Mórahalom, HU	<u>HU</u> /RO	5.01.2011 (registration)
2	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation "Gateway Europe" – limited liability (EGTC "Gateway Europe") (EGTC Gate to Europe Ltd.)	Nyíradony, HU	<u>HU</u> , RO	7.05.2012 (registration)
3	European Common Future Building European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation with Limited Liability	Battonya, HU	<u>HU</u> , RO	17.10.2012 (registration)

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in 12/29/2020]; Constantin-Vasile Țoca, “Ethnical Analysis within Bihor-Hajdú Bihar Euroregion”, in *Analele Universității din Oradea. Seria Relații Internaționale și Studii Europene*, supplement, 2013, p. 111-119.

<sup>7</sup> István Süli-Zakar “Carpathian CBC Macroregion as a Space of Innovation”, in *Cross-Border Cooperation: Models of Good Practice in Carpathian Region*, edited by Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2014, p. 16-28; Constantin-Vasile Țoca, Ioan Horga, “Sociological Research: University of Oradea’s Students Knowledge Regarding the Bihor–Hajdú-Bihar and Carpathian Euroregions”, in *Regional Development in the Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Space – From National to European Perspective*, University of Debrecen Press, Debrecen, 2006, p. 129-136.

<sup>8</sup> Cosmin Chiriac, “Administrative Units within the Carpathian Euroregion. Comparative Analysis”, in *Cross-Border Cooperation: Models of Good Practice in Carpathian Region*, edited by Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2014, p. 159-170; Cristina Dogot, “Romanian Local Administrations and Their Activities in Carpathian Euroregion Analysis”, in *Cross-Border Cooperation: Models of Good Practice in Carpathian Region*, edited by Adrian-Claudiu Popoviciu, C.H. Beck, Bucharest, 2014, p. 172-185.

Nr. Crt.	EGTC	Registered office	Member States	Date of establishment
	(European Common Future Building EGTC)			
4	European Border Cities European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited Liability (European Border Cities EGTC)	Nyíregyháza, HU	<u>HU/RO</u>	20.11.2014 (registration)

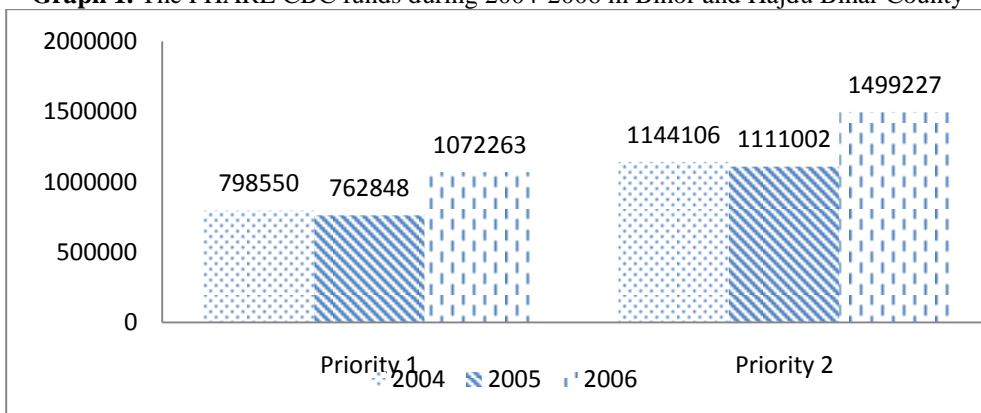
*Source:* <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRAactivities/Pages/Register/HU.aspx>

As a methodology, in our study we use the ex-post evaluation method, so that, based on the data already available at the level of the 3 dimensions mentioned above we will collect quantitative and qualitative data and assess the Romanian-Hungarian border. At the level of cooperation of the Euroregions, we will start our investigative work. From the perspective of Euroregion Bihor – Hajdú Bihar, Euroregion created in 2002 at the initiative of Bihor County Council (Romania) and Local Self-Government Hajdu Bihar (Hungary).

### **Bihor – Hajdú Bihar Euroregion**

The Bihor – Hajdú Bihar Euroregion include the two counties neighbouring Romanian-Hungarian, Bihor and Hajdú Bihar. We will focus on the statistical data to highlight the degree of cross-border cooperation on two major European programs. The first one is PHARE CBC, a pre-accession program for Romania, which was carried out between 2004 and 2006, following by the Cross-Border Cooperation Program Hungary - Romania (HU – RO 2007-2013). The Phare CBC program was implemented at the level of the two priorities: 2 633 661 € (priority 1) and 754 335 € (priority 2) respectively, and the distribution of funds was made over the three years of implementation 2004, 2005 and 2006 (see **Graph 1**).

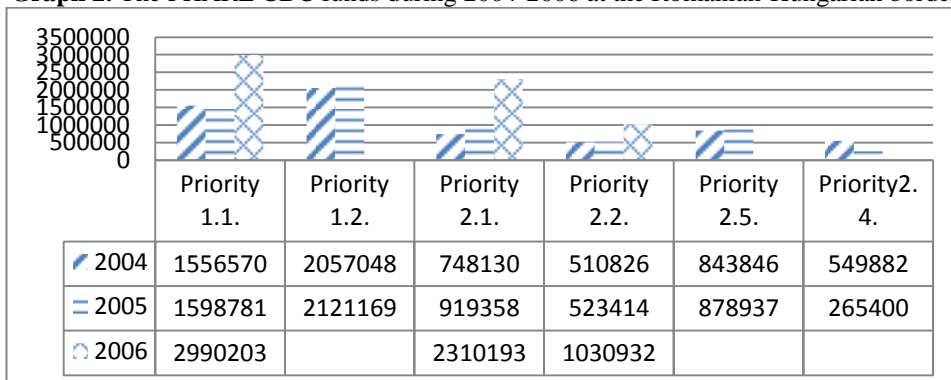
**Graph 1.** The PHARE CBC funds during 2004-2006 in Bihor and Hajdú Bihar County



*Source:* Own elaboration, <http://www.brecoradea.ro/index.php/programe/phare-cbc>

For a more detailed analysis, we presented **Graph 2**, which shows the distribution of funds between key area of intervention.

**Graph 2.** The PHARE CBC funds during 2004-2006 at the Romanian-Hungarian border

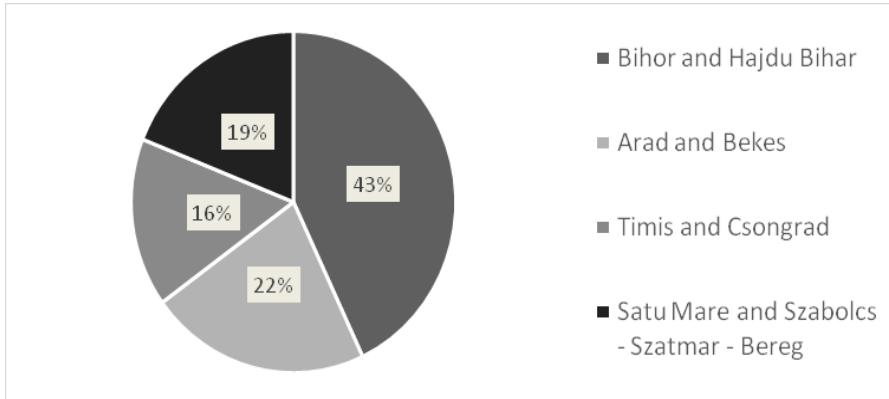


*Source:* <http://www.brecoradea.ro/index.php/programe/phare-cbc>

During the implementation of the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013, the Bihor-Hajdú Bihar Euroregion, through its two counties, attracted from a total of 248 million Euros, a percentage of 43% of the program funds, being an example of good practice at the Romanian – Hungarian border<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Ioan Horga, “Evaluarea On-Going a Programului de Cooperare Transfrontalieră Ungaria-România (2007-2013)”, in *Evaluarea cooperării teritoriale europene* [Evaluation of European territorial cooperation], edited by Ioan Horga, Constantin-Vasile Țoca, University of Oradea Press, 2013, p. 23-35; Florentina Chirodea, Luminița Șoproni, Constantin-Vasile Țoca, “Cross-Border Cooperation in Bihor – Hajdú Bihar Euroregion. Achievements, Opportunities and Perspectives”, in *Cross-Border Cooperation in Bihor – Hajdú Bihar Euroregion. Achievements, Opportunities and*

**Graph 3.** HU - RO 2007-2013 funds at the Romanian-Hungarian border



*Source:* own elaboration, based on data collected from [http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/financed\\_projects/](http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/financed_projects/)

### **Carpathian Euroregion**

The Carpathian Euroregion is one of the largest Euroregions in Europe, encompassing no less than 5 component countries (Romania, Hungary, Ukraine, Slovakia and Poland), covering an area of over 160,000. square km and with a population of about 16 million inhabitants<sup>10</sup>. At the level of the Carpathian Euroregion, a foundation has been set up for each country, the Carpathian Foundation, which has played an important role in financing projects in this area in order to develop this vast region of Europe. If we focus only to the Romanian-Hungarian border, we aim two counties on the Romanian side (Bihor and Satu Mare), and on the other side of the frontier, we have the counties of Hajdu Bihar and Szatmar Bereg. For the Hungarian side, the implemented projects were founded by a number of programs, including the National Cooperation Fund (Nemzeti Együttműködési Alap) and ENPI INTERREG programs. The most

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*Perspectives*, edited by Constantin-Vasile Țoca, Ioan Horga, Luminița Șoproni, University of Debrecen Press, 2017, p. 49-61.

<sup>10</sup> István Süli-Zakar, *Kozos Multunk – Kozos Europaert: 20 Eves a Karpatok Euroregio. Emlkek, Sikerek, Megujulas* [Kozos Multunk – Kozos Europaert: 20 years of the Carpathian Euroregion. Memories, successes, renewal], Didakt Kft Debrecen, Debrecen 2014, p. 371-372; István Süli-Zakar, *A Karpatok Euroregio Interregionalis Szovetseg Tiz Eve* [The Carpathians Euroregio Interregionalis Alliance ten eve], Debreceni Egyetem Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadoja, Debrecen, 2003, p. 111; István Süli-Zakar, *A Karpatok Euroregio 15 ev ahatarokon ativelo kapcsolatok fejleszteseert* [The Carpathian Euroregio has been developing relations for 15 years], Debreceni Egyetem Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadoja, Debrecen, 2008, p. 97-112; István Süli-Zakar, Klára Czimre, *Carpathian Euroregion – Borders in the Region – Cross-Border Co-operation*, University of Debrecen Press, Debrecen, 2001, p. 160.

important projects implemented by Hungary within the Carpathian Euroregion, which involved cross-border area of interest, are presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** The main projects implemented by Hungary in the Carpathian Euroregion with a focus on Romanian-Hungarian border area

Nr Crt	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget
1	FLAPP (Flood Awareness and Prevention Policy)	After a cyanide pollution in the Tisza River basin the objective was to raise flood awareness, start sustainable flood management and CBC to stimulate river basin approach	2004-2007	1 672 850 INTERRE G IVC
2	Borders through the eyes of people	Sociological analysis and activities in border regions of Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine <sup>3</sup>	2012-2014	487 491 ENPI
3	Promotion of folk-arts and handicrafts in the Carpathian Euroregion	To return local folk-arts and handicrafts their role as an important part of cultural and economic life in the border Hungary-Ukraine region <sup>3</sup>	2013-2014	91 447 ENPI
4	CBC Parliament	To create a new IT tool and databases for development of the border region	2009-2011	424 971 ENPI
5	CER NEA Professional Program	To analyse and evaluate 20 years of CER, conference, book, operational support	2013-2014	13 324 NEA
6	Sustainable Development of Border Regions provided by effective functioning the Carpathian Euroregion	Creation a new macro-strategy for the CER territory	2013-2015	537 610 ENPI

**Source:** Rudolf Bauer, *The Carpathian Euroregion project. Short study*, [http://cesci-net.eu/tiny\\_mce/uploaded/CER\\_study.pdf](http://cesci-net.eu/tiny_mce/uploaded/CER_study.pdf)

On the other hand, the Carpathian Foundation has been actively involved in the development of the Carpathian Euroregion in order to improve the quality of life, preserve social, ethnic, cultural<sup>11</sup>, environmental and sustainable development values in five Hungarian regions. The Foundation has been involved in grant and program activities totalling 1.5 million USD, but the most important grants that deserve attention are: construction program, 212,088 USD; integrated rural community program, 263,600 USD; Carpathian cultural heritage program with 171,000 USD; The Roma Net program dedicated 80,000 USD to Roma

<sup>11</sup> Alina Stoica, Constantin-Vasile Țoca, "Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Cultural and Educational Relations", in *Cross-Border Partnership: With Special Regard to the Hungarian-Romanian-Ukrainian Tripartite Border*, edited by I. Horga, I. Süli-Zakar, University of Oradea Press, Oradea, 2010, p. 70-75.

NGOs; CBC Carpathian program with 157 180 USD; Carpathian BRIDGE (the best rural development initiatives and gateway to Europe) with 80,000 USD; the program of local initiatives in the CER with 79,144 USD; *Community Centre of Development* with 30,000 USD; the Carpathian Scholarship Program with 20,000 USD.<sup>12</sup>

In Romania, one of the most representative projects implemented in the Carpathian Euroregion is the *Sustainable Development of Border Regions* project, which aimed to create a new macro-strategy for the CER territory, implemented in 2013-2015, with ENPI funds amounting to 537610 Euro<sup>13</sup>. Probably the last big project was in 2009, namely the “Civil Society Development Foundation”, where Carpathian Foundation Romania together with the Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation obtained financing from the Norwegian EEA funds in total € 2741817. The project had five components, namely strengthening democracy, children and young people, social inclusion and social services, the environment and cultural heritage<sup>14</sup>.

Like its counterparts, Hungary, the Romanian part of the Carpathian Foundation (CF) provided funding for over 250 projects with a value of approximately 1,500,000 between 1995 and 2005. Among important funding projects were: the local initiative program (until 5,000 USD / project); CBC Program (up to 25,000 USD); Integrated Rural Community Development Program (IRCD) (up to 150,000 USD / project); RomaNet (up to 5,000 USD / project); Heritage Program Live (up to 8,000 USD / project). Furthermore, the Romanian CF, since 1995, the Carpathian Foundation has received funds from a multitude of financiers from the European continent as well as from the USA, as follows<sup>15</sup>: The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Michigan, USA, 10,8 million USD, between 1995 and 2010, The Ford Foundation, New York City, New York, USA, 400,000 USD in 2002-2003, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, New York City, New York, USA, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington D.C., USA, The EastWest Institute, New York City, New York, USA, The Cooperating Netherland Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2,6 million USD between 2002 and 2008; The European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands; The Open Society Institute, Budapest, Hungary, 1,7 million USD in 1999-2006; King Baudouin Foundation, Brussels, Belgium, 180,000 USD in 1999-2004; The International Visegrad Fund, Bratislava, Slovakia, Georghe Ofrim, Sighetu Marmăției, Romania, Fred Robbey, The

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<sup>12</sup> Rudof Bauer, *The Carpathian Euroregion Project. Short Study*, available at [http://cesci-net.eu/tiny\\_mce/uploaded/CER\\_study.pdf](http://cesci-net.eu/tiny_mce/uploaded/CER_study.pdf) [accessed in 12/29/2020], p. 24-25.

<sup>13</sup> Official site of the project no. HUSKROUA/1101/066 available at <https://www.keep.eu/project/15316/sustainable-development-of-border-regions-provided-by-effective-functioning-the-carpathian-euroregion> [accessed in 12/29/2020].

<sup>14</sup> Environmental Partnership Foundation, NGO Funded projects 2004-2009, available at [www.repf.ro](http://www.repf.ro) [accessed in 02/02/2021].

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

Villages, Florida, USA, 900,000 USD in 2002-2003; The Charities Aid Foundation, 460,000 USD<sup>16</sup>.

Based on the data analysed at the level of the Carpathian Euroregion and especially of the projects implemented at Romanian-Hungarian border, in the counties that are our research target area, were implemented, over a period of 20 years, projects in value of 4,727,693 Euros initiated by the Hungarian side, and by the Romanian side, projects worth 4,779,427 Euros. Furthermore, on the Romanian side, we have an added value of over 16,000,000 USD through the contribution of the various external sponsors.

### **Euroregion Danube - Kris – Mureş - Tisa**

This Euroregion is based on the collaboration relations between three countries, Romania, Hungary and Serbia, and at the level of Romanian-Hungarian borders we have 3 counties in our target area, namely Arad, Timiș and Csongrad. At the level of this Euroregion, in our target area operates the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013, through which they were financed 2 major cross-border projects: Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion; EuroRegional News Aggregator project<sup>17</sup>.

The funds attracted by the counties from the DKTM Euroregion, mirroring the counties on both sides of the Romanian-Hungarian border, the counties of Timiș and Csongrad attracted 16% of the HU - RO RO 2007-2103 funds, and Arad and Békés (Békés is not part of the DKTM Euroregion, but is in our research area), they attracted 22% of the HU - RO 2007-2013 funds.

### **European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation**

The European Territorial Cooperation Group Bánát - Triplex Confinium Limited Liability EGTC, was established in 2001 and based in Mórahalom (Hungary). The group is composed of Romanian (37) and Hungarian (37) mayors plus 8 communes in Serbia, as observer members. At the level of this area, there is collaboration with the Serbian side, materialized in cross-border projects implemented at the level of Serbian-Hungarian border. Even if this area is not in our established zone of study, the funds attracted through projects are important and worth taking into account. Among the projects implemented at the level of this group we mention<sup>18</sup>:

- modernization of development strategies of local communities and elaboration and implementation of joint cross-border projects within the Sectoral Operational Programs HU - SRB / 0901/213/013, with a total budget of 99,800 Euro;

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<sup>16</sup> Rudolf Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 26-27.

<sup>17</sup> Official site of Danube – Kris – Mureş – Tisa Euroregion, Completed programs, available at <http://dkmt.net/en/index.php?page=programok>, [accessed in 02/02/2021].

<sup>18</sup> Official page of BTC-EGTC, available at <http://www.btc-egtc.eu/ro/aplicatii/licitatiei-castigate> [accessed in 02/02/2021].



- in within the 2011 ETT call for projects, it was financed for 2011 with 5,000,000 HUF (approximately 14,000 Euro), by the Fund Manager Wekerle Sándor, authorized by the Ministry of Administration and Justice;

- the Ministry of Administration and Justice managed by Wekerle Sándor, launched in 2012 funding of the European Territorial Associations / EET (EET-12 appeal code). The group receives non-reimbursable funding of 8,850,000 HUF (approximately 25,000 Euros);

- the project “Dance and Music Without Borders”, funded through the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013, amounting to 69,743 Euros;

- COOP-BANAT-HURO/1001/083/2.1.2. - a project who worth 75,770 Euro, and aimed to strengthen cooperation between the Southern Plain region of Hungary and the Western region of Romania, for stimulate economic growth by capitalizing on the territorial advantages and relational as well as the elaboration of a strategic plan of the group.

The European Territorial Cooperation Group “Gateway Europe” - Limited Liability (EGTC “Gateway to Europe”), (EGTC Gate to Europe Ltd.), has in turn implemented a number of projects that have received funding from two directions, one national, from the Hungarian state, and the second European funds directive. Among the projects implemented at the level of this group we mention<sup>19</sup>:

- from the Hungarian state, on the budget line to support the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation), several projects were implemented through which the website was created, meetings between local actors and organizing various activities; from the Ministry of Justice of Hungary financing the project ETT-13-B-0003, in amount of 9 112 500 Forints and the project ETT-14-B-0006 in amount of 10 000 000 Forints,

- from the direction of the financing from European funds, the project was implemented Agricultural forum in Dél-Nyírség Erdőpuszták Leader Association's localities for the realization of one Agricultural Forum based on 35/2013 (V.22) Rural Development Ministry Regulation regarding the implementation of LEADER Strategies.

European Common Future Building EGTC, is a Romanian - Hungarian EGTC group with 8 members at the moment, but at the level of this form of cooperation we have not identified any statistical information. However, based on the group's objectives, the aim was to consolidate a common tourism management system, which would present the entire region to tourists, with an implementation idea by designing a website and developing a common marketing strategy<sup>20</sup>. Among its other objectives, the EGTC emphasizes investment in infrastructure,

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<sup>19</sup> Official site of EUROPA-KAPU EGCT, available at <http://europakapu.eu/projects>, [accessed in 02/02/2021].

<sup>20</sup> European Committee of the Regions, EGTC, *Europe – Building Common Future*, available at [https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRActivities/Pages/Eur%C3%B3pa-k%C3%B6z%-j%C3%B6v%C5%91-%C3%A9p%C3%ADt%C5%91-\(Europe---building-common-future\).aspx](https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRActivities/Pages/Eur%C3%B3pa-k%C3%B6z%-j%C3%B6v%C5%91-%C3%A9p%C3%ADt%C5%91-(Europe---building-common-future).aspx), [accessed in 02/02/2021].

training and cooperation of producers, while intending to focus more on visibility and capacity building.

