

## Ethnical analysis within Bihor-Hajdú Bihar Euroregion

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# ETHNICAL ANALYSIS WITHIN BIHOR-HAJDÚ BIHAR EUROREGION<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** *Bihor – Hajdu Bihar Euroregion is a form of cross-border cooperation that includes the counties of Bihor and Hajdu Bihar, at the midst of which there are the two county capitals, Oradea and Debrecen, communities that have a diverse ethnical structure, sharing a history older than 800 years. Nowadays we can talk about an intense cross-border cooperation at the Romanian-Hungarian border of various forms and shapes.*

**Keywords:** *Euroregions, Demography, Ethnicity, Cross-border Cooperation, NUTS system*

The cities of Debrecen and Oradea, two cities on each side of the Romanian-Hungarian border, sharing a history of more than 800 years, found elements that made the two communities develop a series of cross-border cooperation elements on both sides of the border.

The two municipalities become in 2002 part of Bihor-Hajdu Bihar Euroregion, a newly created structure within a diversified area in terms of ethnic-confessions, culture and not least of cross-border cooperation, a structure that aims at being an engine for cooperation at the level of the Euroregional structure that houses 2 NUTS elements: the counties of Bihor and Hajdu Bihar, as well as the two cities.

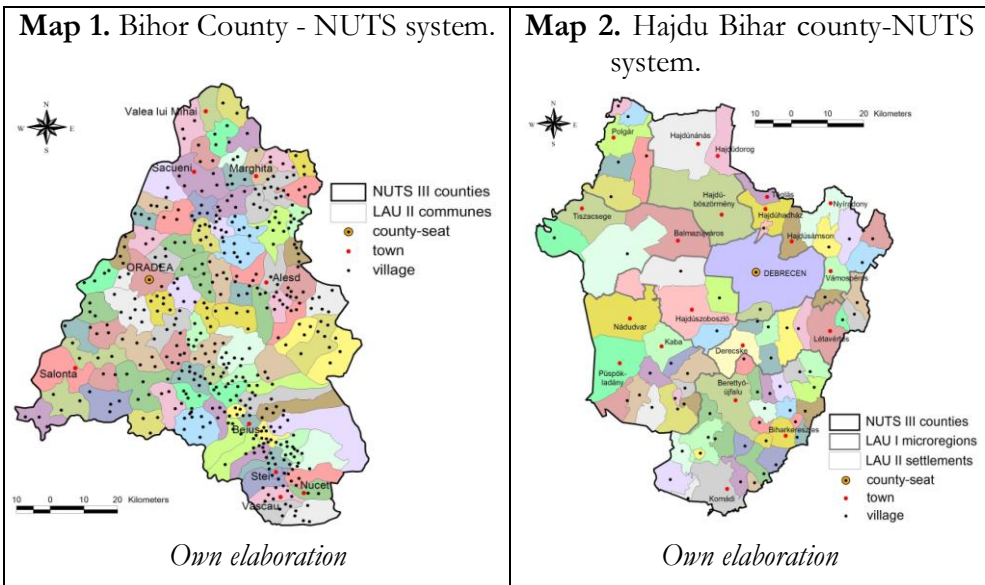
The two cities analysed from the point of view of the Debrecen-Oradea are at the centre, considering that they reach several levels such as:

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- there is a local level in both municipalities; these are the most important cities in the area from the point of view of the political, administrative, and economic points of view; here we can find the highest concentration of people; they are both border cities and regional points
- the county level; here we remind the counties of Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar, where Oradea and Debrecen are the most important cities
- from the point of view of the regional level, the two development regions to which the two centres belong, North-Western Development Region and Eszak-Alfold Development Region, are representative
- the Euroregional level is represented by the Bihor – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion (according to NUTS, there is no such level in Romania)
- the national level is represented by the two neighbouring countries: Romania and Hungary.



The idea of Euroregion occurs at the same time with the evolving process of local autonomy and regionalisation. The aim is to set direct connections between regions and communities on both sides of state borders by virtue of local authorities' competences as they are defined in national and European law. The conditions for optimal development of a Euroregion are minimal economic balance, cultural similarities despite ethnic diversity, geographical proximity and common historical heritage. Cooperation develops mainly in these fields.

