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## **TO SOME FEATURES OF SLOVAK - UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND**

*Development of cross-border relations between Transcarpathia and regions of Eastern Slovakia, among others, is marked by the fact that Ukraine is not a member of the EU and the Schengen zone. It follows the specific issues related to visa and migration issues in both countries. This range of issues affects not only the cross-border relationships of neighboring regions, but also the economy, politics and security of the people of both countries.*

*Keywords: border region, the Slovak-Ukrainian relations, migration, visa.*

More than twenty years after the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet satellite regimes have changed the relationship between people and between countries. Many facts and problems we now estimate in a different light. Instead of the promised paradise on earth, we have a global financial, fiscal, economic and value crisis. Although the Cold War ended, we are concerned with the problem of terrorism. We have independent states and economic freedom, but significantly increased unemployment and people are not happy of lusting, bureaucratic and often corrupt administrative apparatus.

In this regard, they worry about concern growing social insecurity and a sense of the collapse of traditional values, and fear through the existing climatic changes, to which we are not ready. So we have a democracy of politics, citizen alienation from the public administration, we believe in steady growth, but do not believe in our future pensions. If we look closer or more distant future of the European Union (the EU) or Slovakia, we can see there are many possible positive but also negative, opportunities, including threats [2, p.4].

The Carpathian region is somewhat a space for model situation in Central Europe. It's about the territory, which, though never was a typical historical crossroads, but it had to deal with all the consequences which resulted historical changes, especially along past centuries. It is located on the border of Western and Eastern Christianity, and types of civilization, not only with different economic and political attributes, but also philosophical and cultural parameters.

It characterized by particularly diverse ethnic and religious composition, which remained, in principle, stable, despite the large number of state-law changes. This kind of Europe in miniature, in which live Slavs, Germans, Latin, Jews and Gypsies, Eastern and Western Slavs, Catholics of Western and Eastern rites, Orthodox, Protestant Augsburg and Galvez religion, orthodox Jews and modern direction and many supporters sects. Obviously, this implies a relatively large Carpathian tolerance for those differences. It takes all minorities, because there was never obvious majority and most people in the region could materially and socially survive only through joint efforts to respect.

However, there were also misunderstandings that are usually impulses from outside; they were not primarily ethnic and violent. But we cannot exclude such a way what modern restless night filled with social and religious tensions in the so-called Third World, with possible mass migration may cause [2, p. 11]. In this direction, a feature of this area is primarily that it is related to the settlement of border regions. Through the media sometimes you can hear thoughts that currently we do not share borders but unite. But, in fact, refers only to the old slogan from the sixties of the last century.

In fact in the history to border regions in the development didn't have ever prefer, namely geostrategic reasons, because borders were considered as the line that separates, whether from the enemy, or of any competitor. During the existence of borders in the minds of people in general dominated by the idea of the threat, and therefore separating border, and the border area was a buffer area, the territory of military space, territory, which is closed to the common population. It automatically classifies border regions to marginal positions. It, in turn, can take a relative form and its relativity depends on what parameters to determine it in some contact countries [3, p. 9 - 10].

For the Slovak-Ukrainian border zone, to which from the Slovak side belong districts Trebishov, Michailovce, Sobrance and Snina, is typical that it comes to a high level problematic area, which is located on the external border of the European Union. This is a problematic area not only on Slovak side of the border, but also, even more, on the Ukrainian border area. This should take into account the fact that this is a border area with high levels of social pathological phenomena of economic nature (smuggling goods) and humane nature (illegal immigration), which often follow different crimes. According to L. Faltan in terms of socio-economic situation Slovak part of the border zone is characterized by:

- high levels of unemployment;
- lowest average wage in Slovakia;
- investment dependence;
- labor migration outside the border districts [4, p. 68 - 69].

In this context, one should take into account that it is not only the feature of Slovak-Ukrainian border region. The above north-south strip of the eastern part of Slovakia is an extension of the so-called "Eastern wall" (which goes on Polish territory) - continuous marginalized territory of eastern Poland, which runs from north to south, along with contact through Ukraine and north-eastern Hungary (also with high level of socio-economic problems). Ten years ago it was aptly called "marginal eastern wall of the EU." [4, P.71] Here are accumulated economic and social problems, along with the quality of human resources and infrastructure provision, as well as existing human potential, which, however, market conditions are not sufficiently active and competitive. Problems with human resources are so steadily growing, going worse demographic and educational structure of the population, through the reduced quality of human resources, it is important to change the trajectory of their development.

In Slovakia, during the process of social transformation was a violation of socio-spatial balance, deepening of regional disparities and the concentration of social, economic and infrastructure problems and population problems in certain regions [10, p. 24 - 30, 16, p. 245 - 249]. A typical example of this phenomenon is the same regions that form the districts on the Slovak-Ukrainian border. For a more

complete picture you need to know other factors that influence its development, e.g. long-term decline of agriculture, low levels of education, a high share of Roma population, insufficient and inappropriate industrial structure, a network of roads and rail network, etc.

Relationship of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as SR) with Ukraine can be characterized as a friendly neighbor, without negative historical reminiscences. Interests in Slovakia develop mutual political, economic and social contacts with Ukraine resulting from direct physical proximity of the two countries. However, different quality of the internal environment of Slovakia and Ukraine, as well as the fact that Ukraine is the only country neighboring Slovakia, which is located outside the integrated area of common rules and standards of the European Union and NATO, is a problem for forging closer ties that negatively manifested in opportunities for cross-border cooperation [1, p.10]. Limiting factor in mutual contacts is that SR as EU member state should be based on policy frameworks and relationships that EU applies for Ukraine.