European Border Cities European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited Liability (European Border Cities EGTC), was initiated by the president of the European Border Cities EGTC, Ferenc Kovács - mayor of Nyíregyháza and the co-president Gábor Kereskényi, mayor of Satu Mare. Its director is István Pató, the head of the Urban Planning and City Management department in the mayor's office in Nyíregyháza. According to the EGTC Group's data, it focuses on the launch of the Hungary-Romania cross-border development programs for 2014-2020 and the quadripartite cross-border cooperation programs (HU-SK-RO-AU), that are able to carry out the group's plans<sup>21</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

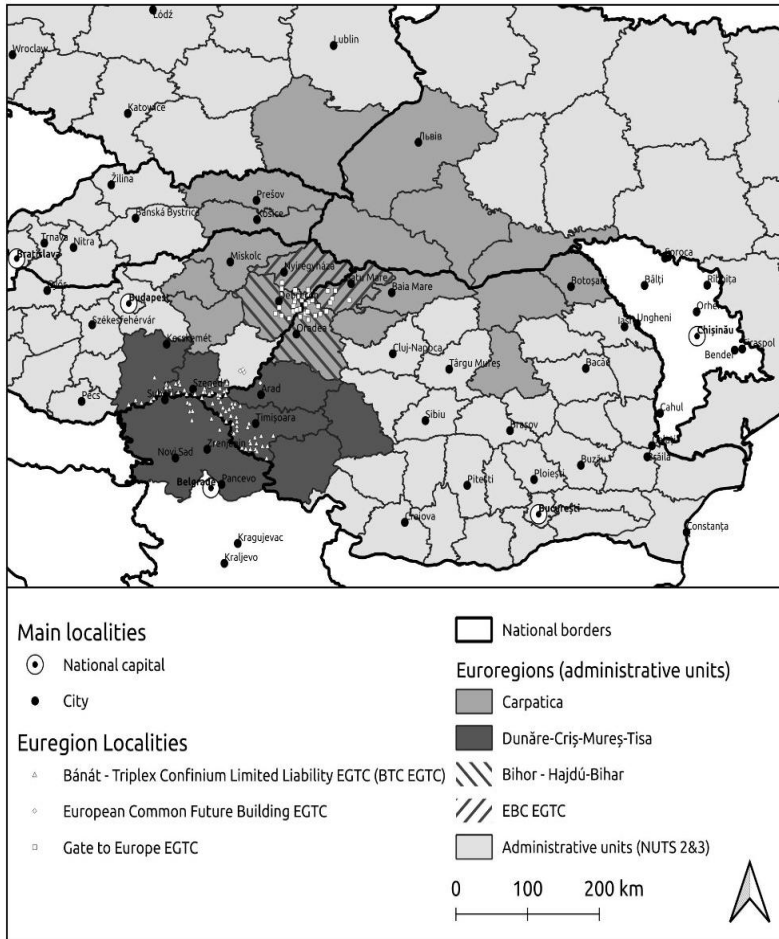
Based on the study carried out in our work, we will try to highlight the cross-border cooperation at the Romanian – Hungarian border, where we have identified two forms of cross-border cooperation, namely Euroregions and EGTCs. On the other hand, a very effective instrument was the cross-border programs between 2004 and 2006 (when projects were implemented from pre-accession funds) and between 2014-2020. In this context, a specific instrument has been identified at the level of the Carpathian Euroregion, which through the fund set up has supported Euroregion in its overall development.

In general, all forms of cross-border cooperation as well as cross-border projects have been a real support for the development of the Romanian-Hungarian border. In order to see, as accurately as possible, the implementation of cross-border cooperation between Romania and Hungary, we present below a map in which we capture the involvement of the neighbouring counties, as well as those NUTSs territorial area which have been added by extending the Euroregions or EGTCs. Thus, covering a larger area than proposed at the beginning of the study, the area of impact is much greater and the communities are more significant.

The final conclusion of the work, following the research carried out, is that at the Romanian – Hungarian border a series of results could be identified which helped to develop the target border regions, as well as the neighbouring communities. By implementation of cross-border projects founded especially through HU – RO 2007-2013 programme, was developed an infrastructure who laid the foundation for sustained collaboration for the next Interreg V A Cross-border Cooperation Program.

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<sup>21</sup> European Committee of the Regions, EGTC, *European Border Cities EGTC*, available at <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRActivities/Pages/border-cities.aspx>, [accessed in 02/02/2021].



All this combined represents an added value to the study of border regions, which falls within the objective of the Regional Development Policy, namely the increase of the target area, the increase in the quality of life in this zone and as far as possible the reduction of distance from the developed regions of the European Union.

# MONOCENTRIC ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, POLYCENTRIC BORDER AREAS? A LOOK AT THE BIHOR – HAJDÚ-BIHAR EURO-REGION

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**Abstract.** *The Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar counties, from both sides of the Romanian – Hungarian border, are, in different degrees, monocentric administrative units, as it is shown in this paper. Each one has an administrative centre that is demographically and economically dominant. They were important urban centres in most of their history and have remained important during the communist era that has dominated Eastern Europe for almost half a century. In that period, polycentrism was a debated concept revolving around political autonomy and control (citation). In this century, Polycentricity is another debated concept, promoted by the European Union as a means of achieving territorial cohesion throughout the EU. In this paper, the main question revolves around how much the permeable borders of the EU, though sometimes confronted with the national interest, can pave the way to polycentric areas. After a look at the speciality literature to explain the concept and to identify ways to measure it, empirical research will provide an answer to the question of whether the Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar Euro-region is or can be a polycentric urban area.*

**Keywords:** *polycentricity, Euro-regions, cross-border cooperation, Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar*

## **Introduction**

The Bihor – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion, composed of the two counties that neighbour each other on both sides of the Romanian-Hungarian border, was founded in 2002 and accumulates almost 20 years of existence<sup>4</sup>. In the initial years both countries were EU membership candidates, both gaining their full membership a few years apart (Hungary - 2004, Romania - 2007). This means that the border that separates the two countries was not a hard dividing line for most of the existence of the Euro-region, facilitating interaction instead of impeding it. As a

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<sup>4</sup> Constantin Țoca, “Ethnical Analysis within Bihor-Hajdú Bihar Euroregion”, in *EuroTimes*, supplement 01/2013, p. 128.

consequence, increased levels of cooperation were possible. The question that we pose in this research is whether this has led to such cooperation levels that did or might generate a polycentric structure.

The research that was put together in this paper starts with a brief overview of the speciality literature that covers the terms of monocentricity and polycentricity. Specifically in the case of polycentricity, we're looking at Polycentric urban regions (PUR). Following this, in the second part, we'll take a look at the administrative set up of the two counties, their history and characteristics. We'll take a special look at their monocentric structure, heavily dominated by the capital cities of each administrative unit, which, though it is quite evident, is also particularly important in the context of this research. Further on, within the third part of the paper, the focus falls on the metrics that highlight polycentric patterns and we'll apply selected metrics to the Euroregion in the fourth part of the study. Our findings do not indicate the existence of a polycentric pattern in the region and the emergence of such a pattern is not to be expected any time soon.

### **Theoretical frame: monocentricity, polycentricity, PUR**

As it is already obvious from the title and introduction, in the theoretical part of the study we need to analyse and discuss two opposing key terms: monocentricity and polycentricity.

We will not dive too deep into the speciality literature, as the purpose of the study is not an exhaustive analysis of the two terms. Instead, we're focusing on a small, but relevant, part of it. An in-depth, comprehensive analysis of the speciality literature, that goes back almost a century<sup>5</sup>, would defeat the purpose of this study, so we'll base these concepts on relatively recent studies, published after the European Union started discussing and, eventually, promoting polycentricity as a means of achieving a more economically, socially and territorially balanced Union.

One of the first extensive studies that has put polycentricity in a practical perspective is the report of the *ESPON 111: Potentials for Polycentric Development in Europe* project, which places the two terms in opposition, and describes monocentricity as a territorial structure in which "service provision and territorial management competence is increasingly concentrated to a single centre"<sup>6</sup>, also to be found in a follow-up report published two years later<sup>7</sup>. Another, yet very similar description, states that monocentricity is "the obvious mirror image

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<sup>5</sup> For some details regarding the evolution of territorial structures related to the two concepts see Christian Vandermotten et al., "European Planning and the Polycentric Consensus: Wishful Thinking?", in *Regional Studies*, vol. 42, no. 8, 2008, p. 1205–1217.

<sup>6</sup> European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON), *ESPON 1.1.1.: Potentials for Polycentric Development in Europe*, Nordic Centre for Spatial Development, Stockholm, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> ESPON, *ESPON project 1.4.3 Study on Urban Functions. Final Report*, The ESPON Monitoring Committee, March 2007, available at [https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/fr-1.4.3\\_April2007-final.pdf](https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/fr-1.4.3_April2007-final.pdf), [accessed in April 2021].

or contrast case of the polycentric model”, which also finds the monocentric model to be inadequate to describe the spatial distribution of cities today<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, monocentric patterns are highly associated with areas that are heavily dominated by an urban centre, no further clarifications being needed in this regard.

Davoudi identifies polycentricity as a term initially used to describe the internal patterns of cities, to “mark a departure from the monocentric model”<sup>9</sup>, putting the two terms in opposition at this level as well.

The use of the two terms at “outer-urban” scales is linked mainly to European spatial planning. The macro level is linked to the European level by the ESPON 111 project report while the meso level is linked to the national and transnational levels, the latter one being of relevance for our study<sup>10</sup>.

Polycentricity is categorized into *morphological*, when addressing the distribution and size of urban areas, and *functional* (or relational), when addressing interactions between urban nodes potentially forming a polycentric pattern<sup>11</sup>. Discussions whether the morphological elements are enough to describe a region as polycentric can be found in the speciality literature, however Vandermotten provides examples of morphologically polycentric areas, that still behave in quite a monocentric manner<sup>12</sup>. Meijers, for example, highlights that the basic definition of polycentricity, which refers to the existence of multiple centres in a given area, refers strictly to the morphological characteristics and the functional aspects are characteristic of networked and not polycentric urban systems<sup>13</sup>.

Burger and Meijers compared the two forms of polycentricity, morphological and functional, based on local importance, to highlight the former and centrality, to highlight the latter<sup>14</sup>. Their conclusions leave room for improvement; however, they do find heavy correlation between morphological and functional polycentricity<sup>15</sup>.

This brings us to Polycentric Urban Regions (PUR), which is not a new concept according to Kloosterman’s brief historical analysis of the related speciality literature<sup>16</sup>. The most common aspects that are presented as defining elements of a PUR are (1) the presence of two or more (multiple) cities and towns, which are (2)

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<sup>8</sup> Robert C. Kloosterman, Sako Musterd, “The Polycentric Urban Region: Towards a Research Agenda”, in *Urban Studies*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2001, p. 624.

<sup>9</sup> Simin Davoudi, “European Briefing: Polycentricity in European Spatial Planning: from an Analytical Tool to a Normative Agenda”, in *European Planning Studies*, vol. 11, no. 8, 2003, p. 993, 994.

<sup>10</sup> ESPON, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 20–23.

<sup>11</sup> Martijn Burger, Evert Meijers, “Form Follows Function? Linking Morphological and Functional Polycentricity”, in *Urban Studies*, vol. 49, no. 5, April 2012, p. 1132, 1133.

<sup>12</sup> Christian Vandermotten et al., *op. cit.*, p. 1210.

<sup>13</sup> Evert Meijers, “Measuring Polycentricity and Its Promises”, in *European Planning Studies*, vol. 16, no. 9, October 2008, p. 1319.

<sup>14</sup> Martijn Burger, Evert Meijers, *op. cit.*, p. 1134.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1144.

<sup>16</sup> Robert C. Kloosterman, Sako Musterd, *op. cit.*,

historically, administratively and politically independent, (3) located in close proximity and (4) well connected<sup>17</sup>.

Discussions revolve around some of the more unclear and broadly defined aspects mentioned above. The first and the second one is quite clear. They just state that the region has to include several urban areas that are clearly separated urban entities and can be differentiated from other structures such as Metropolitan areas.

The aspects that leave room for interpretation are the ones referring to the proximity of the centres and their level of connectivity.

Reasonable proximity is heavily linked to commuting, in the eyes of many scholars, as Davoudi points out, also highlighting the fact that, as technology advances, faster means of transport are introduced which, eventually, would include larger areas into PUR<sup>18</sup>. Commuting times are also affected, in densely populated areas by traffic congestion<sup>19</sup> which would disqualify some areas that would otherwise be considered PUR, because of the *close proximity* attribute.

It is also questionable whether it is enough to investigate commuting patterns to determine if two urban areas are in reasonable proximity, as there are many other ways in which two cities or towns may interact, on a daily basis, thus checking both the proximity and connectivity attributes of the definition of a polycentric urban region. For example, Burger and Meijers analysed morphological and functional polycentricity based on commuting and shopping flows as well employment numbers<sup>20</sup>.

When it comes to connectivity, or interdependency, the journey to work is considered a defining factor in many studies, however it is not generally accepted as such<sup>21</sup>. Once again, flows and interactions between urban nodes may be generated by many human activities besides travel to work and back.

No matter which is the stance we take here, connectivity and proximity are the more difficult attributes to evaluate and are dependent on the availability of flow related data. They also link PUR more to functional polycentricity rather than morphological polycentricity.

Further on in this study we'll consider size-distribution related data to analyse morphologically polycentric patterns in the area, leaving open the opportunity for functional polycentricity at a later stage, within a different study.

### **The territorial configuration of the study area**

Documentary attestation puts the origins of the two main urban centres of the study area before the 12th (Oradea) and 13th (Debrecen) centuries with

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<sup>17</sup> Evert Meijers, "Polycentric Urban Regions and the Quest for Synergy: Is a Network of Cities more than the Sum of the Parts?", in *Urban Studies*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2005, p. 765; Simin Davoudi, *op. cit.*, p. 986; ESPON, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 179, 180.

<sup>18</sup> Simin Davoudi, *op. cit.*, p. 986.

<sup>19</sup> Julien Grunfelder, Thomas Sick Nielsen, "Commuting Behaviour and Urban Form: A Longitudinal Study of a Polycentric Urban Region in Denmark", in *Geografisk Tidsskrift-Danish Journal of Geography*, vol. 112, no. 1, 2012, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Martijn Burger, Evert Meijers, *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Simin Davoudi, *op. cit.*, p. 986.

archaeological evidence showing that the area has been inhabited for much longer. Their evolution through most of their history is not of importance to this study, however, both cities have been important urban settlements in the area for quite some time, being the capitals of the Bihor and Hajdúság (Hajdú) counties. After the second world war the Hajdú-Bihar County was established, extending the area of the former Hajdú county and affecting the area covered by the Bihor County as well.

The maps below (see **Fig. 1**) highlight the demographic evolution of the main urban localities of today, from the study area, by classifying them based on the number of inhabitants, at different moments in time. They clearly show that the two capital cities have always dominated the area, being important centres and thus, creating a monocentric pattern within their respective counties. This dominance has grown stronger through time. Since this is not of relevance for the current study, we will not go into details regarding the reasons for which they have outgrown to such extent the other localities from the area, though, considering the fact that for a significant amount of time they were under a communist regime, it is pretty clear that the evolution was dictated.

Currently, both counties have a relatively high number of urban localities with a clear advantage for the Hungarian side (Bihor: 10, Hajdú-Bihar: 21). Despite this, besides the two capital cities, and compared to them, the other urban centres are quite small. There is also a difference in the division of the territory into local administrative units. The ones in the western side of the Hajdú-Bihar County cover significantly larger territories than the rest of the Euroregion.

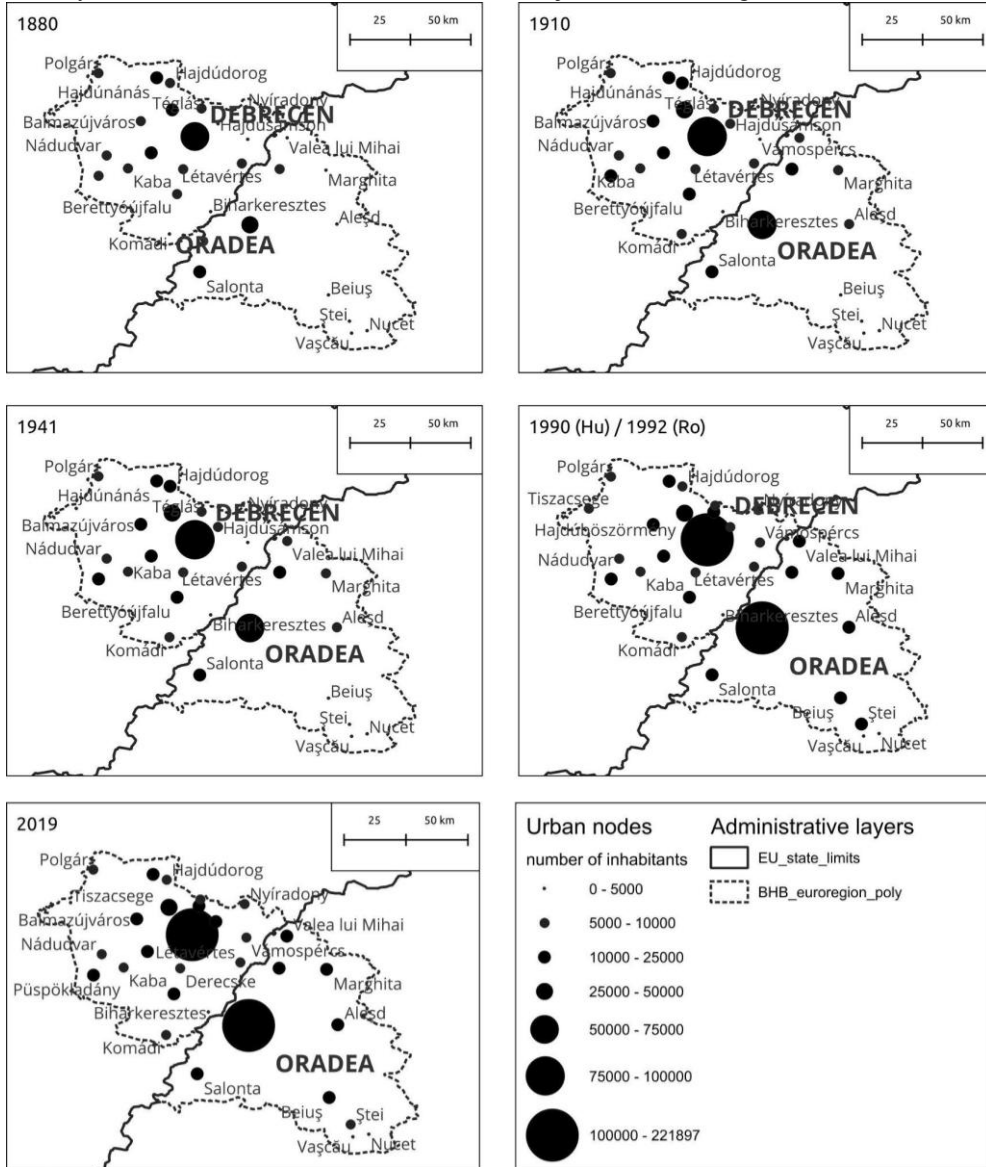
Most urban localities have 30,000 inhabitants or less. Though the map doesn't show it, as it displays only localities having an urban status, there are quite a few communes comparable in size with other smaller sized towns, the largest one being Sânmartin (in Bihor) with more than 10,000 inhabitants. One other remark that can be made is that many of the towns in the Hungarian side are actually quite small in terms of the number of inhabitants (12 of them have less than 10,000 inhabitants), which actually shows that many localities offer better living conditions, that match the requirements for urban status, on the Hungarian side than on the Romanian side, within the study area.

In terms of the territorial distribution of the urban centres, there also seems to be better coverage on the Hungarian side which means that, theoretically, more inhabitants should have access to better important public services in Hajdú-Bihar than in Bihor.

This brief overview of the territorial context stands simply as a starting point that highlights the clear dominance of the two capital cities within the study area.



**Figure 1.** Maps showing the evolution of the number of inhabitants of the urban localities of today, between 1880 and 2020, in the Bihar – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion



**Source:** Hungarian Central Statistical Office official site, available at <https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en>, [accessed in August 2021]; Varga E. Árpád, *Erdély etnikai és felekezeti statisztikája. Népszámlálási adatok 1850-2002 között* [Ethnic and denominational statistics of Transylvania. Census data between 1850 and 2002], available at <http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002.htm>, [accessed in August 2021]; Eurostat, *GISCO. Geographical Informations and Maps*, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/gisco/geodata/reference-data/administrative-units-statistical-units>, [accessed in August 2021].

### **Measuring monocentricity and polycentricity**

Well, actually, considering the previous research on the topic mentioned within the section concerned with the theoretical frame of this paper, we're not really measuring them separately, but, based on selected indices, we're measuring where they are positioned on a scale that has the monocentricity on one end and polycentricity on the other.