Originally, the Euroregion refers to cooperation between authorities at the border while the Council of Europe shows that cross-border regions have a certain homogeneity and functional interdependence, otherwise cooperation would not be needed.

Association of European Border Regions states that “within the limits of the geographical aim of cooperation, cross-border structures are cooperation arrangements for cooperation between local or regional governmental structures lying along the border in agreement with the promotion of common interest to increase the standard of living of border populations

Euroregions can be identified as territorial structures established with the aim to strengthen interregional and cross-border cooperation to reach a coherent area for economic, scientific, social and cultural development (A. Ilieş, 2004, p 24).

Cross-border cooperation Euroregion is a voluntary association respecting national and international law, territorial and administrative structures of the countries at different levels with the aim to eliminate territorial isolation and to settle the framework for cultural connection or to rebuild typical groups, and to set up economic development nuclei to achieve a balance between the centre and the periphery at an advanced stage of functional territorial systems (Ilieş A., 2006).

Cross-border cooperation regions aim at reducing border conflicts in convergence and good neighbourhood areas, eliminating isolation and reaching confidence between neighbouring states.

Elements of Euroregions: cross-border structure, cooperation between governmental structures, interregional cooperation, economic development, scientific development, social development, cultural development, cross-border cooperation, pursuing common interests, territorial-administrative structure, association of communities, compact area, development of functional territorial systems, promoting common interests, promoting joint projects, respect for national and international law, developing common projects and partnerships in different directions that are a priority for Euroregions, Euroregional actors, Supporting good neighbourhood, eliminating isolation.

Sucha shows the main elements of Euroregions as follows (K. Czimre, 2006, p 84):

- ❖ Core forms of cross-border cooperation
- ❖ Instruments to diminish differences between border regions
- ❖ Strong confidence and cooperation with the citizens
- ❖ Studies in the field of good neighbourhood and integration
- ❖ Preventing negative heritage
- ❖ Important elements for the Central European countries' integration to the European Union

There are two types of factors generating cooperation. They are as follows (K. Czimre, 2006, p 87):

- ❖ Unifying factors: geographical position, climate, common history, common culture, economic development, trade, linguistic competences, common strategies

- ❖ Inhibiting factors: differences envisaging the administrative system and responsibilities, tax system, territorial planning and regional development, legal and executive methods, environmental protection and territorial planning, linguistic elements.

In order to have an efficient cooperation and communication on the regional and Euroregional levels, we have to consider a wide range of aspects (Thomas Lunden, 2004, pp 25-125): space, time, technology, rules, policies, power exercise, economy, communication: language, symbols, culture, identity, human resources, social aspect

**The Bihor-Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion** was established at the end of 2002 upon the initiative of the Bihor County Council (Romania) and the Hajdu-Bihar Local Government (Hungary). They seized the important role of cross-border cooperation in fields of common interest for European integration.

The management of the Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar Euroregion (A. Ilieş, 2004, p 163): Co-presidents, Council of the Euroregion, Steering Board, Secretariats, Working Commissions. The Council is the main decision-maker of the Euroregion. (<http://www.cjbihor.ro/index.php?act=euroregiune>)

Tasks of the Euroregion Council:

1. discusses and approves the strategic priorities of the Euroregion for the following year;
2. Decides on changes to the association's legal status;
3. Approves the budget of the Euroregion that is equally supported by the members, as well as the changes to the budget;
4. Approves the report on activities funded by the Euroregion;
5. Debates and approves the changes to the internal Regulations of the Euroregion;
6. Decides on admission new members or withdrawal of existing members;
7. Elects the Board members;
8. Approves the Board report;
9. Appoints the members of the Working Commissions;
9. Appoints the Secretariats;