SR supports Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state within its current borders, the development of pluralist democracy, political and economic stability as a prerequisite for regional security. Endeavor to maintain an active dialogue with Ukraine as an important partner of the transit of strategic raw materials. SR interested in making Ukraine after the criteria became a member of NATO and the EU. They are developing joint actions to combat organized crime, illegal migration and security.

In the Slovak-Ukrainian relations after 1990 could be determine the minimum two problems, which officially rarely mentioned. The first problem is the inconsistency of the method and the inability of both sides to find common ground on the issue of transit of Russian energy resources through its territory. We will now pay special attention to this issue, because it not refers to the specific problem of relations between border regions. Recently supported system to solve this problem as Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak, who, among other things, said: "We must find a model which will be one of the whole of the EU, on the other hand, Russia and Ukraine." [17, available online]

The second problem is the so-called Ruthenia issue that has its roots in the past and is in excellent definition, and thus the position of the representatives of this ethnic group in Slovakia (ethnicity) and Ukraine (sub ethnos). In 1994, the Ukrainian part appealed to Slovakia with a proposal to create a joint Commission on National Minorities. It interest was that the Slovak government did not support the Ruthenia minority, because thus it indirectly supports Ruthenia separatism in neighboring Transcarpathia region. This is a sensitive issue, and despite the differences in perception and approach in both countries, it did not affect the development of cross-border relations.

Ethno political processes occurring in Transcarpathia are complex. In the early 90s there were hyper political national cultural movements and associations. Some of them have undergone a gradual transformation of national cultural in social and political organization (association). Internal disagreements often justified personal ambitions of individual leaders and their efforts to get grants from the state budget. The mechanism of the relationship between minorities and the central or local governments through national organizations actually leads to the transformation of the political actors. Under separate national entities were formed national political elite and emerging group of professional actors. Several years ago I suggested that the relatively near future, representatives of ethnic groups in Transcarpathia will impose specific requirements of a political nature, claiming the direct participation in political structures and management of the region or its parts [5, p. 35 - 46]. I was wrong, perhaps only in the timing.

Relations between Slovaks and Ruthenians or Ukrainian in Slovakia are not and even in the past didn't belong to the conflict. The priority is rather a problem of identity and the internal development of the minority. Contacts between Slovaks and Ruthenians can be described as the relationship between the normal populations. The relationship between the general population of both nations over the centuries are essentially good, friendly and benevolent, conditional on their Slavic character, linguistic and cultural proximity, and common fate and almost the same position in the national structure of the former Hungary. Religious and ethnic diversity of eastern Slovakia, and as a result - the daily confrontation

of people belonging to different religious and linguistic communities, reflected in the formation of social relations, which was necessary for mutual tolerance [11, p. 39-51].

Slovak-Ruthanian ethnic boundary has been since its formation space intensive processes that are reflected in material culture, language in the religious sphere. In border areas often lived both ethnic groups in one possession, and often in the same village [14, p.182]. This trend continues today, it confirms the conclusions reached by the Institute of Social Sciences SAS [see.: 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15] that deal with these matters.

Transcarpathia is a typical border region, via which Ukraine has borders with four countries of Central Europe. Through it pass meaningful energy and transport routes towards the west. This and other facts, represents a huge potential for the development of international economic relations, scientific and technical, humanitarian and political nature.

In addition to the positive side, this fact brings into being and a host of problems. Transcarpathian Region is on track for legal and illegal immigration to Europe. Migration is not only a problem between the two countries. At the present time, it has a strong effect on international events. After the accession of Slovakia to the EU and Schengen, Slovakia undertook to develop and improve the system of integrated protection of EU borders.

It is therefore pointless to declare such tabloid statements as: "After joining the Schengen a new Iron Curtain was created». Only the ignorant and those who do not know the situation before 1989, can learn and repeat this phrase and contribute, thus creating modern myths.

But the fact remains that there are still many problems that complicate the relationship. Constantly open problem remains the issue of the visa regime. Since the space for publication strictly defined, I will not focus in detail on this issue, which is associated with the issuance of visas. I just want to note that both the Slovak and the Ukrainian side are reserves that can improve this process. Despite this, I will give a few facts. According to the monitoring report Ukrainian citizen initiative "Europe without barriers", whose director is Iryna Sushko, a consular visa practice of 20 countries of the

Schengen zone in Ukraine, Slovakia received consular offices in the overall ranking fourth assessment [19, p. 1-2]. In 2009, the Slovak consulates issued to citizens of Ukraine more than 27,000 visas [19, p. 4]. In 2010, 22,820 applications for visas were issued a positive 22 657 [18, p. 19], a in 2011 from 40,882 applicants for a visa - 40 381 citizens of Ukraine [18, p. 18].

In this paper we have attempted to outline some issues that are specific to the Slovak-Ukrainian border region compared to other border regions of neighboring Slovakia. Decisive role in this respect plays the fact that Ukraine is the only neighboring country that is not part of the European Union and NATO. This implies a great mode at the border, which determines the development of cross-border relations between Transcarpathian region and Presov and Košice region. With it came mainly issues related to visa issues and migration of both countries and the EU. It matters that it has an impact not only on cross-border relations of neighboring regions, but also impact on the economy, politics and security of the people of both countries.

### **Summary**

This article outlines some of the problems specific to the Slovak-Ukrainian border region compared to neighboring regions of other states bordering with Slovakia. Since there exists an excellent quality of the internal environment of Slovakia and Ukraine, which implies, among other things, on the fact that Ukraine is the only neighboring country that is outside the integrated area of common rules of the EU and NATO. This implies a great mode at the border, which determines the development of cross-border relations between Transcarpathian region and Presov and Košice region. With it came mainly issues related to visa issues and migration policy in both countries and the EU. This range of issues that have an impact not only on cross-border relations neighboring regions, but also affect the economy, politics, security, social development and population of individual states.

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