In our case, one of the most challenging tasks regarding the selection of appropriate indices to measure the level of polycentricity (or monocentricity) of the study area is finding the right data to do so. For the study area that was selected here, even though it is, we think, an interesting case study, being a cross-border area, within a context that facilitates cooperation, at least for the last 20 years or so, both parts of EU member countries, it still challenging to find, not just appropriate data for our purpose, but matching data. To be more specific, the fact that the level we're analysing the local level, within two different countries makes data availability for similar indices almost impossible even if we're only looking to address morphologic polycentricity as mentioned earlier in this paper.

As mentioned in the section dedicated to the theoretical frame, we'll consider only morphologic polycentricity within this study. As an indicator through which we'll analyse it we've selected the number of dwellings within the area. The selection of relevant indices should be based on whether they reflect a pattern that suggests a more balanced distribution of the socio-economic factors within the territory. Considering this, the evolution of the number of dwellings within the territory should highlight a more balanced distribution of such factors as they show, to some extent, when a certain location becomes attractive for incoming population or if it manages to keep the young population in.

However, there is one caveat to these assumptions and that's that the increase of dwellings in local administrative units surrounding larger localities are, many times, caused by that fact that they are attractive just as dormitory villages or towns so, the numbers don't tell the whole story.

Some of the studies researching the level of polycentricity use statistical methods while others also consider spatial factors, which we think are important as they reflect how well distributed the localities are within the territory and, in their absence, certain areas might be considered polycentric even if the more developed localities are all concentrated in one area. However, all these researches are static and they don't analyse the evolution of areas towards either of the two ends of the monocentric-polycentric scale, which is what we intend to look into.

Based on this line of thought, the following methods with corresponding representations will be used to analyse the evolution and level of polycentricity within the study area:

- The difference in the number of dwellings between 2003 and 2020, to highlight the evolution and distribution of growth (or decrease) within the territory, represented as a map,
- The distribution of the number of dwellings within the territory in 2003 and 2020, to understand the evolution, represented as maps,

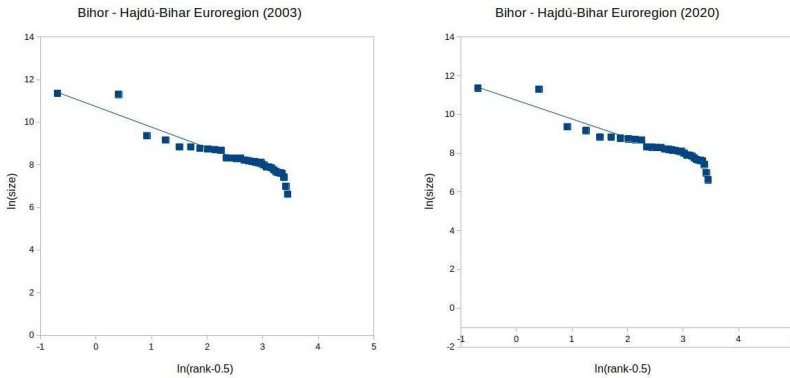
- Rank-size distribution of the number of dwellings in 2003 and 2020, to highlight the polycentricity levels, without accounting for spatial distribution, represented as charts.

### Monocentric parts, polycentric whole?

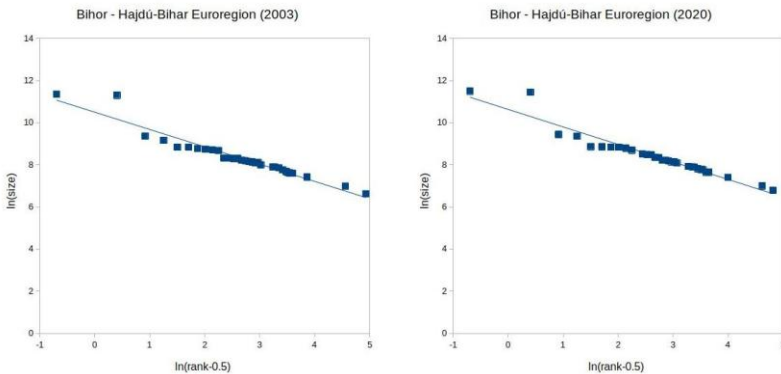
The visual outcome of our research are several maps and charts that explain the evolution of the settlements within the territory from the perspective of the monocentric-polycentric scale. The resulting representations show that the study area didn't evolve in any way towards a polycentric pattern as far as the dwellings related data shows. On the contrary, the increase in the number of dwellings is much stronger in the two county seats, showing that their dominance within the area is actually growing.

First of all, we've applied the rank-size distribution method of analysis to the Euroregion as a whole (**Fig. 2**), but also to the two counties individually (**Fig. 3** and **4**). The selection of the nodes that are included in the rank-size distribution analysis is also quite significant and may alter the results. For each of the areas mentioned above we've considered first, all of the localities from the area, but we also looked at the urban nodes separately, as the images below show.

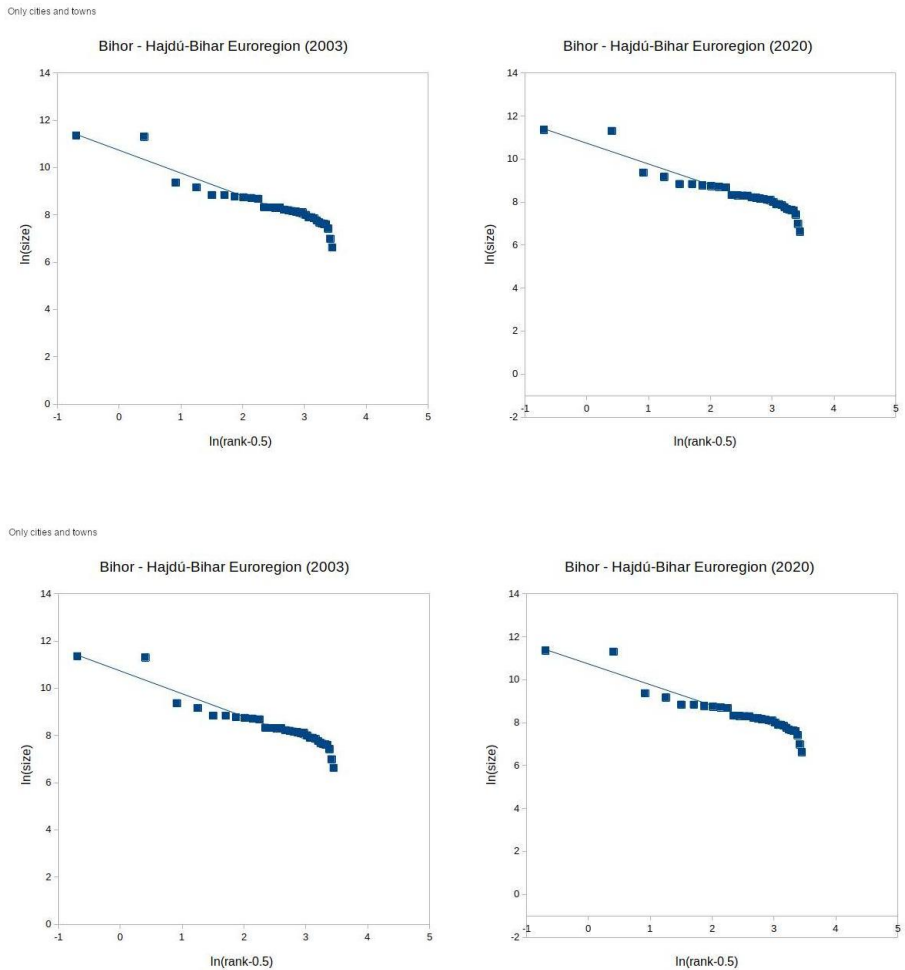
Only cities and towns



All localities



**Figure 2.** Rank-size distribution of the number of dwellings within the Bihar - Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion in 2003 and 2020



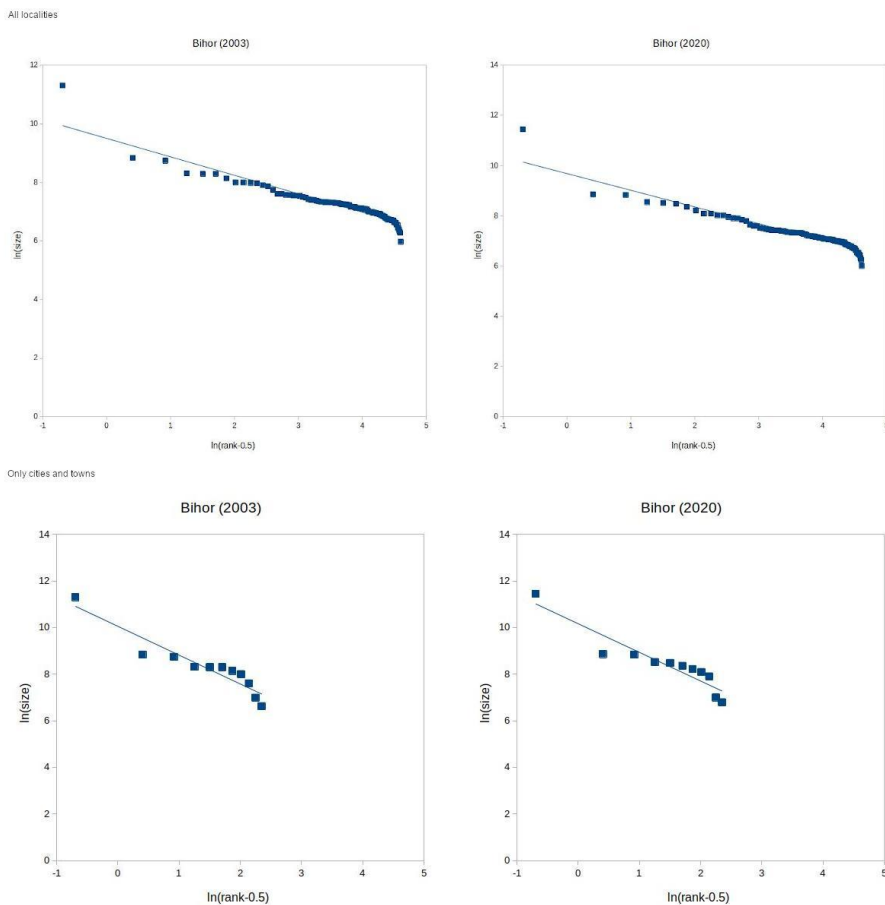
**Source:** Hungarian Central Statistical Office official site, available at <https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en>, [accessed in August 2021]; National Institute of Statistics, *Statistical data bases*, available at <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, [accessed in August 2021]).

The charts show that there is no significant change within the Euroregion between the two vertical snapshots of 2003 and 2020. Secondly, comparing horizontally the previous image, there is no significant difference between the top two charts and the bottom two ones, which just highlight how dominant the two urban centres are. When thinking of the definition of morphologic polycentricity, which states that there should be two or more well distributed and of balanced size

urban centres, perhaps we could say that there is a hint of morphologic polycentricity in the study area as the two capital cities are more or less balanced in term of the number of dwellings. Nonetheless, we consider that this is not enough to state that this area is polycentric and that the flows between the two centres and other urban nodes within the area are necessary to give any significance to this term.

Taken separately, the two areas are, as expected, quite monocentric morphologically. The Bihor County shows a stronger monocentric pattern than Hajdú-Bihar however, the difference is not significant. Again, no significant differences can be spotted based on these charts between 2003 and 2020, in either of the two counties, whether all of the localities are considered or only the urban ones.

**Fig. 3.** Rank-size distribution of the number of dwellings within Bihor County in 2003 and 2020

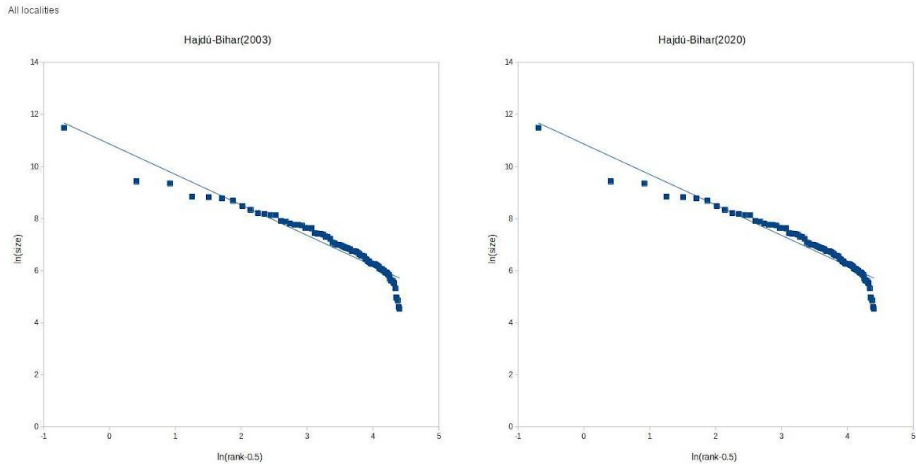


**Source:** National Institute of Statistics, *Statistical data bases*, available at <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, [accessed in August 2021].

Three of the towns from the Bihor County show some increase in the number of dwellings however, not enough to counterbalance the growth in Oradea. Also, there is clear evidence of the dormitory village trend around Oradea, as highlighted in **Fig. 5**.

In Hajdú-Bihar County, Hajdúszoboszló is the one town that has seen a greater increase in the number of dwellings during the analysed time-frame.

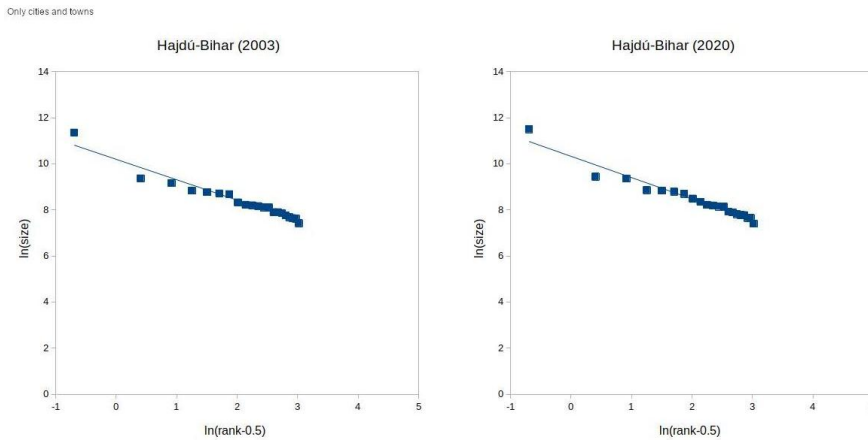
**Fig. 4.** Rank-size distribution of the number of dwellings within Hajdú-Bihar County in 2003 and 2020



**Source:** Hungarian Central Statistical Office official site, available at <https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en>, [accessed in August 2021].

However, just like in the case of Bihor County, the increase in Debrecen is much stronger. There also seems to be some increase in the vicinity of Debrecen, just like in the case of Oradea, but it is not so evident most probably due to the larger area covered by the administrative territory of Debrecen which is most probably where most of the new residential dwellings have concentrated.

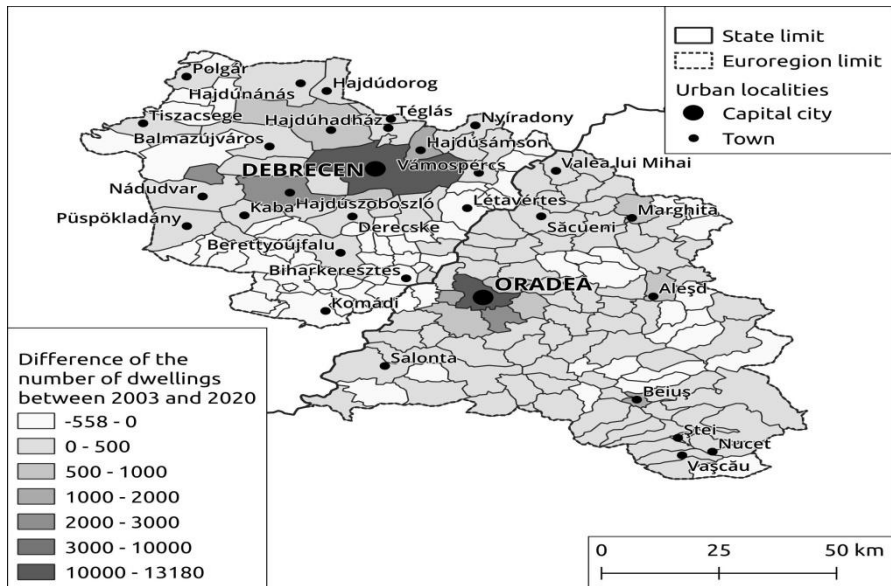
**Fig. 5.** Evolution of the number of dwellings within the Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion, between 2003 and 2020



**Source:** Eurostat, *GISCO. Geographical Informations and Maps*, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/gisco/geodata/reference-data/administrative-units-statistical-units>, [accessed in August 2021]; Hungarian Central Statistical Office official site, available at <https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en>, [accessed in August 2021]; National Institute of Statistics, *Statistical data bases*, available at <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>, [accessed in August 2021].

## Conclusions

The study shows that, considering the chosen data, there is no evidence in the case of the Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion of a clear evolution towards a clear polycentric pattern, which would include the functional aspects as well, though the characteristics of morphologic polycentricity are there. Even though we think the number of dwellings could provide good indications in this regard, we wouldn't draw any final conclusions regarding the appropriateness of this indicator for this purpose. To confirm these outcomes, we think the study deserves to be continued by looking into other indicators and data that would address both morphologic and functional polycentricity, as proposed by the speciality literature.



The introduction of time within the equation seems to provide an additional level of detail which could be further investigated. In our case study it actually shows that the direction seems to be quite opposite than the one that our hypothesis considered.

Spatial aspects are also crucial in analysing the results of polycentricity related research, as it provides a very important perspective which shouldn't be neglected in such endeavours. Simply looking at statistical data is not enough unless they also reflect the distribution within the territory. Otherwise, concentrations of urban areas within a small territory of a study area could be mistaken for polycentric patterns that would be characteristic only for a small portion of it.

One final conclusion is that, to be able to tell whether two monocentric neighbouring areas could generate a polycentric pattern, the size and distribution of the nodes is not sufficient to reach a conclusion.

Given all of the above, we still think it would be interesting to see what additional information would be provided by analysing the area, from the perspective of functional polycentricity, with different sets of data.





# WATERSIDE BORDER CITIES IN ROMANIA AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Cristina-Maria DOGOT\*

***Abstract:** Living in border regions can be a particular experience both for citizens and for the public administration of the cities. From west to east, the main border cities of Romania benefited, according to their efforts and interests, from cross-border cooperation programmes and were and/or are involved in cross-border cooperation projects with similar partners from the neighbouring states. This study focuses on cross-border cooperation programmes developed by cities situated on the waterside border or very near by a waterside border and that have not terrestrial borders with the neighbour states. Considering the particularities of these areas, this study will draw attention to the specificities of the cooperation programmes developed by these cities, to the benefits and the eventual dynamics that these programmes succeeded in adding to the local communities.*

***Keywords:** waterside border cities, cross-border cooperation, CBC programmes and projects*

## **Introduction**

The accession of the former communist states to the European Union brought in the public discussion many concepts and perspectives of cooperation difficult to be imagined before this process began. Though the actions of pre-accession process belonged mainly to the central authorities, the post-accession period offered progressively to the local administrative units the possibility to develop their own direct roles and specific attributions in some activities generated by the state membership to the European Union. This situation was a very challenging one for the great majority of the local administration units, working in the first years of the post-communist period in a large extent with the same human resource as in the communist time. The conditioning of the pre-accession period and the integration process energised, albeit far enough, both the central and local authorities, and a network of cooperation relationships was generated and was stimulated to develop. If the central authorities had more credits to develop this cooperation process based on new (type of) relations and projects, for the local authorities the challenges were various and many times difficult to overpass: they had not the experience to be autonomous, to look for opportunities and to decide

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for themselves, to establish partnerships with foreign similar authorities (and beside all these it is possible to add to the lack of vision and of will to change and corruption).

Being located on a waterfront region had numerous significations over time, a natural border being either a protective barrier, either a hindrance, representing for the adjacent communities also the chance of survival or an obstacle to development<sup>1</sup>. It is obvious that economic, commercial and (geo)political role and significance of these cities changed in different historical times, before and after the unification of Romanian historical provinces, but it is not the objective of this paper to highlight these changes and the challenges raised by different historical factors. However, as for any other community living in a natural border area, for the Romanians communities located along the length of waterside borders this situation historically has played nearly the same particular role as for other similar communities in Europe or across the world. As follows, there are many studies<sup>2</sup> dedicated to this kind of cities, especially to the port cities development in different historical periods, though not referring in an equal or similar way to all of them. But not all cities from the waterside border areas were or are important ports (as they were, for example, Brăila, Galați, Tulcea or Constanța), not all of them played some important economic, commercial or even (geo)political roles in their history, to arouse the large interest of researchers, now or before.