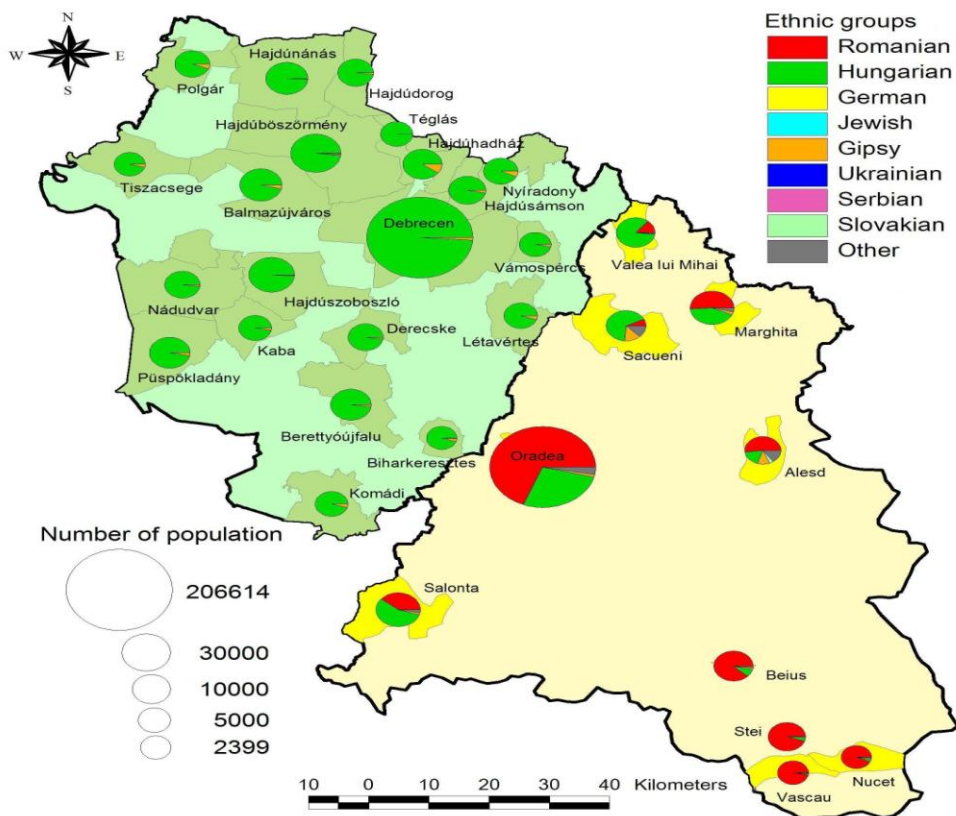
From the point of view of communication between the two counties, we will mention the crossing points between them:

**Table 1**

Pos	Crossing point	Traffic type	Means of transport
1	Valea lui Mihai/Nyirabrany	International	Vehicle
2	Valea lui Mihai/Nyirabrany	International	Railway
3	Episcopia Bihor/Beretyoufalu	International	Railway
4	Borş/Artand	International	Vehicle
5	Salonta/Mehkerek	International	Vehicle
6	Salonta/Mehkerek	International	Railway
7	Oradea	International	Airport
8	Debrecen	International	Airport

Source: Alexandru Ilieş, *România. Euroregiuni*, Oradea, 2004, p174

Map 3. Ethnic groups in Bihor-Hajdu Bihar



Source: Tabel 2, Tabel 3, Tabel 4

Table 2. Ethnic structure in the Bihor – Hajdu Bihar Euroregion in 2002

Ev	Region NTUS 3	Összesen	Román	Magyar	Cigány	Német	Szlovák	Ukrán	Egyéb
2002	Bihor	600246	404468	155829	30089	1163	7370	198	1304
	%	100	67.38	25.96	5.01	0.19	1.22	0.03	0.21
2001	Hajdu Bihar	553043	669	540721	10836	319	48	208	242
	%	100	0.12	98.77	1.96	0.07	0.01	0.03	0.03
2001 2002	Bihor-Hajdu Bihar Euroregion	1153266	405137	696570	40925	1482	7418	406	1546
	%	100	35.13	60.39	3.54	0.13	0.64	0.04	0.13

**Table 3.** The main towns in the Bihar County according to the 2002 statistics

	Total	Romani	Maghiari	Germa ni	Evrei	Țigani	Ucrai nieni	Szerb	Szlovák
Total	600246	404468	155829	1163	224	30089	198	35	7379
Oradea	206614	145284	56985	563	166	2449	93	20	474
Salonta	18074	7267	10335	29	3	379	9	1	45
Aleșd	7387	4503	1566	9	3	938	3	-	360
Beiuș	10996	9849	930	19	3	169	0	2	3
Marghita	17291	9167	7468	33	2	485	3	1	82
Nucet	2399	2275	66	8		44			
Ștei	8637	8272	319	8	2	18	4		2
Vale lui Mihai	10324	1442	8757	10	4	95	4		5
Vășcău	2854	2804	15	5		20	9		
Săcuieni	11665	891	9010	3	1	1747	1		2

