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## **SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTION OF REGIONAL TRANSBORDER COOPERATION IN SLOVAKIA**

*The article focuses on the sociological reflection of the issue of cross-border regional cooperation in Slovakia and offers general formal and institutional conditions at the local level. Official documents on the development of Kosice and Presov, as self-governing units, provide analyzes for the study of cross-border regional cooperation.*

*Keywords: local development, regional development, the endogenous potential, partnership, Euroregions, micro regions.*

Sociological reflection based on the results of sociological research of projects that we have implemented at the Institute of Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences since 1994, including: "Interregion - the emergence of new territorial community?" (1994-1996) and current information on this project: «Search for new social and spatial forms as an impetus for local and regional development" (2010-2013 years). This allows us to characterize the changes and shifts in the development of cross-border regional co-operation in Slovakia in these two stages of development. Existing data from sociological studies since 1994 that have a lesser or greater extent, were also issues of cross-border cooperation, reported in this period, especially the shortcomings in institutional mechanisms at local, regional and national level (defunct regional degree higher territorial units, not ratified the European Charter border and cross-border regions), which created the general conditions for the activity in a transborder regional cooperation. At the municipal level, cross-border cooperation was poorly developed; it was based primarily on personal contacts and village mayors, was informal and it was realized mainly at the level of socio-cultural activities. It is characterized by a certain degree of regional passivity and low activation of social potential at local and regional levels (trade unions, civic associations and activity level, regional institutions) [1, p. 222-227]. As a result, inconsistent and not formulated

region of common regional interests and common policies to solve them remained.

The second stage in the formation of cross-border regional cooperation in Slovakia we observe significant changes in the overall framework of formal institutional formation of cross-border cooperation, namely through entry of Slovakia into EU, ratification of the European Charter of border and cross-border regions and institutionalization of the second level of regional self-government - of higher territorial units . How does it impact on the local and regional levels? If during the evaluation we are based on the basic idea of the European Charter of cross-border cooperation - relations on the principle of subsidiarity and partnership at all hierarchical levels, we must admit that this idea has not yet translated into reality. The existence of the WTO and the formation of regional institutions create only partial conditions (especially formal and financial) for the emergence of partnerships and entities CBC. Disadvantages are more on the level of their mutual coordination and communication at a lower level local, regional and municipal level not related. At the local level mark stronger activation of local actors, their expression is particularly micro region (MR) and other entities focused on cross-border cooperation. Barrier, however, the spatial overlap of these subjects, who are often in a competitive relationship and they are not mutually agreed upon. No common platform, a common forum which would unite activities in favor of broader regional and interregional nature.

This is the basic idea of the project "Search for new spatial forms as an impetus for local and regional development": new spatial forms as a chance to overcome the fragmentation of the administrative-territorial division of Slovakia, a combination of exogenous and endogenous factors to overcome regional disparity and the regulation of regional development, and as a supplement to formal territorial-administrative institutions. The relationship between these forms and structures at local, regional, national or international level are the subject of our study. Field surveys in selected MR in Trenchyn (MR Resources of White Carpathians), Žilina region (MR on Horna Orava), Presov region (MR Gornada and Black) and the European Region "White Carpathians" Euroregion "Tatra" Euroregion " Neohradiensis "MY in Banskobystrica Territory (Partnership, MR Strehovska Valley, MR Novogradskiyi

Podzamchiye) and in the Kosice region (MR Troyhranichiye, MR Rudohir'ya, Association of Municipalities of Tokaj region). Field surveys we conduct in the form of expert interviews with some micro and European regions. As part of research is the collection and analysis of program and project documents and materials. Some of these documents to cross-border cooperation, we have analyzed in Presov self-governing province and Kosice self-governing region (KSK).

What are the tasks of WTO in relation to the local and regional level - in the downward direction, which creates the WTO strategy for the development of cross-border cooperation or in the upward direction at the national and international level?

Kosice self-governing region is working in the programming period 2007-2013 in the framework of the third goal coherent EU policy: the European Territorial Cooperation 2 programs:

1. CBC program Hungary - Slovakia 2007-2013 (175.6 million euros).

2. Programme of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Hungary - Slovakia-Romania - Ukraine 2007-2013.

Carriers of Regional Development in KSK are a wide range of institutions that operate at different levels with different spatial activities and functions. These subjects are often without mutual coordination and their activities often competing, lost synergies, which is required for the development of the entire region. A data micro KSK provides 51 active MR. As described in the "Study subjects of regional development KSK" [2, p.8] causes association of municipalities throughout the years have changed and adapted to current conditions. While at the beginning of their formation after the 1990 - 1996 A priority was primarily coordination methods while ensuring self-problems solving regional problems, consulting, opportunities for joint ventures and tourism development in the second half of those 90 years have at the time of MR dominated environment and building infrastructure. A significant increase in the number of KSK was associated with the preparation of the SR to EU accession (2000-2003), and they were already focused on a comprehensive regional development (document development, territorial planning, economic, social and environmental development, cultural heritage preservation). Currently, 88% of MR in KSK oriented comprehensive regional development, 42% - on a common technical

infrastructure, 50% - on the environment, 60% - for tourism development, and only 6 in MR KSK (14%) - on cross-border cooperation. According to these "Analysis ...", the creation of these MP seeks diverse orientation and formal partnership of municipalities do not reflect a spatial and cultural interconnectedness of municipalities in certain areas, but also the personal interest of some regional leaders. Since the term "micro" has no legal basis in KSK they have 4 different legal forms: civic association, nonprofit organization, association of legal persons, associations of legal entities with common interests.

Insufficient use of cross-border cooperation for tourism development was defined as one of the important indicators within the priority problems of tourism development. The strategy of CSE in the Program of economic and social development for the period 2008-2015 CSE years under the first priority topics are business development, also included a specific goal: to create by 2011 a mechanism to improve the economic development of cross-border cooperation, in particular in support of small and medium businesses and increase awareness among them, to create an optimal model support cross-border cooperation, and develop joint cross-border and international scholarship programs and others. The actual implementation of this goal is the subject of our further investigation.

Cross-border cooperation in the CSE is achieved by two sub-projects:

1. Programme of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Hungary - Slovakia-Romania - Ukraine 2007-2013.
2. Cross Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Slovakia 2007-2013, this project was supported by 45 micro-local levels. In CSE have affordable sources of 34 micro regions.

On the example CSE and KSK we have tried to analyze the impact of WTO on local, regional and transnational level in the field of cross-border regional cooperation. Analysis of the available documentation is not sufficient source for its evaluation and synthesis, and to its complement other research methods.

### **Summary**

Formal institutional conditions for the development of cross-border regional cooperation create a good base for the local and regional level, particularly since the SR in the EU. However, there is no

relationship between vertical and horizontal levels of individual subjects at local and regional levels and a more active involvement of the private and public sectors in activities of local governments. In general, it is necessary to increase awareness about the possibility for local development and active communication between individual subjects and the WTO, which in this respect should play the leading role and create a communication model and mechanism of cooperation with participation of regional and local members.

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