During the communist period some of the western waterside border cities became some important getaway doors for Romanian citizens wanting to escape to the communist regime<sup>3</sup>, and these cities were associated at the time with these concomitant roles, liberating and (many times bloodily) obstructionist. The post-communism annulated these ungrateful particularities of the border cities and opened the path for some new roles for these, in some cases completely opposed to those from the communist time. Hence, progressively the border cities passed from the image of the last place to be leaved on the way to the so much-dreamed

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<sup>1</sup> Giuliano Belezza, "On Borders: From Ancient to Postmodern Times", in *The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences*, 4/W3, Vol. XL-4/2013.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the three articles from the journal *Euxeinos* 14 (Sept. 2014), all dedicated to the Black Sea region in different historical times (Roman Empire, XIII-XIV and XVIII-XIX centuries) and signed by Romanian scholars Constantin Ardeleanu, Octavian Bounegru, Șerban Papacostea and Virgil Ciocîltan; the *Black Sea Project Working Papers Series*, containing thirteen edited volumes, published by the inter-university project "The Black Sea and its Port-Cities, 1774–1914. Development, Convergence and Linkages with the Global Economy" (<https://blacksea.gr/>), conducted in the period 2012–2015. To all these, it is possible to add numerous monographic, cartographic, geographic studies, etc., the collection of historical documents related to some of these cities, too numerous to be recollected here.

<sup>3</sup> They are few studies in Romania on this phenomenon, but they are some testimonies of those who managed to emigrate in this way and even some books focused on some personal similar experiences.

material welfare or intellectual development from the western economies and cultures to the situation of becoming some new tools and actors in the cooperation with the neighbourhood, completing at local level some parts of the roles regularly achieved by the central institutions of the state. Gradually, the Euroregions were established and border cities and counties (not only those situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the frontiers) received new tools and methods of development for themselves and for their immediate or far off neighbourhoods<sup>4</sup>.

The participation to these Euroregions was not so vivid from the beginning, the insufficient legislative framework, the lack of trained staff, the general lack of vision on the new perspectives and opportunities provided by the newly adopted principles of public administration (decentralisation, subsidiarity, deconcentration) and by the cross-border cooperation programmes, the financial and administrative capacities and availability of local administrative entities<sup>5</sup> and/or those of the

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<sup>4</sup> Though Flore Pop considers these regional partnerships because the challenging economic situation of the former communist states, forced to find solutions to their inherent economic difficulties derived from the transition period (see Flore Pop, “Integrarea europeană și tranziția țărilor din Est. Noua Europă Centrală și interesul României pentru cooperarea regională în bazinul Marea Neagră – Dunăre” [Regional development between cooperation and regionalisation], in *Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative*, vol. 1, no. 9/2003, p. 131), it is important to reveal that economic potential of the Black Sea area was not properly exploited during the communist regime, so is not by chance that interest in this coastal area exploded at the beginning of the nineties – on the basis of an initiative of Turkey, directed and highly interested in boosting its activity in the area – as Gumpel and Sebe highlight (see Werner Gumpel, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone. Outline of a New Community of States”, in *Intereconomics*, vol. 20, no. 4, July/August 1993, available at <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/140407/1/v28-i04-a04-BF02926197.pdf>, [accessed March 12, 2021]; Mihai Sebe, “Why the Black Sea Matters for the European Union? Brief Remarks and Possible Developments”, in *Working Paper*, Institute of European Democrats, 2018, p. 5, 23). On the other side, since the 2000 they will intervene some security issues related to the Middle East states, raising so the attention not only of the EU, but also of USA (see Ronald D. Asmus, Bruce P. Jackson, “The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom”, in *Policy Review*, June/July 2004, available at <https://www.hoover.org/research/black-sea-and-frontiers-freedom>, [accessed March 12, 2021]).

<sup>5</sup> Constantin Ciutacu, “Repere ale dezvoltării regionale a economiei românești” [Landmarks of the regional development of Romanian economy], in *Revista Română de Economie/Romanian Journal of Economics*, no. 8/1998, p. 141; Călin Emilian Hințea, “Probleme strategice ale reformei sistemului administrativ românesc” [Strategic problems of the reform of of Romanian administrative system], in *Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative*, vol. 1, no. 2/1999, p. 141–145; Cristina Mora, “Dezvoltarea regională între cooperare și regionalizare” [Regional development between cooperation and regionalisation], in *Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative*, vol. 1, no. 3/2000, p. 85–92; Radu Săgeată, “Zonele transfrontaliere aferente României și euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră cu participare românească” [Romania’s cross-border areas and cross-border cooperation Euroregions with Romanian participation], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al*

eastern neighbours to be involved in cross-border cooperation projects represented some important factors for the dynamic of the new activities possible to be developed in the border areas. However, the situation will change, in Romania as in the other former communist states, the spiny transition process began to be by some means handled, though the process to adopt the numerous legislative, political, economic and administrative necessary reforms was a very difficult and far too long one.

### **The border area: some figures and facts**

The total of Romania's borders sum 3149,9 km, of which 1816,9 km represent natural water borders between Romania and Ukraine, Serbia, Bulgaria and Moldova (470 with Bulgaria and 289,6 with Serbia on Danube; 681,3 with Moldova, on Prut River; 343,9 with Ukraine and 32,1 with Hungary on Tisa River, and the 247,4 km Black Sea coastline, from which 22,2 is the frontier with Bulgaria and 31,7 with Ukraine). Around these borders, there are 22 counties, some of them bordering two states (Botoșani – Moldova and Ukraine, Satu Mare – Hungary and Ukraine; Timiș – Hungary and Serbia; Mehedinți – Serbia and Bulgaria), while Tulcea and Constanța are bordered by Bulgaria and, respectively, Ukraine, as states, and by the Danube and Black Sea<sup>6</sup>.

One of the first conceptualisations of the border area considered it as the following: “made up of the territory of communes, cities and municipalities, which, according to the administrative organisation of the Romanian territory, are located near the state border on a depth of 20 kilometres from it to the border”<sup>7</sup>. Later, a superposed concept emerged, that of “border region”, understood as “a region that includes border areas, delimited for implementing a common strategy for developing of borders on both sides and for the implementation of cooperation

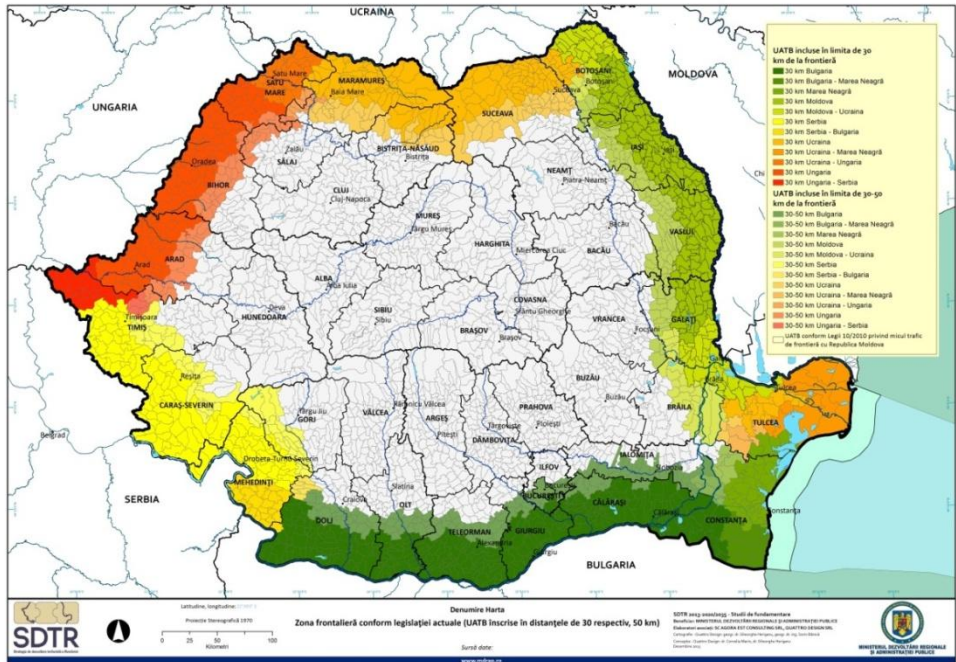
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*Dunării. Studiu geographic* (Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study), edited by Radu Săgeată, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice/MDRAP [Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration], “Strategia de dezvoltare teritorială a României. România policentrică 2035. Coeziune și competitivitate teritorială, dezvoltare și șanse egale pentru oameni” [Strategy of territorial development of Romania. Polycentric Romania. Territorial cohesion and competitiveness, development and equal chances for people], available at <https://www.mlpsd.ro/pages/sdtr>, [accessed August 12, 2020], Anexa 1, p. 80, 91; National Institute for Statistics, “Romanian Statistical Yearbook”, 2018, p. 11, available at [https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/anuarul\\_statistic\\_al\\_romaniei\\_carte\\_ro\\_0.pdf](https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/anuarul_statistic_al_romaniei_carte_ro_0.pdf), [accessed August 12, 2020]. They are some differences between the Strategy and the Statistical Yearbook, but I preferred to use the data from the second source.

<sup>7</sup> *Legea 56 din 4 iunie 1992 privind frontiera de stat a României* [Law 56 of June 4, 1992, on the state border of Romania], art. 4(b), available at <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/2274>, [accessed March 14, 2021].

programmes, projects and actions”<sup>8</sup> and considered depth increased to 30 or even 50/60 kilometres in some official documents: “the border area includes the territory of the states of the contracting parties, which does not exceed 30 km from the state border and is located on either side of the state border”<sup>9</sup>.



Source: MDRAP, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

At the end of the communist regime, some new independent state entities emerged and from here the necessity of concluding new bilateral agreements. Later, when Romania began the EU accession process, some new agreements were signed with the neighbouring states. These new legal norms were mainly related to the border line (its reconstruction, marking, maintenance) and their new economic and political relations, but they also embedded some incipient articles concerning cooperation on border issues (although the intended collaboration as concept was still far from the idea and practice of cross-border cooperation used at EU level<sup>10</sup>. Despite this clumsiness inherent in the new beginning, the first regional

<sup>8</sup> *Legea 350 din 6 iunie 2001 privind amenajarea teritoriului și urbanismul* [Law 350 of 6 June 2001 on land use planning and urbanism], in *Monitorul oficial*, no. 373 / 10 iulie 2001, Definierea termenilor utilizați în lege [Defining the terms used in the law], available at <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/216298>, accessed June 26, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> MDRAP, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Radu Săgeată, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Cătălin-Silviu Sărau, “Contractul de cooperare transfrontalieră” [Cross-border cooperation agreement], in *Tribuna Juridică* 1, no. 1/2011, p. 100–104.

cooperation actions started in 1992, under the influence and following the EU-based regional cooperation model, with Black Sea Economic Cooperation Area (since 1998, the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation)<sup>11</sup>, so in a waterside border area. This regional economic cooperation area became interesting for the European Union only since 2000, especially giving to the recently started process of enlargement, but from this moment EU will permanently and systematically focus on the area, adopting specific policies and programmes<sup>12</sup>.

In 1997, though the necessary national specific legislation to regulate this process was not yet adopted<sup>13</sup>, some north-western counties of Romania started their first participation to a Euroregion, the Carpathian Euroregion (established in 1993 at Debrecen by some local administrations from Hungary, Slovakia and Poland). This first membership to a Euroregion was possible by concluding the Agreement between Romania and the European Commission regarding the establishment for Romania of the status of country eligible to receive Community aid through the PHARE programme (concluded in 1991), on the Memorandum of Understanding on the Programme of Cross-border Cooperation between Romania and Hungary, European Outline Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, and European charter of local self-government, both ratified in 1997<sup>14</sup>.

An important legal norm to establish the institutional framework of cross-border cooperation was the Law 315/2004, on regional development of Romania. This law was a milestone for establishing the offices for cross-border cooperation, including the counties from the border area, “to ensure the management of administrative, financial and technical aspects of cross-border cooperation programmes”<sup>15</sup>, some of them playing a critical role in the implementation of the EU cross-border cooperation programs and in developing the cross-border projects.

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<sup>11</sup> Flore Pop, *op.cit.*, p. 132; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Organizația de Cooperare Economică la Marea Neagră (OCEMN)” [Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation], available at <http://www.mae.ro/node/51353#null>, [accessed July 24, 2020]; MDLPA, *Strategia de dezvoltare teritorială a României. Studii de fundamentare* [Romania’s territorial development strategy. Substantiation studies], Studiul 22: Zone periferice și legături transfrontaliere [Study 22: Peripheral areas and cross-border connections], available at <http://sdr.ro/upload/STUDII/22.%20Raport%20.%20Zone%20periferice%20si%20legaturi%20transfrontaliere.pdf>, [accessed in December 04, 2020], p. 13–14.

<sup>12</sup> Mihai Sebe, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> The necessary juridical norms will be adopted especially since 2001, giving to the beginning of the process of negotiation of EU accession.

<sup>14</sup> Gheorghe Miclăuș, Nicolae Horea, “Instrumente de cooperare ale colectivităților locale regionale în cadrul național și internațional” [Tools of cooperation of regional local collectivities in national and international framework], in *Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative* 1, no. 1/2000, p. 81, 83, 86.

<sup>15</sup> *Legea 315/28 iunie 2004 (actualizată), privind dezvoltarea regională în România* [Law 315/28 June 2004 (actualised) on regional development in Romania], art. 8, par. 1.1., available at <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/53040>, [accessed June 16, 2020].

They were the first steps towards the establishment of the Euroregions and cross-border cooperation areas along Romania's borders, involving three working elements: the space, the human communities and the intrinsic and progressive network relations between them<sup>16</sup>.

### **The waterside border cities and the need for cross-border cooperation**

On the webpage of Romanian Border Police can be seen all the border crossing points<sup>17</sup>, but not all these localities are representative for the cross-border cooperation process. Continuing the idea, there are many border cities in Romania<sup>18</sup>, but not all of them are situated in a waterside border area; and there are too many localities on waterside border regions, but for most of them it is impossible to develop some cross-border activities. Hence, the study will focus on those cities that are really involved in cross-border projects, that indeed can be considered as “interconnection gateways”<sup>19</sup> with their pairs outside Romanian borders. Following these reasons, on Danube, on the border with Serbia, we considered the cities Moldova Nouă, Orșova, and Drobeta-Turnu-Severin, and on the border with Bulgaria the cities Calafat, Turnu Măgurele, Zimnicea, Giurgiu, Oltenița, Călărași. On Danube area too, though they are not exactly on the border area, are the cities Brăila, Galați, Isaccea and Tulcea, all situated on the border of Danube, though not exactly in the border area, but having major importance for the cross-border cooperation with Moldova and Ukraine in the area of Prut and Danube. Galați is situated near by the confluence between Prut and Danube, is only 22 km away from Reni, Ukraine, and is considered in the category of doublet cities, with the city of Giurgiulești, from Republic of Moldova (19-km distance between them). Located at a distance that varies between 22 and 34 km (depending on the chosen route) from Galați and almost 39 from Giurgiulești, Brăila will not be considered for this study, though it participated in cross-border cooperation project at the level of the Euroregion and is hosting the headquarters of the Southeast Regional Development Association. In a special situation is the city of Tulcea, located only 8 km away from the border with Ukraine, but 37 km from the nearest border crossing point, which is Isaccea<sup>20</sup>. Both Isaccea and Tulcea will be

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<sup>16</sup> Gheorghe Miclăuș, Nicolae Horea, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> Romanian Border Police, “Puncte de trecere a frontierei” [Border crossing points], available at <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/ro/main/pg-puncte-de-trecere-a-frontierei-307.html>, [accessed in November 08, 2020]; MDLPA (Study 22), *op. cit.*, p. 58–59.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19–21.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, “Expunere de motive” [Statement of reasons], available at <https://www.mlpsa.ro/pages/sdtr>, [accessed August 12, 2020], p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Radu Săgeată, Nicoleta Damian, “Euroregiunea Dunărea de Jos. Sectorul românesc și arealul de convergență transfrontalieră Galați – Giurgiulești – Reni” [Lower Danube Euroregions. The Romanian sector and the cross-border convergence area Galați – Giurgiulești – Reni], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării. Studiu geografic* [Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study], edited by Radu Săgeată, Romanian Academy



considered in this study, giving to their particular location and role in the cross-border cooperation projects.

In the Black Sea area, the most important localities are Constanța (having a multimodal communication infrastructure, it is the main polarisation core) and Mangalia, but Agigea, due to its proximity to the city of Constanța and the economic importance of the port area will receive a given consideration too<sup>21</sup>.

Another “main polarisation core” in a waterside border area is the locality Sighetul Marmației, on Tisza River, but in what concerns another border-river, Prut, is not benefiting by any important locality on its coasts, but only in the area of Rădăuți Prut and the accumulation lake Stânca-Costești<sup>22</sup>.

The consulted analysis showed how challenging are the waterside border areas, because of difficulties raised by the lack (and costs) of infrastructure and so difficulty in establishing cross-border connections: between Romania and Serbia, in the Danube area are five border crossing points (two road and three port), and between Romania and Bulgaria they are only two bridges and six ferry cross-points<sup>23</sup>. To these infrastructure issues are added different economic interests for the regions on both banks of the Danube, which leads to a certain scarcity of interest for cross-border cooperation (excepting the energy field and some similar natural resources, for Romania and Serbia, some economic clusters developed

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Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014; Bianca Mitrică, “Evaluarea potențialului de cooperare transfrontalieră aferent frontierei de nord a României după integrarea în Uniunea Europeană” [Assessment of the potential for cross-border cooperation related to Romania’s northern border after integration into the European Union], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării. Studiu geografic* [Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study], edited by Radu Săgeată, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014; Irena Mocanu, Radu Săgeată, “Euroregiunea Dunăre-Dobrogea. Caracterizare generală” [Danube-Dobrogea Euroregion. General characterisation], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării. Studiu geografic* [Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study], edited by Radu Săgeată, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> MDLPA, *op.cit.*, p. 20–21; Radu Săgeată, “Frontiera și zona transfrontalieră de nord a României. Caracterizare generală” [The northern border and cross-border area of Romania. General characterisation], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării. Studiu geografic* [Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study], edited by Radu Săgeată, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014; Bianca Mitrică, *op. cit.*; Irena Mocanu, Radu Săgeată, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> MDLPA, *op. cit.*, p. 20–21; Radu Săgeată, “Frontiera și zona transfrontalieră de nord a României. Caracterizare generală” [The northern border and cross-border area of Romania. General characterisation], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării. Studiu geografic* [Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study], edited by Radu Săgeată, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014; Bianca Mitrică, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Romanian Border Police, *op. cit.*; MDLPA (Study 22), *op. cit.*, p. 21, 40.

between Romania and Bulgaria, and some environment issues on the area of Tisza river for Romania and Ukraine)<sup>24</sup>. This communication infrastructure insufficiency (both at transnational and national levels) plays an important role in the economic development of these regions and is reflected in the economic development of these border areas, which remained low even after Romania's accession to the EU<sup>25</sup>.

These waterside border areas raised both the attention of researchers and state authorities (the last ones especially under the pressure of the programmes initiated at EU level), both parties trying to find solutions to remedy the situation, in the context of EU accession and integration of Romania. Hence, in a book of Romanian Academy, starting from the factors considered as highly influencing the activities from the border areas, the intensity and structure of transversal human and material flows, occupational fields of the human resource from these border regions, the demographic factors, as well as the arrangement of the nuclei of local convergence, Radu Săgeată distinguishes two theoretical models of cross-border areas: border areas with a sudden variation of sudden flows and those with a slow variation. The first category includes the naturally hard to reach border areas, and waterside border areas are included in this category<sup>26</sup>.

At the level of state authorities, the interest for this type of localities materialised in adopting the necessary juridical norms to boost cross-border cooperation and strategies ensuring to the fluvial and maritime border areas a specific support for their economic development. But adopting legal norms and strategies means not all the time to solve a problem. As the figures demonstrate<sup>27</sup>,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22; International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, UNDP, “Călătorie în bazinul hidrografic al Tisei, în echilibru/armonie” [Journey in the Tisza river basin, in balance/harmony], available at [https://www.icpdr.org/main/sites/default/files/Summary%20Final%20UNDP%20GEF%20and%20ITRBMP\\_RO.pdf](https://www.icpdr.org/main/sites/default/files/Summary%20Final%20UNDP%20GEF%20and%20ITRBMP_RO.pdf), [accessed November 20, 2020].