*Source:* <http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002/bheta02.pdf>

**Table 4 .** Towns in the Hajdu Bihar County

Locality	Inhabitants	Locality	Inhabitants	Locality	Inhabitants
Debrecen	211 034	Hajdúszoboszló	23 425	Téglás	6 213
Balmazújváros	17 974	Létavértes	7 045	Hajdúdorog	9 463
Berettyóújfalu	16 116	Nádudvar	9 074	Hajdúhadház	12 709
Biharkeresztes	4 230	Nyíradony	7 701	Hajdúnánás	18 055
Derecske	9 136	Polgár	8 373	Tiszacsege	4 975
Hajdúböszörmény	31 993	Püspökladány	15 946		

*Source:* <http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/hun/kotetek/04/tartalom.html>

**Table 5.** Comune în Hajdu Bihar

Locality	Inhabitants	Locality	Inhabitants	Locality	Inhabitants
Álmosd	1 694	Görbeháza	2 641	Nyírábrány	3 952
Ártánd	550	Hajdúbagos	1 972	Nyíracsad	3 982
Bagamér	2 418	Hajdúsámson	10 677	Nyírmártonfalva	2 165
Bakonszeg	1 240	Hajdúszovát	3 149	Pocsaj	2 733
Báránd	2 692	Hencida	1 318	Sáp	1 051
Bedő / Bedeu	317	Hortobágy	1 772	Sáránd	2 310
Berekböszörmény	1 849	Hosszúpályi	5 471	Sárrétudvari	3 009
Bihardancsháza	218	Kaba	6 369	Szentpéterszeg	1 252
Biharnagybajom	2 936	Kismarja	1 400	Szerep	1 628
Bihartorda	988	Kokad	701	Tépe	1 175
Bocskai kert	2 410	Komádi	6 015	Tetétlen	1 463
Bojt	590	Konyár	2 263	Tiszagyulaháza	828

Locality	Inhabitants	Locality	Inhabitants	Locality	Inhabitants
Csökmő	2 171	Körösszakál / Săcal	911	Told	353
Darvas	650	Körösszegapáti / Apateu	984	Újiráz	596
Ebes	4 480	Magyarhomorog	917	Újléta	1 071
Egyek	5 535	Mezőpeterd	586	Újszentmargita	1 602
Esztár	1 367	Mezősas	680	Újtikos	931
Folyás	430	Mikepércs	3 465	Vámospércs	5 465
Földes	4 338	Monostorpályi	2 191	Váncsod	1 348
Furta	1 182	Nagyhegyes	2 665	Vekerd / Veched	167
Fülöp	1 895	Nagykerek	1 361	Zsáka	1 702
Gáborján	928	Nagyráb	2 367		

**Source:** <http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/hun/kotetek/04/tartalom.html>

At the level of Bihor County there is another structure, namely Oradea Metropolitan Area, a structure gathering around Oradea the communities that now have a more harmonious perspective for development; see below the demographic composition of Oradea Metropolitan Area

Debrecen and Oradea are two cities with a common history of almost 800 years old, so we think that in the near future, it is likely to begin a much closer cooperation, it can set the example of good practice, as being the most modern and developed in terms of cross-border relations.

The ethnic-demographic analysis at the level of the two neighbouring counties, plus the analysis of the territorial administrative units, show us an ethnic-demographic diversity at the Romanian-Hungarian border, in a region that shares the same history for more than 800 years, period with moments of cross-border cooperation.

Nowadays, and more accurately after 1989, the cooperation at the Romanian-Hungarian border at the level of Debrecen and Oradea communities and of Bihor-Hajdu Bihar Euroregion has been more dynamic than ever. We can note an increased cooperation, in a diversity of ethnicities, and cultures, and religions; moreover, the perspectives of a cross-border cooperation and more recently territorial through the newest European cooperation instrument, i.e. Groupings for Territorial Cooperation - EGTC, have led us to debating on a new form of cooperation at the level of the two communities of Debrecen and Oradea, mainly through a possible Eurometropolis Debrecen – Oradea.



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