<sup>25</sup> MDLPA (Study 22), *op. cit.*, p. 24, 41–43, 59; Dana Cirișperu, “Harta de business a României. Cum s-a schimbat în ultimul deceniu harta de business a României: economia celor 10 județe care generează 70% din cifra de afaceri din țară” [Business map of Romania. How the business map of Romania has changed in the last decade: the economy of the 10 counties that generate 70% of the country's turnover], in *Ziarul financiar*, 16 May 2018, available at <https://www.zf.ro/top-1000-companii/harta-de-business-a-romaniei-cum-s-a-schimbata-in-ultimul-deceniu-harta-de-business-a-romaniei-economia-celor-zece-judete-care-genereaza-70-din-cifra-de-afaceri-din-tara-17141115>, [accessed in November 2021]; Liliana Guran, “Economia în sectorul frontier românesc” [The economy in the Romanian border sector], in *Euroregiunile de cooperare transfrontalieră din bazinul inferior al Dunării. Studiu geografic* [Euroregions for cross-border cooperation in the lower Danube basin. Geographical study], edited by Radu Săgeată, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Radu Săgeată, *op. cit.*; MDLPA (Study 22), *op. cit.*, p. 35–36, 40–41.

<sup>27</sup> Dana Cirișperu, *op. cit.*; Liliana Guran, *op. cit.*; INSSE, “Romanian Statistic Yearbook”, 2007-2019, available at <https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/anuarele-statistice-ale-romaniei>, [accessed in October 02, 2021].

the economic situation of the waterside border regions didn't change dramatically in the last decade, being numerous the factors that can function as barriers to economic dynamics<sup>28</sup>, and commonly too few the involved resources (human, material, financial, etc.).

### Cross-border cooperation in the waterside border cities

Critical for the cities located along the waterside border areas is to find partners in the immediate vicinity, on the other side of the national border. It is about so-called doublet cities, that across our concerned rivers are<sup>29</sup>:

Cities	Population (2011)	States	Distance	River
Sighetu Marmăției // Slatina (Solotvino)	37.640 // 3.729	RO / UA	+ 5	Tisza
Moldova Nouă // Golubac	12.350 // 8337	RO / SR	+8	Danube

<sup>28</sup> Săgeată considers the role of political heritage in the Central and Eastern Europe Euroregions and in establishing them, resulting so some outsized structures, sometimes rigid and noneffective. See Radu Săgeată, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> National Institute of Statistics, *Recensământul populației și locuințelor, Rezultate definitive 2011* [Population and Housing census. Final results 2011, Tabel 3: Populația stabilă pe sexe și grupe de vârstă – județe, municipii, orașe, commune Table 3: Population by sex and age groups – counties, municipalities, cities, communes], available at <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/>, [accessed August 12, 2021]; Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, “Census 2011. Projected Population at the beginning and the end of the projected period by municipalities”, available at <https://data.stat.gov.rs/Home/Result/180202?languageCode=en-US&displayMode=table>, [accessed in August 24, 2021]; Official website of Kladovo Town, *Kladovo. Location, Climate, and Population*, available at <http://www.kladovo.org.rs/položaj-klima-i-stanovnistvo.htm>, [accessed August 24, 2021]; Official website of Kladovo Town, *Kladovo*, available at [https://www.citypopulation.de/en/serbia/admin/bor/M20903\\_kladovo/](https://www.citypopulation.de/en/serbia/admin/bor/M20903_kladovo/), [accessed in September 11, 2021]; Republic of Bulgaria, National Statistical Institute, *2011 Population Census. Main Results*, available at [https://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011final\\_en.pdf](https://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011final_en.pdf), [accessed in August 24, 2021]. For Lom, Oryahovo, Nikopol, Svishtov, Tutrakan data are for December 2020; for Reni, data are for 2021; for the cities from Republic of Moldova data are from 2014. See also, World Population Review, *Odesa Population Data*, available at <https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/odesa-population>, [accessed in August 27, 2021]; City Population, *Ukraine: Rivne*, available at <http://www.citypopulation.de/en/ukraine/rivne/>, [accessed August 27, 2021]; City Population, *Ukraine: Ivano-Frankivsk*, available at <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/ukraine/ivanofrankivsk/>, [accessed in August 27, 2021]; National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, *Results of Population and Housing Census in the Republic of Moldova in 2014. Characteristics Population 2 (population by communes, religion, citizenship)*, available at <https://statistica.gov.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=479>, [accessed in August 27, 2021]; Romanian Intermodal Association, *Registru porturi dunărene* (Danube ports register), available at <https://ria.org.ro/ria/images/platina/porturi%20fluviale%20dunare%20-%20romania.pdf>, [accessed in September 23, 2021].

Cities	Population (2011)	States	Distance	River
Orșova // Tekija	10441 // included in Kladovo population (20635)	RO / SR	+ 31	Danube
Drobeta Turnu Severin // Kladovo	92.617 // 20.691	RO / SR	25	Danube
Calafat // Vidin	17.336 // 48.071	RO / BG	+ 16	Danube
Rast // Lom	3.343 // 23.528	RO / BG	+ 106	Danube
Bechet // Oryahovo	3.657 // 9.138	RO / BG	+ 7	Danube
Turnu Măgurele // Nikopol	24.772 // 7.721	RO / BG	+ 6	Danube
Zimnicea // Svishtov	14.058 // 33.321	RO / BG	+ 6	Danube
Giurgiu // Ruse	61.353 // 149.642	RO / BG	+ 14	Danube
Oltenița // Tutrakan	24.822 // 13.240	RO / BG	+ 136	Danube
Călărași // Silistra	65.181 // 35.607	RO / BG	+ 10	Danube
Constanța	283.872	RO / BG	-	Black Sea
Năvodari	32.981	RO / BG	-	Black Sea
Mangalia	36.364	RO / BG	-	Black Sea
Galați // Reni	249.432 // 245.289	RO / MD	+ 22	Pрут
Galați // Giurgiulești	249.432 // 2.866	RO / MD	+ 19	Pрут
Galați // Kahul	249.432 // 30.018	RO / MD	+ 52	Pрут
Galați // Cantemir	249.432 // 5.136	RO / MD	+112	Pрут
Stânca (Ștefănești) // Costești	5.314 // 3.507	RO / MD	+ 11	Pрут
Rădăuți-Pрут // Lipcani	3339 // 4.685	RO / MD	+ 4	Pрут
Galați // Odessa	249.432 // 1.009.299	Ro / UA	+324	Pрут
Sighetu Marmăției // Slatina (Solotvino)	37.640 // 3.729	RO / UA	+ 5	Tisza

Though, among the waterside border cities Moldova Nouă (12.350 inhabitants) is not mentioned as a doublet city, since December 2019 a new ferry border crossing was set up here, in order “to consolidate relations between the two states, within the process of implementing a Romania-Serbia cross-border cooperation programme, being in accordance with provisions of the community legislation in the field”<sup>30</sup>. The ferry is connecting the cities of Moldova Nouă (RO) and Golubac (SR, 8337 inhabitants), between them being a distance of about 8

<sup>30</sup> Romania Border Police, *Operaționalizarea unui nou punct de trecere a frontierei la granița cu Serbia* [Operationalisation of a new border crossing at the border with Serbia], available at <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/ro/timisoara/i-operationalizarea-unui-nou-punct-de-trecere-a-frontierei-la-granita-cu-serbia-18921.html>, [accessed in August 30, 2021].

km<sup>31</sup>, so it is possible to consider these localities as doublets as well. Another special case is that of the city of Corabia (16.441 inhabitants in 2011), located on the bank of the Danube and having two ports, but having no correspondent on the opposite bank of the Danube and not conducting any cross-border cooperation project (the research is limited to projects conducted through funds allocated to cross-border cooperation and does not consider projects conducted through other funding lines (although during the documentation I noticed that large cities accessed several funding lines to solve infrastructure. The study also refers to some cities without doublet and communes from the Black Sea (Constanța, Agigea, Năvodari and Mangalia), because they, through their intense activity in the field of freight traffic, are engines of economic growth for a wide area around them.

*The beginnings: the dreamy stage*

Once at this point of the presentation, the next step is to highlight the results of cooperation between the partners on both banks of the rivers.

At the beginning of cross-border cooperation process the issue of communication infrastructure had to be solved, and in some cases this practical activity fulfilled some symbolic roles, the pragmatic approaches being interweaved with some romantic, “starry-eyed” activities. Hence, the rehabilitation of some bridges, the construction of new ones (with European funds) or even the possibility of the free use of some of them was sometimes perceived as a promise of a good future cooperation, of forgetting a grey past, of a new (and romantic) beginning for some states hardly tried for decades and eager to recover the years lost in the period of Soviet domination. It was the case of the reparation of historical bridge on Tisza, between Sighetu Marmăției and Solotvyno, and the prospects of a new one in the same area, the “flower bridge” from Stâncea-Costești<sup>32</sup>, between Romania

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<sup>31</sup> Dragana Harabagiu, *Oficial! Bacul de la Moldova Nouă pornește spre Serbia, chiar înainte de 2020!* [Official! The ferry from Moldova Nouă leaves for Serbia, just before 2020!], available at <https://expressdebanat.ro/oficial-bacul-de-la-moldova-noua-porneste-spre-serbia-chiar-inainte-de-2020/>, [accessed August 30, 2021].

<sup>32</sup> “Flower bridge”, which firstly took place on May 6, 1990 following the organisation of the new political forces and some cultural organizations in the two states, became the most symbolic for the relations between Romania and Republic of Moldova, being repeated in other areas of the Prut border and even the next year. Both events, from Soltvyno and from the border with the Prut, were the subject of documentaries about the beginnings of post-communist Romania. See “România post-revoluție, 1990: se împlinesc 30 de ani de la primul ‘pod de flori’ peste Prut” [Post-revolution Romania: 30 years passed since the first flower bridge” over the Prut], in AGERPRESS, 06 May 2020, available at <https://www.agerpres.ro/documentare/2020/05/06/romania-post-revolutie-1990-se-implinesc-30-de-ani-de-la-primul-pod-de-flori-peste-prut—499572>, [accessed in May 20, 2021]; Cristian Ștefănescu, *Prezență românească la Festivalul Filmului Feminin de la Köln și Dortmund* [Romanian presence at the Women’s Film Festival in Köln and Dortmund], in DW, on-line edition, 19 April 2010, available at <https://www.dw.com/ro/prezen%C5%A3%C4%83-rom%C3%A2neasc%C4%83-la-festivalul-filmului-feminin-de-la-k-%C3%B6ln-%C5%9Fi-dortmund/a-5482021>, [accessed in May 20, 2021].

and Moldova, when authorities used moments both to remember the historical ties between us and our neighbours, and to make promises<sup>33</sup> on the next common ideals and projects, even to create some new myths (as for example the possible unification between Romania and Moldova), while participating people, by their sincere since then, by the naïve assumption both political and spiritual discourses, legitimised these activities and provided them the popular/mass character<sup>34</sup>.

And for the other of the river border areas there were actions with a more special character when relations between the former communist countries were restored on new bases, but not at the same level as those on Tisza and Prut (it was either too weak or dangerous to address the ethnic dimension of relations, very important in the relationship with Ukraine and Moldova). However, some “romantic” touches were achieved in these cases as well, but from the other perspectives. Thus, the bridge over the Danube in the Giurgiu-Ruse area was called the ‘Friendship Bridge’<sup>35</sup>, and the one put into use in 2013 between Calafat and Vidin was called ‘The New Europe Bridge’<sup>36</sup>. Because of the war from the former

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<sup>33</sup> As for example, at the inauguration of the bridge over Tisza, Roumanian President Băsescu emphasized that “our country is itself a bridge, a bridge for Ukraine to EU”, in Ziare.com, “Podul peste Tisa a fost inaugurat luni” [The bridge over Tisza was inaugurated on Monday], available at <https://ziare.com/basescu/presedinte/podul-pestetisa-a-fost-inaugurat-luni-56217>, [accessed in 15 January 2007].

<sup>34</sup> Emaramures.ro, *Inaugurarea podului istoric peste Tisa, cu o întârziere de 5 ani* [Inauguration of the historic bridge over the Tisza, with a delay of five years], 15 January 2007, available at <https://www.emaramures.ro/inaugurarea-podului-istoric-pestetisa-cu-o-intarziere-de-5-ani/>, [accessed in May 21, 2021]; Anemona Andone, “România ar putea fi legată de Ucraina cu un nou pod peste Tisa, la Sighetu Marmației. Proiect pe masa Guvernului” [Romania could be connected to Ukraine with a new bridge over Tisza, at Sighetu Marmației. Project on the Government table], in *Economica*, on-line edition, 23 November 2020, available at [https://www.economica.net/romania-ar-putea-fi-legata-de-ucraina-cu-un-nou-pod-pestetisa\\_193109.html](https://www.economica.net/romania-ar-putea-fi-legata-de-ucraina-cu-un-nou-pod-pestetisa_193109.html), [accessed May 21, 2021]; Transilvania Policromă [Polychrome Transylvania], “Reportaj Slatina/Solotvino - Ucraina” [Coverage Slatina/Solotvino – Ukraine], available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhK8YiBUYJQ&ab\\_channel=Transilvania\\_Policroma](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhK8YiBUYJQ&ab_channel=Transilvania_Policroma), [accessed in May 21, 2021].

<sup>35</sup> Named so at the insistence of the Soviets, but keeping the name after 1989, without paying too much attention to the ideas and influences of the early 50s. See Geta Roman, “Podul Prieteniei, gigantul de care rușii aveau nevoie ca de aer” [The Friendship Bridge, the giant that the Russians need ed like air], in *Historia*, available at <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/podul-prieteniei-gigantul-de-care-rusii-aveau-nevoie-ca-de-aer>, [accessed in August 29, 2021].

<sup>36</sup> Geta Roman, *op.cit.*; [European Commission, *Commissioner Hahn welcomes the opening of the ‘New Europe Bridge,’ a landmark of European cooperation*, press release, Bruxelles 14 June 2013, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ro/IP\\_13\\_537](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ro/IP_13_537), [accessed August 29, 2021].

Yugoslavia and the position of Romania in some moments of this war, for the bridges<sup>37</sup> that connect Romania and Serbia the situation was unspectacular at all.

*EU dimension of cross-border cooperation*

Almost all of these almost symbolic lines were doubled or followed by some complex institutional approaches, with the financial support of the Council of Europe (specific bodies, political declarations, recommendations, reports, studies, analyses, handbooks)<sup>38</sup> and EU multiannual programmes (Interreg, Phare CBC, Tacis CBC) dedicated to the candidate Central and Eastern European countries and to their neighbours, each of them providing different strands, instruments and methods, according to the new objectives of the EU related to its deeper integration (Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment, European Territorial Cooperation) and to the needs of the (new) members and/or candidate or simply neighbour states in terms of regional and cross-border cooperation and economic development<sup>39</sup>.

**Table 1.** EU cross-border cooperation programmes<sup>40</sup>

INTERREG	Phase	Number of programmes	Funding amount (million EUR in real terms)	Number of EU Member States
0	1988-1989	14 projects	0,021	
I	1990-1993	31	1,082	12
II (strands A – Cross-border; B – Transnational; C – Interregional)	1994-1999	59	3.500	15
III (strands A, B, C)	2000-2006	79	5.100	25 (after 2004)
IV (ETC, IPA, ENPI; the interregional)	2007-2013	92	7.800	27

<sup>37</sup> Danube FIS Portal, “Poduri” [Bridges], available at <https://www.danubeportal.com/ro/bridges/filter> Bridge, [accessed in August 27, 2021].

<sup>38</sup> Council of European Union, *Similarities and Differences of Instruments and Policies of the Council of Europe and the European Union in the Field of Transfrontier Cooperation*, 2006 ed., available at <https://rm.coe.int/16807480f6>, [accessed in August 02, 2021].

<sup>39</sup> European Commission, *Territorial Cooperation in Europe. A Historical Perspective*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2015, p. 13–14, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/information/pdf/brochures/interreg\\_25years\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/information/pdf/brochures/interreg_25years_en.pdf), [accessed in May 28, 2021]; European Parliament, *Thirty Years of European Territorial Cooperation*, Briefing, European Parliamentary Research Service, November 2020, available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/659340/EPRS\\_BRI\(2020\)659340\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/659340/EPRS_BRI(2020)659340_EN.pdf), [accessed in May 2021]; MDLPA (Study 22), *op.cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> European Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 32–33, 35; European Parliament, *op. cit.*, p. 2–3.

<b>INTERREG</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Number of programmes</b>	<b>Funding amount (million EUR in real terms)</b>	<b>Number of EU Member States</b>
programmes URBACT, INTERACT, ESPON)				
V (IPA, ENI/ENPI CBC, ICD; the interregional programmes URBACT, INTERACT, ESPON)	2014-2020	100	10.100	28
INTERREG (ETC) – four strands	2021-2027			27

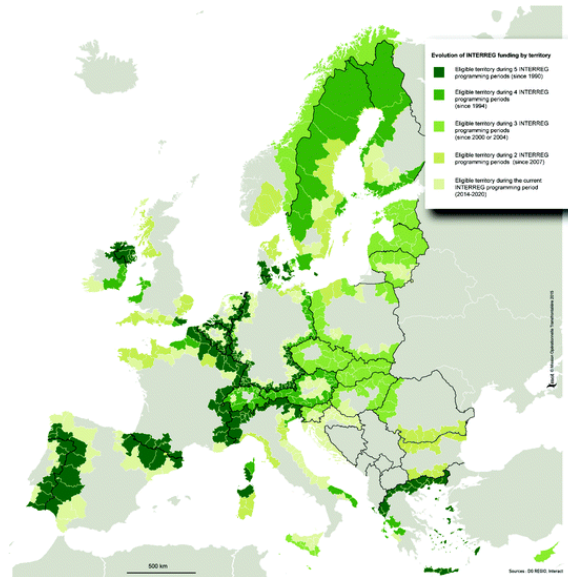
Not all member states participated from the beginning in the programmes provided by the EU and, as shown in the map above, Romania became progressively eligible for INTERREG programme: in 2000 the western border, and in 2007 the southern one. For a full participation in cross-border cooperation programmes Romania adopted in 2007 an emergency ordinance<sup>41</sup> allowing it to apply the newest European rules in the field, establishing the involved authorities and the framework of cross-border cooperation. Since 2014 all already highlighted border regions became eligible for INTERREG programmes, and Romania participated in 99 projects, with 835 members<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Romanian Government, *Ordonanță de urgență nr. 127 din 12 noiembrie 2007 (\*actualizată\*) privind Gruparea europeană de cooperare teritorială (actualizată până la data de 2 februarie 2015\*)* (Emergency ordinance no. 127 of 12 November 2007] (\*updated\*) on European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (updated to February 2, 2015)), available at <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/86886>, [accessed in April 02, 2021].

<sup>42</sup> Interreg Europe, *In my Country*, available at <https://www.interregeurope.eu/in-my-country/>, [accessed in June 01, 2021].





**Source:** European Commission, *Territorial Cooperation in Europe. A Historical Perspective*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2015, p. 37, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/information/pdf/brochures/interreg\\_25years\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/information/pdf/brochures/interreg_25years_en.pdf), [accessed in May 28, 2021].

#### *Cross-border cooperation: local facts and issues*

As showed before, the border areas along the rivers are not so developed from economic point of view, consequently they were included in specific strategies of territorial cooperation and development. Regarding Romania, in the period 2007-2013 numerous cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation and programmes and have been developed, as well as programmes on territorial cohesion, financed by ERDF and IPA. In what concerns the waterside border areas, they were though Romania-Bulgaria and Romania-Serbia cooperation programmes, as programmes related to the Danube and Black Sea areas.<sup>43</sup> To have a clearer picture of the cross-border projects conducted with the participation of cities from the river and maritime areas of Romania, we contacted their town halls, where the information provided by their sites was inconclusive or there was no section dedicated to the EU funded programmes. The received information was useful, but not exhaustive, therefore it was necessary to complete it with data found on the EU website centralising the cross-border projects and documents. The results of this research are concentrated in the tables below, summarising from different perspectives the key data related to the projects lead by public and private actors from the concerned cities.

<sup>43</sup> MDLPA (Study 22), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

**Table 1. Funds by financing periods<sup>44</sup>**

<b>Financing period</b>	<b>2007–2013</b>	<b>2014–2020</b>	<b>2011–2020 (EUSDR)</b>
Number of projects	46	46	21
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>44501529.95</b>	<b>67571579.86</b>	<b>1104314249</b>

**Table 2. Total funds and programmes**

3 823 774.00	2	<b>South East Europe, 2007-2013</b>
1 104 314 249.08	21	<b>EUSDR</b>
28660987.82	25	<b>CBC 2007-2013, RO-BG</b>
6613518.44	9	<b>ENPI CBC RO-UA-MD 2007-2013</b>
5403249.69	10	<b>ENPI CBC Black Sea Basin 2007-2013</b>
44601359.18	20	<b>INTERREG V-A RO-BG, 2014-20</b>
9 282 310.86	5	<b>INTERREG V-B Danube 2014-2020</b>
1 954 589.16	3	<b>INTERREG IPA CBCRO-SR, 2014-2020</b>
1 655 581.41	2	<b>IPA CBC RO-SR, 2014-2020</b>
1 356 801.9	4	<b>ENI CBC RO-UA, 2014-2020</b>
1 945 553.13	2	<b>ENI CBC HU-SK-RO-UA 2014-20</b>
437 672.30	2	<b>ENI CBC RO-MD 2014-20</b>
6337711.92	8	<b>ENI CBC Black Sea Basin 2014-20</b>

The largest funding was obtained from EUSDR related projects, though the data are for the period 2011–2020. The cities that have benefited from these funds are those with an important activity in the field of freight traffic: Constanța and Agigea, the most important port area at the Black Sea, and Galați (the second largest port in Romania) and Giurgiu, the nearest port to Bucharest, located “on the north-south route between the Baltic Sea and Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey” and

<sup>44</sup> All the tables bellow are realised using the data provided by keep.eu, a databases of cross-border projects since 1990 up today, and, for some projects, the webpages of the financing programme. See official site of the RO-UA-MD Programme, available at <http://www.ro-ua-md.net/projects/projects-map/>, [accessed in May 2021].

ranked in “the top 4 routes for rail freight transport at the border crossing points”<sup>45</sup>. (However, in the case of EUSDR projects the beneficiaries do not have partners.)

**Table 3.** Funds by cities

City	Total projects (public+private)	Projects between doublet cities	Total funds	Public institutions	Private entities
Sighetu Marmăției	5 (5+0)	1	2763097.03	2763097.03	0
Moldova Nouă	1 (1+0)	1	941292.45	941292.45	0
Orșova	1 (1+0)	1	1093495.84	1093495.84	0
Drobeta Turnu Severin	5 (2+3)	2	2809524.19	1888520.87	921003.32
Calafat	3 (0+3)	3	601234.22	0	601234.22
Zimnicea	1 (1+0)	0	1475894.96	1475894.96	0
Oltenița	2 (0+2)	0	850856.25	0	850856.25
Călărași	12 (2+10)	3	14255239.78	1775387	12479852.78
Giurgiu	9 (5+4) (4 EUSDR)	4	45248934.96	28172376.44	17076558.52
Turnu Măgurele	5 (5+0)	3	19945951.31	19945951.31	0
Galați	26 (17+9) (8 EUSDR)	Reni-1 Giurgiulești Kahul-9 Cantemir	187361854.8	179483910.1	7877944.74
Constanța	30 (22+8) (6 EUSDR)	Not apply	599242945.7	595136539.6	4106406.07
Agigea	3 (3+0) (3 EUSDR)	Not apply	316960000	316960000	0
Năvodari	2 (2+0)	Not apply	9365888.94	9365888.94	0
Mangalia	2 (2+0)	Not apply	8301384.87	8301384.87	0
Tulcea	6 (4+2)	Not apply	5169763.57	4076906.57	1092857
<b>Total</b>	<b>113 (71+42)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1216254574</b>	<b>1170957999</b>	<b>44453113.9</b>

Only a quarter of the projects is realised in partnership with the doublet cities across the border, for the other the partners being frequently at hundreds of kilometres away. It is difficult to interpret this situation having not the necessary information on the relations between partners, but it is possible to reveal some determining factors, and the most important can be considered the large demographic and, implicitly, economic, asymmetry (and so the few common interest fields of activity) between the doublet cities. Hence, the partnerships were realised either with partners found at random, on certain platforms, or with partners known in certain events, with whom it was possible to establish, in specific

<sup>45</sup> Romanian Intermodal Association, *Porturi și căi navigabile (Varianta finală revizuită a Raportului privind Master Planul pe termen scurt, mediu și lung)* [Ports and waterways (Revised final version of the short, medium and long term Master Plan Report)], available at [http://mt.gov.ro/web14/documente/master\\_plan/partea%20II%20master%20plan%20final.pdf](http://mt.gov.ro/web14/documente/master_plan/partea%20II%20master%20plan%20final.pdf), [accessed in September 23, 2021], p. 256–7.

contexts, a relationship of trust. On the other side, it is observable that sums accessed by the public authorities were more significant than those committed by the private actors.

Universities, researching institutes, museums or other cultural institutions and NGOs focused mainly on topics related to education, scientific cooperation, environment, tourism, cultural and/or social issues. The local branches of some regional associations (as for example Pro Danube Romania) focused on very large issues related to infrastructure and they are some cases when local non-governmental associations address issues related to infrastructure or transport. They are, as a rule, those associations created between or by local public institutions, for a better cooperation between them or with the business environment. But normally, the non-governmental associations have focused on a wide variety of topics and themes.

However, it is not difficult to observe that number of projects dedicated only to transport issues is small (30 / 1071839966.00) compared to the needs of the region (especially in the Danube area), and most of these are carried out by the cities already having significant transport activities: Constanța (8 / 580112726.3), Agigea (3 / 316960000), Năvodari (1 / 7896727.8) and Mangalia (2 / 8301384.87) at the Black Sea, and Galați (6 / 95843592.16), Giurgiu (5 / 42779583.28) and Turnu Măgurele (5 / 19945951.31) on the Danube. They are also 7 projects (7974840.88) focused on green technologies in the transport field and on boosting the institutional and human resources involved in transport field, developed by specialised institutions from Constanța (CERONAV / 6 / 7926543.8) and Galați<sup>46</sup> (Union of Romanian Inland Ports / 1 / 48297.08). Regarding the financing programmes, those financed by EUSDR are dominant (17 / 975323307.00), followed by those financed by INTERREG V-A RO-BG 2014-2020 (5 / 34447445.21), CBC RO-BG 2007-2013 (4 / 9416519.18), ENPI CBC Black Sea Basin (1 / 613192.23) and INTERREG V-B Danube 2014-2020 (1 / 3848511.16).

**Table 4.** Classification by population, funds, and number of projects

City	Population	City	Total budget	City	Total projects
Constanța	283872	Constanța	599242945.70	Constanța	30
Galați	249432	Agigea	316960000.00	Galați	26
Tulcea	213083	Galați	187361854.80	Călărași	12
Drobeta Turnu Severin	92617	Giurgiu	45248934.96	Giurgiu	9
Călărași	65181	Turnu Măgurele	19945951.31	Turnu Măgurele	5
Giurgiu	61353	Călărași	14255239.78	Drobeta	5

<sup>46</sup> It is important to mention that Galați and Constanța are also members in some URBACT networks, but any of them participated in projects in a leading position. See URBACT, *Interactive Map*, available at <https://urbact.eu/interactive-map?country=161>, [accessed October 03, 2021].

City	Population	City	Total budget	City	Total projects
				Turnu Severin	
Sighetu Marmației	37640	Năvodari	9365888.94	Sighetu Marmației	5
Mangalia	36364	Mangalia	8301384.87	Tulcea	5
Năvodari	32981	Tulcea	5169763.57	Agigea	3
Oltenița	24822	Drobeta Turnu Severin	2809524.19	Calafat	3
Turnu Măgurele	24772	Sighetu Marmației	2763097.03	Năvodari	2
Calafat	17336	Zimnicea	1475894.96	Mangalia	2
Zimnicea	14058	Orșova	1093495.84	Oltenița	2
Moldova Nouă	12350	Moldova Nouă	941292.45	Zimnicea	1
Orșova	10441	Oltenița	850856.25	Orșova	1
Agigea	7976	Calafat	601234.00	Moldova Nouă	1

As shown in the table above, the largest cities and most important ports, Constanța and Galați, conducted the largest number of projects, with an important financial value. The fact that in these cities there are too, besides important ports and economic units, universities, museums, research centres matter a lot for the general dynamics of the city and region<sup>47</sup>, and their position in the ranking of the number of projects and funds accessed is not accidental. Obviously, their geographical position all-important, if we do not ignore the fact that Tulcea, also a large city, does not succeed in reaching the performances obtained by Galați and Brăila. Also in a positive sense, geographical positioning was an advantage for the cities of Giurgiu, Călărași and Turnu Măgurele, whose location on the 1st and second freight corridors of Romania or very close to them, as well as their location at a short distance from Bucharest, is an extremely important advantage. This type of an advantage can also work for cities in the first half of the Danube on the Romanian territory (Orșova, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Calafat), located on corridor 3 of freight transport<sup>48</sup>, but whose performance in accessing European funds for cross-border cooperation are quite insignificant. The factors are multiple: the natural geographical resource, the level of development of the national infrastructure, the human and natural resource of the area, etc.

<sup>47</sup> As for example, the proximity of Agigea and Năvodari, which, located near Constanța, were attracted to the growth pole represented by a large city. The already existing infrastructure (especially in the Agigea area) had an essential role, it is obvious, but the proximity of a large city had its importance too.

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, *Culoare de tranzit pentru transportul de marfă* [Freight transit corridors], available at <http://www.mt.gov.ro/web14/spatiul-media/comunicate-de-presa/2881-23032020>, [accessed in October 21, 2021].

Local economic statistics reveal that economic growth has been steady for large cities, which benefit from more areas of activity and a more educated and stable population, which has a more extensive transport and communication infrastructure, the cities on whose territory or around which economic agents with significant turnovers have been established and developed. There is a close correlation between the level of county GDP and the rate of access to funds for cross-border cooperation: the lower the county has a GDP, the lower the rate of access to cross-border cooperation funds. Despite the amount of funds accessed (and they have not been accessed only the cross-border cooperation programmes), the big cities knew, however, an economic downturn and a growth of unemployment with the onset of the economic crisis in 2007–2009, partially recovered since 2013–2014<sup>49</sup>.

Small towns have not yet found the resources needed for development: specialists are scarce or lacking, the level of education of human resources in public institutions is precarious, the vision of leaders is rather narrow, that of ensuring the survival of the community. Though most of these small towns conducted analyses and elaborated strategies of development, this development is still to be expected. Even those small cities that managed to access European funding and have improved the quality of specific infrastructure didn't succeed to advance in their economic development, especially because not everywhere has a national infrastructure been built, to connect the results of smaller local projects. This is the cases for the areas around of suspension bridge Ostrovu Mare, a beautiful touristic region, of the city of two ports (one renewed with European money), Corabia, whose economic recovery projected by building a grain exchange (with European money too) has also failed<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> INSSE, *Romanian Statistic Yearbook 2007–2019*, available at <https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/anuarele-statistice-ale-romaniei>, [accessed in October 18, 2021]; ESPON, *Territorial Patterns and Relations in Romania*, available at [https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/country%20Ofiche%20Romania\\_en.pdf](https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/country%20Ofiche%20Romania_en.pdf), [accessed in October 14, 2021]; Călărași City Hall, *Strategia de dezvoltare economică și socială a Municipiului Călărași pentru perioada 2014-2020* [The economic and social development strategy of Călărași Municipality for the period 2014-2020], available at [https://primariacalarasi.ro/images/Documente/DirectiilePrimariei/3.5%20Directia%20programe%20si%20dezvoltare%20locala/3.5.1%20Strategia%20de%20dezvoltare%20economica%20si%20sociala%20a%20municipiului%20Calarasi%20pentru%20perioada%202014-2020/strategie\\_2014-2020.pdf](https://primariacalarasi.ro/images/Documente/DirectiilePrimariei/3.5%20Directia%20programe%20si%20dezvoltare%20locala/3.5.1%20Strategia%20de%20dezvoltare%20economica%20si%20sociala%20a%20municipiului%20Calarasi%20pentru%20perioada%202014-2020/strategie_2014-2020.pdf), [accessed in September 25, 2021]; Constanța City Hall, The World Bank, *Constanța. Competitive Profile*, available at [http://ctinvest.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Constanta\\_Competitive\\_Profile\\_Summary.pdf](http://ctinvest.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Constanta_Competitive_Profile_Summary.pdf), [accessed September 25, 2021].

<sup>50</sup> Digi24, *Cum s-a năruit visul orașului cu port și faleză pe Dunăre. Industria, odată profitabilă, a fost îngropată în sărăcie* [How the dream of the city with a touris port and a cliff on the Danube collapsed. The once profitable industry was buried in poverty], April 02, 2019, available at <https://www.digi24.ro/special/campanii-digi24/raport-de-tara-2019/orasul-cu-doua-porturi-care-se-scurfunda-in-saracie-1107334>, [accessed in May 30, 2021]; Monica Stuparu, “Colonia speranțelor pierdute” [The colony of lost hopes], in *Gazeta de Sud*, September 29, 2017, available at

**Table 5. Funds by theme**

	Sighetu Marmatiei	Moldova Nouă	Orșova	Calafat	Zimnicea	Oltenița	Călărăși	Giurgiu	Turnu Măgurele	Drobeta Turnu Severin	Galați	Constanța	Agigea	Năvodari	Tulcea	Mangalia	Total projects	Total funds
Education and training	1										2						3	<b>516 240.68</b>
Scientific cooperation											1						1	<b>505 708.90</b>
Health and social services	4				1	2			1	1	1						10	<b>6 387 634.72</b>
Health and social infrastructure			1														1	<b>1 093 495.84</b>
Cooperation between emergency services		1															1	<b>941 292.45</b>
Infrastructure											2						2	<b>361 044 163.00</b>
Institutional cooperation and cooperation networks				2		1	1			1	5						10	<b>5 041 512.06</b>
Improving transport connections							3	2			1		1		1		8	<b>93 687 445.21</b>
Transport and mobility							1	2		2						1	6	<b>33 984 029.13</b>
Logistics and freight transport							1			1							2	<b>27 816 263.00</b>
Multimodal transport										1	1						2	<b>22 528 511.16</b>
Coastal								1			2						3	<b>1 199 554.20</b>

<https://www.gds.ro/Local/2017-09-29/colonia-sperantelor-pierdute/>, [accessed in May 2021]; Ramona Olaru, “Bursa de cereale de la Corabia, zero tranzacții în cinci ani” [Corabia grain exchange, zero transactions in five years], in *Gazeta de Sud*, April 25, 2019, available at <https://www.gds.ro/bani-europeni/2019-04-25/bursa-de-cereale-de-la-corabia-zero-tranzactii-in-cinci-ani/>, [accessed in May 2021].

	Sighetu Marmatei	Moldova Nouă	Orșova	Calafat	Zimnicea	Oltenița	Călărăși	Giurgiu	Turnu Măgurele	Drobeta Turnu Severin	Galati	Constanța	Agigea	Năvodari	Tulcea	Mangalia	Total projects	Total funds
management and maritime issues																		
Waterways, lakes and rivers										2	1	1					4	215 110 000.00
Clustering and economic cooperation				1		1					1		1				4	4894397.58
SME and entrepreneurship														1			1	682 883.57
Tourism					1	3		1	2	3							10	7 110 293.35
Labour market and employment					1	1	2		1								5	2 261 446.58
ICT and digital soc											2						2	3 823 774.00
Social inclusion and equal opportunities										2							2	256120.79
Agriculture, fisheries and forestry										1				1			2	1311902.00
Managing natural and man-made threats, risk management									2	4	1	2					9	402 033 525.5
Climate change														1			1	2259798.00
Green technologies						1					1						2	1 909 504.60
Sustainable management of natural										4	4						8	4 963 569.13



	Sighetu Marmatei	Moldova Nouă	Orșova	Calafat	Zimnicea	Oltenița	Călărăși	Giurgiu	Turnu Măgurele	Drobeta Turnu Severin	Galăț	Constanța	Agigea	Năvodari	Tulcea	Mangalia	Total projects	Total funds	
resources																			
Waste and pollution										1							1	573 066.79	
Evaluation system and results						1				2				1			4	8 692 773.55	
Innovation capacity and awareness-raising						1					1						2	2 931 381.48	
Cultural heritage and arts						1	1		1	1	1			2			7	2 827 071.60	
<b>Total projects</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1216387359</b>	

The diversity of the topics addressed in the projects already completed reveals not only the needs of cities on the river and sea border of Romania and the vision of their leaders, but also the ability of these communities to access European funding programmes and use the contracted amounts with a maximum of efficiency. Cross-border cooperation probably not seem like a critical goal for small communities, especially when potential partners on the other side of the border are not in a good economic situation either. Finding the necessary funds for co-financing can be a real challenge for communities experiencing financial difficulties, but it is an opportunity that should not be missed by any community, no matter how much or less developed it may be.

## Conclusions

Cross-border cooperation is a new type of activity for the border communities in the Central-Eastern European states, an activity involving the voluntary mobilization of public and private actors from the border area of two or more states towards cooperation and mutual support, in order to cooperate in solving common problems or for better mutual understanding. The objective of cross-border cooperation is the better economic and social cohesion of border areas, areas that commonly face economic precariousness because the lack of internal (national) and cross-border transport infrastructure, limited and/or poorly or inefficiently used resources, a few types of economic activities, demographic problems (ageing population, migration of young people with a higher level of education), etc.

Although, in general, cross-border cooperation has a whole range of benefits for border regions involving large cities or regions connected by excellent transport infrastructure, small towns located in hard-to-reach areas cannot enjoy the same benefits in the same time. The cities on which this study focused were involved in several cross-border cooperation projects (especially Constanța, Galați, Giurgiu and Călărași, so the big cities or those situated on a main and well-developed axis of freight transport), but not in many cases as the leading partner. (Whatever the quality, that of simple or leading partner, participation in cross-border cooperation projects is crucial, bringing, in addition to the financial benefits of the participants, more consistent in the case of projects leaders', numerous opportunities for mutual knowledge and for future collaborations.) However, this study only dealt with projects coordinated by public or private entities from Romanian cities, considering that these projects brought greater financial benefits to Romanian cities, some of them having a great need for economic development to become or remain attractive enough for the population in the area and thus avoid migration and depopulation.

Out of the border localities, only those with a population more than over 10000 inhabitants were chosen, considering that they can play the role of growth poles for the rural areas in the immediate vicinity. The commune of Agigea was an exception, with its 6992 inhabitants, but it was considered for its significant economic role in the field of port activity. However, the only locality with less than 10000 inhabitants that has conducted a cross-border cooperation project is Bechet, the project of 7 508 045.27 Euro being focused on the development of port infrastructure.

Also, the projects managed by more distant municipalities (Timișoara, Craiova, Bucharest, etc.) or by the county councils or the professional organizations with county character (i.e., commerce chambers) were not considered, as they did not involve a direct effect on the cities located in the immediate vicinity of the river border. The study thus refers only to the projects led by the Romanian partners, not to Bulgarian ones with Romanian riparian or non-riparian partners. The results highlight the different dynamics of the fluvial and maritime cities, dynamics that reflect not only the specificity of these urban areas, but also their capabilities to recover a difficult situation even when financial

opportunities break through and, despite of inherent bureaucracy and confounding obligation, the conditions to obtain the EU funds are not impossible to be reached.

# POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CASE STUDY ROMANIA-UKRAINE BORDER

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**Abstract:** *Starting with 2003 the European Union turned its interest in developing the borders with the future neighbours at that time, out of which our interest is on Romania-Ukraine border. Since then, several generations of programs financed projects aiming to boost the cooperation between the communities living along the border, also to develop the economic and social life. The paper aim was to determine the interplay between macroeconomic indicators, export, import and gross product, of Romanian and Ukrainian administrative territories. The evaluation of the defined hypotheses showed no statistically significant influence of economic activity of Romanian regions on Ukrainian ones in G1 (Odesa and Tulcea), G2 (Chernivtsi, Botoşani, Suceava) and partially G3 cross-border regions, namely in all cases of Zakarpattia oblast and gross regional product of Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. Maramureş and Satu Mare import were significant for Ivano-Frankivsk export affecting it in different directions, Satu Mare impact was positive, while Maramureş – negative. Therefore, we can assume that Ivano-Frankivsk and Satu Mare had export-import relations. Maramureş export had negative impact on Ivano-Frankivsk export and import, while Satu Mare influence was not significant. Therefore, we can suppose that Maramureş and Ivano-Frankivsk compete for the same markets. The research results indicate that there is need to increase the efficiency of the cross-border programmes in this area or develop better ones to intensify the positive synergy effect on both Romanian and Ukrainian sides. The paper is first part of a larger study concerning the evolution of this border area before the pandemic period, but after each programming period.*

**Keywords:** *cross-border cooperation, cross-border programs, regional development, Romania, Ukraine*

## **Introduction**

At the moment of launching the European Neighbourhood Policy, namely 2003, the cooperation on the borders with that time actual and future neighbours of

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the European Union was supported by a variety of instruments, governed by different regulations, operating with different project identification, selection and implementation procedures, being also difficult to implement genuine joint projects (meaning to serve a joint objective and to operate on both sides of the border at the same time).

During 2020-2021 a significant mark was on the cross-border programmes and projects due to the change in border permeability and the changes on the European, national and local agendas concerning health, people movements, economic life.

We intend to start a study in dynamic and time slots on the effects of the cross-border funds on the trade flows in the border areas along Romania-Ukraine border. The first period is dedicated to the follow up of the PHARE CBC programme that was implemented in 2006-2010 and will cover 2011-2015, second period is dedicated to the follow up of 2007-2013 CBC programmes and will cover 2016-2019, before pandemic period, and third period will be dedicated to the follow up of 2014-2020 CBC programmes that will end implementation in 2022 and most likely will cover 2020-2024.

In the framework of the pre-accession-driven PHARE instrument in the candidate countries, the PHARE CBC programmes<sup>1</sup> supported cross-border cooperation with Member States and between the candidate countries. In the also called New Independent States (NIS countries) the TACIS CBC programme<sup>2</sup> supported cross-border cooperation in the western border regions of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova.

For the first phase, for the 2004-2006 programming period, the proposed key objective was to build on existing progress made in coordinating the various instruments, while fulfilling the existing commitments at that time and obligations regarding the previous programming period up to the end of 2006. These programmes should have been prepared jointly by relevant stakeholders on both sides of the border. The Neighbourhood Programmes covered a broad range of actions flowing from the objectives stated in the European Commission document<sup>3</sup>, including infrastructure in the sectors of transport, environment, energy, border crossings, electronic communications, etc.

The second phase for the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy through the cross-border financial instruments was to establish a new Neighbourhood Instrument post 2006 linked to, and coherent with, the various external policy agendas and processes taking into account of the different regional

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, *Commission Regulation (EC) No 2760/98 of 18 December 1998 concerning the implementation of a programme for cross-border cooperation in the framework of the PHARE programme*, Bruxelles, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> European Union Council, *Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 99/2000 of 29 December 1999 concerning the provision of assistance to the partner States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, Bruxelles, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, *Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument*, Bruxelles, 2003.

priorities already developed. Also, this new instrument was aimed to combine both external policy objectives and economic and social cohesion. The new instrument was named the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and covered more programmes, the geographic coverage of the programmes being established in 2007 in reflection of the basic criteria from the ENPI Regulation and taking account of relevant lessons from past experience, notably with the Neighbourhood Programmes operating in the period 2004-2006, and with some adjustments which needed to reflect the developments since 2007.

The 2003 External Border Initiative Programme (EBI), an aid programme of the European Community in form of grants<sup>4</sup>, has been designed following bilateral discussions between the Romanian authorities and the European Commission's representatives. The objectives of the 2003 PHARE External Border Initiative for Romania were to improve cross-border cooperation at local level between Romania and Serbia&Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine, to support the further development of the economic potential of the border regions and to pave the way for the future (2004-2006) PHARE CBC/Neighbourhood programmes between Romania and Serbia & Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine.

The first from the four priority fields for these funds was the economic development and cooperation that included as eligible activities<sup>5</sup>: studies for planning and development; economic development – support for small projects focused on the capitalization of the economic activities such as proposals for small scale enterprises, marketing initiatives, market studies, networks and structures for cross-border cooperation and partnership in order to support those kinds of projects; and tourism – soft activities such as studies, planning, institutional capacity building, training for SMEs and human resources development in tourism field.

In the next step, the starting point to state the general objectives of the Neighbourhood Programme (NP) that influence the area, namely Romania-Ukraine 2004-2006, have been the analyses focused on key factors uniting border regions of Ukraine and Romania<sup>6</sup>. The results of the analyses on uniting factors, presented in the Joint Programming Document, showed that a number of key socio-economic fields were important and with a high cross-border value.

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<sup>4</sup> European Commission & Romanian Government, *Financing Memorandum for 2003 External Border Initiative Programme for Romania signed on 19.12.2003*, 2003/005-778, December 2003, available at [http://www.mdrl.ro/\\_documente/cbc/2003/ebi/memorandum\\_ebi\\_2003.pdf](http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/cbc/2003/ebi/memorandum_ebi_2003.pdf), [accessed in January 2021].

<sup>5</sup> Romanian Government, Managing Authority, *Guidelines for Applicants for Joint Small Projects Fund*, 2003, available at [http://www.mdrl.ro/\\_documente/cbc/2003/ebi/ucraina/pachet\\_info\\_U\\_ro.exe](http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/cbc/2003/ebi/ucraina/pachet_info_U_ro.exe), [accessed in February 2021].

<sup>6</sup> Romanian Government, Managing Authority, *Joint Programming Document for the Neighbourhood Programme Romania-Ukraine*, July 2005, available at [http://mdrl.ro/\\_documente/cbc/2004\\_2006/RoUa/programare/JPD\\_ro\\_ua.pdf](http://mdrl.ro/_documente/cbc/2004_2006/RoUa/programare/JPD_ro_ua.pdf), [accessed in February 2021].

The identified opportunities on the Romania-Ukraine border were: expanding rural tourism in regions particularly rich and competitively advantaged for long-term development in this sector, provided that biological equilibrium will be protected on short and long term; the development of existing human resources operating or to be operating in competitive sectors; the opportunity of supporting growth of an interesting SME backbone specialized in economic sectors and having good cooperation scope for local development with an integrated perspective; and of preserving and promoting common historical heritage and natural treasures of extremely high value at regional, national and international levels. The general objective of the Romania-Ukraine NP programme was to improve cross-border integration between boundary regions while posing good bases for sustainable economic development.

For the 2007-2013 programming period was in place the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) through which there were financed three programmes on the actual Eastern border of EU and covering mainly Ukraine and Republic of Moldova: Joint Operational Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Joint Operational Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine and Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova.

The main priorities of the above-mentioned programmes were built around economic and social development, environment management and protection, increase of the security and efficiency of the border by proper management and the “People to people” component<sup>7</sup>. The main difference between the previous implementing systems for the programming period 2004-2006 and the ENPI requirements was that for the 2004-2006 exercise there was no joint implementation on the project level and the tasks related to the external funding and implementation were performed by the services of the European Commission, while after the joint implementation and funding was mandatory<sup>8</sup>.

The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova<sup>9</sup>, financed through the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument,

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<sup>7</sup> Romanian Government, Joint Managing Authority, *Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova*, 2008, available at [http://www.ro-ua-md.net/images/stories/File/Joint\\_Operational\\_Programme.pdf](http://www.ro-ua-md.net/images/stories/File/Joint_Operational_Programme.pdf), [accessed in February 2021]; Joint Managing Authority Hungary, *Joint Operational Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine*, 2008, available at [http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/file\\_download/1](http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/file_download/1), [accessed in February 2021]; Joint Managing Authority Poland, *Joint Operational Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine*, 2008, available at [http://pl-by-ua.eu/upload/en/PL-BY-UA\\_ENG.pdf](http://pl-by-ua.eu/upload/en/PL-BY-UA_ENG.pdf), [accessed in February 2021].

<sup>8</sup> European Parliament and EU Council, *Regulation 1638/2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*, Bruxelles, 2007; European Commission, *Regulation no 951/2007 laying down implementing rules for cross-border cooperation programmes financed under Regulation no 1638/2006*, Bruxelles, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Romanian Government, Joint Managing Authority, *Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova*, 2008, available at <http://www.ro-ua->

is one of the tools used by the European Commission for the implementation of the European Union Neighbourhood Policy. The programme aimed to create a bridge between the three partner countries, in the purpose of sustaining the communities from the border areas for finding common solutions to the similar problems they face. Through this programme the local administration and other organizations from cross-border areas are encouraged to collaborate for the development of the local economy and environmental issues.

As the JOP Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova presents, the aim of the first priority was to improve the economic performance of the border area through the diversification and modernization in a sustainable manner, of the border economy. The most urgent needs of the area, identified in the analysis that was the starting point of the programme design, addressed by this priority are focused mainly: “to support SMEs growth and to increase the number of SMEs in order to improve the economy of the region and limit the migration; to improve competitiveness across the economy, particularly for Innovation and Research and Development (R&D); to facilitate the ecologically balanced modernization of agriculture in order to make the principal sector of the area more competitive; to develop the great potential of tourism (cultural, agro, eco and theme tourism) for area development; to improve the region’s infrastructure through modernization of transport and energy networks which suffer from a lack of investment and are key aspects to a competitive economy and to provide adequate interconnection of electricity systems through integration into the UCTE (Union for the Coordination of the Transmission of Electricity) in order to increase the capacity of cross-border electricity exchanges and increase security of supply in the region; to make the area more attractive for foreign direct investments, etc.”

### ***Theoretical background***

Cross-border cooperation creates additional opportunities for national and regional economies, as well as local businesses involved in international trade and production. Therefore, there is an abundant literature devoted to different aspects of this topical issue. Milenković shed light on eco-regionalism as the model for amending economic and social status and maintaining the living space and environment of people living in bordering regions of different countries<sup>10</sup>.

Analysing Black Sea Region, an EU macro-region, Studzieniecki determined that even though cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programs foster regional development, the organisational structure still requires amendment<sup>11</sup>. According to Ustinovichius, Lewczuk, and Czech, the

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md.net/images/stories/File/Joint\_Operational\_Programme.pdf, [accessed in February 2021].

<sup>10</sup> Marija Milenković, “Ecoregionalism-Factor Cross-Border Cooperation and Tourism Development”, in *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, no. 44/2012, p. 236-240.

<sup>11</sup> Tomasz Studzieniecki, “The Development of Cross-Border Cooperation in an EU Macroregion – A Case Study of the Baltic Sea Region”, in *Procedia Economics and*



mechanisms for multifunctional development of cross-border regions should include: complex analysis and generalization of regional economic development, integration and relations on cross-border area; comparison of cross-border trade potential of neighbouring regions; the assessment of premises and conditions; substantiating the perspective directions and determining the purpose, as well as efficiency of cross-border cooperation of cross-border regions<sup>12</sup>. Bouwmeester and Scholtens (2017) found that “international spill-overs are generally larger for employment compensation compared to capital compensation and that the spillovers are unevenly distributed among the countries and the types of labour”<sup>13</sup>. These authors showed that high-skilled and medium-skilled labour is more influenced in countries hosting investments, while low-skilled labour is occupied outside the EU.

Using a bivariate linear model on the sample of Portuguese and Spanish cross-border small and medium enterprises, Raposo, Ferreira, and Fernandes (2014) confirmed that cross-border cooperation positively affects company performance and innovation results<sup>14</sup>.

Lewczuk and Ustinovichius (2015) presented the concept of multifunctional development of cross-border areas, which includes the following conditions for efficient functioning: monitoring the regional socio-economic indices, improving regional competitiveness, and implementing economic reforms within the framework of national development programmes<sup>15</sup>.

In a study of Péter Balogh and Márton Pete, as argument of our endeavour, we identified that in some cases, a combination of market forces with adequate policy of multiple levels of governmental decision makers, and within the local cross-border influence led to an integration along the border<sup>16</sup>. However, in other cases, while comparing the way the macro-national EU objectives are reflected in

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*Finance*, 39/2016, available at [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(16\)30318-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(16)30318-5), [accessed in March 2021], p. 235-241.

<sup>12</sup> Leonas Ustinovichius, Jerzy Lewczuk, Artur Czech, “Methodological Approach Justifying the Concept of Cross-Border and Trans-Boundary Cooperation with Other Countries and Regions”, in *Procedia Engineering* no. 208/2017, available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2017.11.037>, [accessed in March 2021], p. 183-189.

<sup>13</sup> Maaïke C. Bouwmeester, Bert Scholtens, “Cross-Border Investment Expenditure Spillovers in European Gas Infrastructure”, in *Energy Policy*, no. 107/2017, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2017.05.010>, [accessed in March 2021], p. 371-380.

<sup>14</sup> Mario L. Raposo, Joao J.M. Ferreira, Cristina I. Fernandes, “Local and Cross-Border SME Cooperation: Effects on Innovation and Performance”, in *Revista Europea de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa*, no. 23/2014, p. 157-165.

<sup>15</sup> Jerzy Lewczuk, Leonas Ustinovichius, “The Concept of Multi-Functional Development of Cross-Border Regions: Poland Case”, in *Procedia Engineering*, no. 122/2015, available at <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2015.10.008>, [accessed in March 2021], p. 65-70.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Balogh, Marton Pete, “Bridging the Gap: Cross-border Integration in the Slovak–Hungarian Borderland around Štúrovo–Esztergom”, in *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4/2018, p. 605-622.

the regional cross-border programmes, researchers found that the regional specificity is also very important in establishing the specific development objectives<sup>17</sup>. Some researchers' reviews on literature show that a cross-border region may benefit of a better integration on the cross-border labour market, energy innovations, cross-border logistics and joint marketing<sup>18</sup>.

On the other side, even the evaluation of the cross-border programmes is a complex task due to the several competences and data needed to be processed<sup>19</sup>, aspect that proves how more difficult is a task of detecting the contribution of these programmes in the economic development of the border area. A previous research listed four categories of financial sources relevant in the development of the cross-border regions – the along the border communities' funds, the domestic development funds targeted for regional development, European funds for different objectives that lead to development, and attracted private sources of funds<sup>20</sup>.

In case of borders in the Eastern part of Europe it seems that a significant part of economic cross-border cooperation is represented by smuggling, mainly in the case of the borders between member states and the partner countries<sup>21</sup>. Despite the significance, in this area there is a lack of official data or the possibilities of field research are extremely low, therefore it cannot be counted as source of analyse.

Specific on the border area of our study, other researchers concluded that the EU cross-border programmes, directed on the interregional dialogue and society democratization assisted in cross-border cooperation very much, contributing to the integration path of the countries<sup>22</sup>. On the same area, other

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<sup>17</sup> Stefan Telle, Martin Špaček, Daniela Crăciun, “Divergent Paths to Cohesion: The (Unintended) Consequences of a Place-Based Cohesion Policy”, in *Regional and Local Development in Times of Polarisation: Re-thinking Spatial Policies in Europe*, edited by Thilo Lang, Franziska Gormar, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p. 149-172.

<sup>18</sup> Jos van den Broek, Hub Smulders, “Institutional Hindrances in Crossborder Regional Innovation Systems”, in *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, no. 2/2015, p. 116-122.

<sup>19</sup> Florentina Chirodea, “Evaluarea programelor de cooperare transfrontalieră. Instrumente, metodologii și particularități” [Evaluation of cross-border cooperation programs. Tools, methodologies and features], in *Evaluarea cooperării transfrontaliere la frontierele României* [Evaluation of cross-border cooperation at Romania's borders], edited by Ioan Horga, Constantin-Vasile Țoca, Florentina Chirodea, Primus Publishing House, Oradea, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Marcela Șlusarciuc, “Financial Instruments for Crossborder Economic Development. Shaping the New Tendencies at the European Level”, PhD Thesis, “Ștefan cel Mare” University, Suceava, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Katarzyna Stoklosa, “Conflict and Co-operation on Polish Borders: The Example of the Polish-German, Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Russian Border Regions.”, in *Austrian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no.1/2013, p. 65-82.

<sup>22</sup> Serghei Hakman, “Ukraine – Republic of Moldova – Romania: Cross-Border Cooperation and Regional Experience of European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Realization”, in *Challenges and Opportunities for a Multilateral Cooperation*, edited by Antonello F. Biagini, Constantin Hlihor, Andrea Carteny, Mineo Giovanni Editore, Roma, 2012, p. 87-99.

researchers analysed the perceived immediate impact that some projects had on economic level<sup>23</sup>. Still, any of them went deeper in analysing the economic impact.

***Aim, methodology and data***

The aim of our paper is to determine the interplay between macroeconomic indicators, namely, export, import and gross product, of Romanian and Ukrainian administrative territories belonging to the same cross-border regions. Our hypotheses are that export, import and gross regional products of Romanian regions are significant for export (hypothesis 1, H1) and import (hypothesis 2, H2), export (hypothesis 3, H3), and gross regional products (hypothesis 4, H4) of Ukrainian ones respectively.

In our research, we rely on available Romanian National Institute of Statistics and Statistical Service of Ukraine data, adjusted to exchange rates, in 2011-2015. The regions of our interests are: Tulcea, Botoşani, Suceava, Maramureş and Satu Mare for Romania; as well as Odesa, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk and Zakarpattia for Ukraine. We made a grouping depending on the border pairing, and inclusion in different generations of programmes along time: G1 – Tulcea and Odesa (**Table 1**); G2 - Botoşani, Suceava, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk (**Table 2**); G3 – Maramureş, Satu Mare, Zakarpattia (**Table 3**).

**Table 1.** Export, import and gross regional products in G1 cross-border region in 2011-2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Export, million euros					
Odesa	1 108.07	1 388.63	1 226.37	1 342.35	1 557.32
Tulcea	357.35	317.68	450.10	341.63	450.85
Import, million euros					
Odesa	2 261.55	3 349.39	2 589.64	1 567.50	872.00
Tulcea	277.68	276.98	268.71	267.95	272.66
Gross regional product, million euros					
Odesa	5 544.57	6 303.75	6 573.60	4 768.04	4 117.47
Tulcea	1 239.83	1 101.60	1 196.63	1 159.63	1 241.62

**Source:** Authors' calculations based on data retrieved from Romanian National Institute of Statistics and Statistical Service of Ukraine, 2021

**Table 2.** Export, import and gross regional products in G2 cross-border region in 2011-2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Export, million euros					

<sup>23</sup> Iordan Gh. Bărbulescu, Mircea Brie, Nicolae Toderaş, *Cooperarea transfrontalieră între România și Ucraina, respectiv între România și Republica Moldova. Oportunități și provocări în perioada 2014-2020* [Cross-border cooperation between Romania and Ukraine, respectively between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Opportunities and challenges in the period 2014-2020], European Institute of Romania, București, 2016.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Chernivtsi	98.20	97.20	94.38	97.44	97.63
Botoșani	246.36	252.18	270.52	272.95	290.38
Suceava	261.36	334.22	411.07	407.02	416.20
Import, million euros					
Chernivtsi	117.18	136.08	119.07	84.10	70.66
Botoșani	216.52	232.61	210.99	226.41	252.21
Suceava	355.48	356.62	422.52	432.31	498.13
Gross regional product, million euros					
Chernivtsi	1 079.09	1 281.92	1 296.34	957.57	763.80
Botoșani	1 442.10	1 339.33	1 517.34	1 492.39	1 555.43
Suceava	2 515.46	2 493.33	2 690.77	2 757.32	2 873.48

**Source:** Authors' calculations based on data retrieved from Romanian National Institute of Statistics and Statistical Service of Ukraine, 2021

**Table 3.** Export, import and gross regional products in G3 cross-border region in 2011-2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Export, million euros					
Ivano-Frankivsk	677.27	639.24	355.25	367.85	336.26
Zakarpattia	1004.87	1077.74	979.00	1042.77	986.58
Maramures	799.92	855.83	981.48	1033.99	1076.17
Satu Mare	837.36	840.97	773.08	796.03	860.71
Import, million euros					
Ivano-Frankivsk	768.09	765.46	435.49	363.42	265.49
Zakarpattia	1436.51	1563.27	1553.23	1308.03	911.87
Maramures	629.94	625.22	666.67	716.88	801.82
Satu Mare	898.64	888.07	757.12	816.36	900.63
Gross regional product, million euros					
Ivano-Frankivsk	2411.88	3143.55	3128.11	2395.22	1892.55
Zakarpattia	1627.70	2084.02	2016.56	1534.75	1194.95
Maramures	2133.64	2231.93	2311.07	2452.15	2720.75
Satu Mare	1596.30	1610.61	1777.97	1824.84	1937.18

**Source:** Authors' calculations based on data retrieved from Romanian National Institute of Statistics and Statistical Service of Ukraine, 2021

There are certain limitations of our research due to the specificity of Ukrainian and Romanian statistics. Firstly, the Statistical Service of Ukraine does not provide data on monthly basis, while the Romanian one has data on bordering regions starting with 2012. Secondly, Ukraine faces challenges caused by the Russian Federation, so last five years illustrate the drop-in economic activity due to the hybrid war against it, while Romanian is a peaceful EU member-state. Finally, statistics does not depict economic activity between the very countries simply illustrating general data for regions of interest.

To evaluate the defined scientific hypotheses, statistical significance of the interplay between macroeconomic indicators of regions of interest was determined via t-statistic at the significance level of 5%. If the calculated t-statistic value was

lower than 5%, we rejected the null hypothesis and adopted the alternative hypothesis. We applied Eviews 8 to conduct calculations.

**Results and discussion**

The research results are in the tables below.

The probability values (0.7084; 0.7907; 0.5117; 0.4377) confirm that in the evaluation of the interplay between macroeconomic indicators in G1 cross-border region, there are no statistically significant influence of economic activity of Romanian regions on Ukrainian ones (**Table 4**). Therefore, H1-H4 were not confirmed.

**Table 4.** Evaluation of the interplay between macroeconomic indicators in G1 cross-border region in 2011-2015

Dependent variables	Independent variables	t-statisic	Probability	Correlation
Odesa export	Tulcea export	0.411375	0.7084	0.231080
Odesa export	Tulcea import	-0.289982	0.7907	-0.165123
Odesa import	Tulcea export	0.742308	0.5117	-0.479038
Odesa gross regional product	Tulcea gross regional product	-0.892845	0.4377	-0.458190

Source: Authors’ results, 2021

The probability values (0.3073; 0.4234; 0.3699; 0.2723; 0.1463; 0.3637; 0.8925; 0.4867) confirm that in the evaluation of the interplay between macroeconomic indicators in G2 cross-border region, there are no statistically significant influence of economic activity of Romanian regions on Ukrainian ones (**Table 5**). Therefore, H1-H4 were not confirmed.

**Table 5.** Evaluation of the interplay between macroeconomic indicators in G2 cross-border region in 2011-2015

Dependent variables	Independent variables	t-statisic	Probability	Correlation
Chernivtsi export	Botoșani import	1.358347	0.3073	0.481827
	Suceava import	-0.998178	0.4234	-0.121075
Chernivtsi export	Botoșani export	1.147514	0.3699	-0.187165
	Suceava export	-1.500194	0.2723	-0.497012
Chernivtsi import	Botoșani export	-2.318677	0.1463	-0.834236
	Suceava export	1.166506	0.3637	-0.576767
Chernivtsi gross regional product	Botoșani gross regional product	0.152892	0.8925	-0.610640
	Suceava gross regional product	-0.845933	0.4867	-0.729889

Source: Authors’ results, 2021

**Table 6** indicates that G3 cross-border region showed controversial region. Considering Zakarpattia region, the probability values (0.5467; 0.6654; 0.6720; 0.8868; 0.0794; 0.1069; 0.5453; 0.8327) confirm that there is no statistically

significant influence of economic activity of Romanian regions on Ukrainian one (**Table 6**). Therefore, H1-H4 were not confirmed.

Regarding Ivano-Frankivsk oblast within G3 cross-border region, H4 was not confirmed; H1 was totally confirmed, while H2 and H3 were partially supported by the results of our calculations.

**Table 6.** Evaluation of the interplay between macroeconomic indicators in G3 cross-border region in 2011-2015

Dependent variables	Independent variables	t-statistic	Probability	Correlation
Ivano-Frankivsk export	Maramureş import	-17.60324	0.0032	-0.777918
	Satu Mare import	13.29368	0.0056	0.557663
Ivano-Frankivsk export	Maramureş export	-8.846232	0.0125	-0.962345
	Satu Mare export	2.239337	0.1545	0.393164
Ivano-Frankivsk import	Maramureş export	-8.079252	0.0150	-0.985099
	Satu Mare export	0.274779	0.8093	0.203058
Ivano-Frankivsk gross regional product	Maramureş gross regional product	-0.740105	0.5363	-0.667064
	Satu Mare gross regional product	0.343625	0.7639	-0.576525
Zakarpattia export	Maramureş import	-0.719142	0.5467	-0.412503
	Satu Mare import	0.502166	0.6654	0.269291
Zakarpattia export	Maramureş export	-0.490985	0.6720	-0.347149
	Satu Mare export	0.161102	0.8868	0.164712
Zakarpattia import	Maramureş export	-3.333860	0.0794	-0.676990
	Satu Mare export	-2.806917	0.1069	-0.529986
Zakarpattia gross regional product	Maramureş gross regional product	-0.722035	0.5453	-0.735111
	Satu Mare gross regional product	0.239970	0.8327	-0.660908

**Source:** Authors' results, 2021

Applying the least squares method, we received the following linear regressions for Ivano-Frankivsk oblast:

$$IF\_EXP = 368.30429913 - 1.90067974426*MM\_IMP + 1.66017202906*SM\_IMP \text{ (Adjusted } R^2 = 0.991163; \text{ Probability (F-statistic) } = 0.004419)$$

$$IF\_EXP = 828.546426667 - 1.31692590171*MM\_EXP + 1.09175631931*SM\_EXP \text{ (Adjusted } R^2 = 0.957864; \text{ Probability (F-statistic) } = 0.021068)$$

$$IF\_IMP = 2187.90632276 - 1.94450841986*MM\_EXP + 0.216583672351*SM\_EXP \text{ (Adjusted } R^2 = 0.942994; \text{ Probability (F-statistic) } = 0.028503)$$

Where: IF\_EXP – Ivano-Frankivsk export; IF\_IMP – Ivano-Frankivsk import; MM\_EXP – Maramureş export; MM\_IMP – Maramureş import; SM\_EXP – Satu Mare export; SM\_IMP – Satu Mare import.

Maramureş and Satu Mare imports were significant for Ivano-Frankivsk export affecting it in different directions, Satu Mare impact was positive, while Maramureş – negative. Therefore, we can assume that Ivano-Frankivsk and Satu Mare had export-import relations.

Maramureş export had negative impact on Ivano-Frankivsk export and import, while Satu Mare influence was not significant. Therefore, we can suppose that Maramureş and Ivano-Frankivsk compete for the same markets.

### ***Conclusions***

The aim of the paper was to determine the interplay between macroeconomic indicators, namely, export, import and gross product, of Romanian and Ukrainian administrative territories belonging to the same cross-border regions. The evaluation of the defined hypotheses showed no statistically significant influence of economic activity of Romanian regions on Ukrainian ones in G1 (Odesa and Tulcea), G2 (Chernivtsi, Botoşani, Suceava) and partially G3 cross-border regions, namely in all cases of Zakarpattia oblast and gross regional product of Ivano-Frankivsk oblast.

Maramureş and Satu Mare imports were significant for Ivano-Frankivsk export affecting it in different directions, Satu Mare impact was positive, while Maramureş – negative. Therefore, we can assume that Ivano-Frankivsk and Satu Mare had export-import relations. Maramureş export had negative impact on Ivano-Frankivsk export and import, while Satu Mare influence was not significant. Therefore, we can suppose that Maramureş and Ivano-Frankivsk compete for the same foreign markets. Also, both parts of the border could be affected by factors external to the region and a possible direction of investigation could be to compare these border regions with the national average data or with other borders of the two countries.

The research results indicate that there is need to increase the efficiency of the cross-border programmes in this area as to intensify the positive synergy effect on both Romanian and Ukrainian sides. The research has its limitations mostly due to the specificity of Ukrainian and Romanian statistics, but it also contains interesting findings and inspiration for the following steps of the mentioned research on cross-border cooperation. The follow up of the study in dynamic and time slots on the effects of the cross-border funds on the trade flows in the border areas along Romania-Ukraine border will focus on to effects after 2007-2013 CBC programmes and will cover 2016-2019, before pandemic period.

# THE COOPERATION IN THE CROSS-BORDER EUROREGIONS: IS THERE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE INFLUENCE FROM ITS PUBLIC OPINION PERCEPTION?

Dan APĂTEANU\*

**Abstract:** *The cross-border cooperation is a subject analysed intensively nowadays, as it has many implications for the lives of a large number of people living in the European Union. There is evidence that shows that the borderlands create a local milieu, that has specific geographical, socioeconomic and culturally intrinsic characteristics. The European Union supports the cross-border cooperation by the program Interreg A, that aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas. The cooperation in the EU seems to be encouraged, as people trust in the EU, they have a positive image of the EU, they are optimistic about its future, and most importantly, EU citizenship and free movement are seen as main EU achievements, as is evidenced by latest Eurobarometer results. In the Romania-Hungary cross-border area, there are good perspectives for cooperation, as there is a high level of trust between the people.*

**Keywords:** cross-border cooperation, EU, Eurobarometer

## **Introduction**

Cross-border cooperation is a hot topic, analysed by many scholars nowadays, as cooperation has intensified or we try to encourage it to take place due its many benefits. There are many theoretical approaches, that show the specifics of these areas. Some of these theoretical approaches are: territorialism, glocalization, institutional and the Euroregions framework ones. The program that regulates the Euroregions cooperation is Interreg A, that supports the cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. The cross-border cooperation supports sustainable development along the EU's external borders, helps reduce differences in living standards and addressing common challenges across these borders. However, in order for the cooperation to be strong, it is important that people to trust in their

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neighbours; we see the state of these values from the 2019 Eurobarometer on the state of EU and also for the Romania-Hungary case.

### **1. Cross-border cooperation theoretical framework**

Cross-border cooperation promoted by Euroregions is nowadays analysed intensively. One of the studies investigates 61 active Euroregions to observe the characteristics of their CBC agreements<sup>1</sup>. From an analytical perspective, the study challenges the claim that Euroregions are effective as political instruments for re-territorialization or new modes of cross-border multilevel governance.

The paper by Berzi reconceptualise the understanding of borderlands by applying the territorialist approach and understanding them as complex territorial units, whereby geographical, socioeconomic and cultural patterns are affected and altered by the fixation of the international boundary and territorialisation. Still, the persistence of local cross-border networks, both formal and informal, contributes to maintaining a shared *local milieu*. The case study analysis shows how borderlands adapt themselves to the new spatial configuration and introduce a new set of geographical, socioeconomic and culturally intrinsic characteristics, that is, the *borderland milieu*, which is reproduced as a result of local cross-border interactions<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, the study by Blatter<sup>3</sup>, underlines a trend towards *glocalization* in the Euroregions. The institutionalized links between subnational actors and the official inclusion of subnational actors in cross-border institutions are undermining the exclusive gate-keeper role which national executives held during most of the twentieth century. The modern political system which separated the world into neatly separated spaces of place is becoming transformed.

In Europe, the process of regional cross-border institution-building shows the quite typical modern features of *institutions* with a dominance of public sector actors, a clear-cut geographic scale, a multifunctional scope and temporal stability. The European system of 'multi-level governance' is being complemented by another rather weak but comprehensive layer of institutions of governance and identity formation. In contrast to this, in North America regional cross-border cooperation follows much more the logics of spaces of flows. The new institutions, which are quite 'fluid' with respect to geographic space and time, are not strong enough to play a significant role in policy conflicts with distributive consequences across national borders.

There is a paradox between the European setting that is favourable to cooperation and the limited number of concrete cross-border development projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Noferini, Matteo Berzi, Francesco Maria Camonita, Antoni Durà Guimerà, "Cross-Border Cooperation in the EU: Euroregions Amid Multilevel Governance and Re-Territorialization, in *European Planning Studies*", Vol. 28, Issue 1 (2020), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Matteo Berzi, "The Cross-Border Re-Territorialization Concept Revisited: The Territorialist Approach Applied to the Case of Cerdanya on the French-Spanish Border", in *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 25, Issue 9 (2017), p. 1593.

<sup>3</sup> Joachim Blatter, "From 'Spaces of Place' to 'Spaces of Flows'? Territorial and Functional Governance in Cross-border Regions in Europe and North America", in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 28, Issue 3/2004, p. 545.

This contradiction can be explained initially by the different organizations of spatial planning on either side of the borders<sup>4</sup>. Also, there is a difference between the ‘community’ approach, of which one aim is to seek territorial cohesion within Europe, and the institutional framework which organizes the spatial planning and development of a territory delineated by national boundaries, without taking into account the spatial development of the neighbouring territories. Cross-border cooperation therefore requires adjustments and innovations in matters of spatial planning. One of the keys to success is coordination between the actors, or even harmonization of the spatial policies in order to achieve efficient management of border areas.

## **2. Cross-border cooperation legal framework in EU**

European cross-border cooperation programme, known as *Interreg A*, supports cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. It aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union.

37.5% of the EU population lives in border areas, along some 38 internal borders made up of geographic, linguistic barriers often bearing the scars of European wars. First developed as a Community initiative in 1990, Interreg was reorganised as a formal “objective” of European Cohesion Policy in 2000.

European Cross-border cooperation aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purpose of the overall harmonious development of the Union.

There were 60 cooperation programmes for the period 2007-2013 with an allocation of EUR 6 billion (60% of which have been spent already), are involved in a wide variety of activities linked to the maturity of border cooperation.

Cross-border cooperation programmes support NUTS III regions laying directly on the borders, or adjacent to them. They are managed by joint structures, situated in one of the countries, responsible for the whole programme.

In some border areas, cooperation still had to heal the scars of history and turn recent ‘enemies’ into ‘neighbours’ to foster sustainable trust along many borders, as a stepping stone towards more mature stages of cooperation ranging from tackling common handicaps – especially risk prevention and emergency response activities- to more integrated cooperation approaches aiming at exploiting together untapped potential to boost economic development in often peripheral regions.

In particular, the more integrated stages of Cross-border cooperation contribute to a harmonious territorial development by retaining brains in the border

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<sup>4</sup> Frederic Durand, “Challenges of Cross-Border Spatial Planning in the Metropolitan Regions of Luxembourg and Lille”, in *Planning Practice & Research*, Vol. 29, Issue 2 (2014), p. 131.

areas that would otherwise migrate to the economic and service-wise more attractive national centres. This is achieved by enhancing the quality of life in the often, peripheral border regions, notably via investments in: innovation, health care, education, employment, labour mobility.

The 2014-2020 period required each of the 60 programmes to be more focused in terms of results and priorities, in line with the new reformed EU Cohesion Policy. This should ensure maximum impact and even more effective use of the investments.

Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) is a key element of the EU policy towards its neighbours. It supports sustainable development along the EU's external borders, helps reduce differences in living standards and addressing common challenges across these borders. It was first recognised as such in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) regulation for the period 2007-2013. This was confirmed for the period 2014-2020 in the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) regulation adopted in March 2014.

CBC promotes cooperation between EU countries and neighbourhood countries sharing a land border or sea crossing. Funding can also be provided for a programme between several EU and neighbourhood countries which, for example, are part of the same sea basin.

CBC is designed on the *principles* of the EU's territorial cooperation model, but adapted to the specificities of the EU external cooperation. What characterises the CBC programmes and makes them a unique cooperation mechanism is the participating countries' strong commitment and ownership based on:

- balanced partnership between the participating countries on either side of a border: Member States and neighbouring countries have an equal say in the programme decisions and projects receive funding only if implemented by partners on both sides;
- management entrusted to a local – or national – authority in a member state, jointly selected by all countries participating in the programme;
- common legal framework and implementation rules: For the future ENI period, rules established for the ENPI CBC have been simplified and adapted based on previous experience.

CBC has three main objectives: (i) promoting economic and social development in border areas; (ii) addressing common challenges (environment, public health, safety and security); (iii) putting in place better conditions for persons, goods and capital mobility.

The ENI CBC budget for the period 2014-2020 remains roughly at the same level as the ENPI CBC budget 2007-2013 with a total of EUR 1.052 billion. The CBC budget comes from two different sources: ENI and contributions from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Out of the 16 CBC ENI programmes identified in the ENI CBC Programming Document 2014-2020, 13 programmes were adopted in December 2015, and 2 more were adopted in December 2016 (Mid-Atlantic is still missing). It is to be noted that the Baltic Sea

programme remains an INTERREG programme managed by DG Regional and Urban Policy and was adopted already in 2014.

### **3. Spring 2019 Standard Eurobarometer on the state of European Union**

This Standard Eurobarometer survey was conducted after the European elections, between 7 June and 1 July 2019 in all 28 EU countries and five candidate countries.

#### *Trust and optimism*

Trust in the EU is at its highest level since 2014 and remains higher than trust in national governments or parliaments. Trust in the EU has increased in 20 Member States, with the highest scores in Lithuania (72%), Denmark (68%) and Estonia (60%). In addition, over half of the respondents “tend to trust” the EU in Luxembourg (59%), Finland (58%), Portugal (57%), Malta and Sweden (both 56%), Bulgaria and Hungary (both 55%), Ireland, Poland, the Netherlands and Cyprus (all 54%), Romania and Austria (both 52%) and Latvia and Belgium (both 51%).

Since the last Standard Eurobarometer survey in autumn 2018, the proportion of respondents who have a positive image of the EU (45%) has increased in 23 EU Member States, most strikingly in Cyprus (47%, +11), Hungary (52%, +9) Greece (33%, +8), Romania (60%, +8) and Portugal (60%, +7). A two-percentage point increase has been registered since autumn 2018 (+10 since spring 2014), reaching its highest level ever for the past 10 years. 37% (+1, compared to autumn 2018) of respondents have a neutral image of the EU, while less than a fifth have a negative image (17%, -3) –is the lowest score in 10 years.

A majority of Europeans are optimistic about the future of the EU (61%, +3 percentage points), while only 34% (-3) are pessimistic. Optimism is highest in Ireland (85%), Denmark (79%), Lithuania (76%) and Poland (74%). At the other end of the scale, optimism is less pronounced in the United Kingdom (47% vs 46%) and in France (50% vs 45%).

55% of Europeans say they are satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU, the highest score since autumn 2004 (+5 percentage points since autumn 2018; +11 since spring 2014) while the number of those “not satisfied” has decreased by five percentage points, to 36%. A majority of Europeans agree that “their voice counts in the EU”. The EU-28 average reaches 56% (+7 percentage points since autumn 2018; +11 since spring 2018; +14 since spring 2014), with the highest scores being observed in Sweden (86%), Denmark (81%) and Netherlands (76%).

#### *EU citizenship and free movement seen as main EU achievements*

In all 28 Member States, more than half of respondents feel that they are citizens of the EU. Across the EU as a whole, 73% feel this way (+2 percentage points since autumn 2018), and at a national level the scores range from 93% in

Luxembourg, 88% in Germany, 87% in Spain to 57% in both Greece and Italy and 52% in Bulgaria.

A large majority of EU citizens support “the free movement of EU citizens who can live, work, study and do business anywhere in the EU” (81%, -2 percentage points since autumn 2018), and in every EU Member State more than two-thirds of respondents share this view, from Lithuania (94%) to Italy and the UK (both 68%).

#### **4. The Romania - Hungary case**

The Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Programme carries on the financing of cross-border cooperation initiatives in the Romanian-Hungarian border area, with the support of European Union, through European Regional Development Fund, and with the contribution of the Governments of both Romania and Hungary. The Programme will be implemented during 2014–2020 programming period.

The Programme allocates non-refundable funding, in a competitive manner, in the framework of public calls for proposals, for joint cross-border projects aimed at:

- Joint protection and efficient use of common values and resources (Cooperating on common values and resources) – 48.50 million EURO
- Improve sustainable cross-border mobility and remove bottlenecks (Cooperating on accessibility) – 34.99 million EURO
- Improve employment and promote cross-border labour market (Cooperating on employment) – 55.07 million EURO
- Improving health-care services (Cooperating on health-care and prevention) – 57.03 million EURO
- Improve risk-prevention and disaster management (Cooperating on risk prevention and disaster management) – 9.55 million EURO
- Promoting cross-border cooperation between institutions and citizens (Institutions and Communities cooperation) – 4.01 million EURO

As a cross-border cooperation Programme, Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary has the following characteristics:

1. Lead beneficiary principle. For each project in part, one of the institutions/organizations participating in the project will be nominated as Lead Beneficiary (LB), which will be responsible for project implementation. Each partnership has to be composed of at least two partners, one from each country participating in the Programme, institutions or organizations in the eligible area of the Programme;

2. Cooperation criteria. The Beneficiaries will cooperate to elaborate and implement the project. Furthermore, they may cooperate as the regards staff selection and/or project financing;

3. Cross-border character and impact. The operations implemented within the Programme’s framework must have a clear cross-border impact. These operations will be relevant for the cross-border area and will reflect the interest of both countries. The elaborated projects have to address commune needs of the eligible area and to solve issues, from the cross-border point of view. Also, it is

interesting and useful to see what are the opinions on CBC of the people living in these countries.

#### *Eurobarometer results programme Hungary-Romania*

In cross-border region Hungary-Romania, 38% of respondents have heard about EU-funded CBC activities. This level of awareness is higher than the EU average of 31%. Awareness of CBC is higher on the Hungarian side (46%) than on the Romanian side (29%). Overall, in the Hungary-Romania border region, people in age group 25-39 and, to a lesser extent, in age group 15-24, are less aware of EU-funded CBC activities.

37% of respondents in this cross-border region have travelled to the other side of the border. This is significantly lower than the EU average of 53%. There is a difference in mobility between both partner countries. 43% of RO respondents have been to the Hungarian side of the border. The opposite is true for 32% of HU respondents. The most frequent reason mentioned for crossing the border is leisure and tourism, but only 29% of all respondents have crossed the border for this reason. The next most frequent reasons for traveling to the other side of the border are buying goods and services (mentioned by 15% of respondents) and visiting friends (13%).

In this cross-border region, 72% of respondents would feel comfortable with having a citizen from the partner country as a work colleague, family member, neighbour or manager. This is lower than the EU average of 82%. 76% of RO respondents trust their Hungarian neighbours, whereas 67% of HU respondents trust their Romanian neighbours.

Living near the border is seen by a majority of respondents (65%) as having no impact. 24% considered that it is more of an opportunity and 7% of people responded that living near the border is an obstacle. 75% of respondents identified at least one problem making CBC difficult in their region. Respondents could select several obstacles. The first obstacle is language, mentioned by 53% of people, which is lower than the EU average of 57%.

The next 2 most cited obstacles are:

- social and economic differences (42%, which is slightly lower than the EU average of 46%)

- legal and administrative differences (41%, whereas EU average is 45%)

The least relevant obstacles are cultural differences and accessibility (mentioned by respectively 32% and 30% of respondents, both equal to EU averages).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The high level of trust in EU, the increasing proportion of people who have a positive image of EU, the optimism of the future of EU, and a large majority of EU citizens that support the free movement of EU citizens who can “live, work, study and do business anywhere in the EU”, indicate that people are willing to cooperate inside EU.

In cross-border region Hungary-Romania, a significant proportion of respondents have heard about EU-funded CBC activities, more than the EU average, a large majority of the people trust their neighbours; however, the number of people who travelled across the border is lower than the EU average and many believe that living next to the border has no impact on their lives. Obstacles in the way to the cooperation are the language, social, economic, administrative, legal and cultural differences. In conclusion we see that there are factors that have the potential to increase the cross-border cooperation, but also ones that need to be overcome.

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