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Edited by:
Vladimír Benč



**ENHANCING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND UKRAINE
WITH REGARD TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
INVESTMENTS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION**



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the European Union and Ukraine with regard
to regional development, investments
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in the cross-border region**

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**Prešov
October 2014**

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INVESTMENTS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGION**

Edited by: Vladimír Benč

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FOREWORD

This publication is the outcome of the international conference on „Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation Between the European Union and Ukraine with regard to Regional Development, Investments and Social Capital Development in the Cross-Border Region” that was held in Prešov, Slovak Republic, on 25th September 2014. The conference was organised by the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Bratislava.

The main aim of the conference was to discuss the possibilities for enhancement of cross-border cooperation (CBC) between the regions that are sharing eastern EU Schengen border with Ukraine in the context of changing conditions after the signing of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine (21st March 2014) ... and the developments that followed the “Euromaidan” ... (since November 2013). Experts from six countries (Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine) contributed to the conference proceedings by sharing both their knowledge and experience regarding the ways to develop and enhance cross-border cooperation with Ukraine.

The conference debate focused on external (political, security, economic) and internal (regional development, business environment, trade, R&D, institutional set-up) factors that are affecting both the CBC with Ukraine and sustainable development of the EU - Ukraine CBC area. Discussants addressed possibilities of key challenges for regional, economic and social development of the border regions and their management, as well as the recently drafted strategies and initiatives aimed at the elimination of social, economic and other obstacles for CBC.

Possible intensification of the cross-border cooperation should be one of the tools that shall help to overcome the main barriers for regional, economic and social development of the border regions. At the same time, the purpose of the conference was to facilitate information exchange between the CBC stakeholders on both the existing and planned activities in order to improve the coordination of actors active in the cross-border cooperation. New funding schemes were set-up to co-finance cross-border projects under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the European program ENI HU-SK-RO-UA 2014-2020. Therefore, the conference discussion included evaluation and analysis

of the ways to make the best use of the allocated funds in a more targeted way. Main findings of the conference proceedings on possibilities to enhance the cross-border cooperation along the eastern Schengen border, between the EU and its neighbours, are presented in selected articles by speakers who have been participating in the conference.

The organisation of this conference, as well as the issuing of this publication would not have been possible without the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Bratislava. My special thanks go to Mr. Michael Petráš, Research Assistant and former Director of FES Bratislava, for his long-term support of our activities and for a perfect cooperation. Furthermore, I would like to express my thanks to all of the conference speakers and participants for their interesting contributions and a fruitful discussion at the conference, including for sharing their expertise with other participants. Last but not least, I would like to thank all those who are helping to improve the living conditions of the citizens living in the border areas along the eastern Schengen border. First of all, let me thank Mrs. Oľga Benč (sameness of our surnames is just a coincidence), probably the last General Consul of Ukraine in Prešov for years to come, for her personal involvement in all activities that supported the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation in the last four years. Closure of the General Consulate and her departure will make the situation even harder, but we have to believe that Ukraine will overcome the crisis soon. We, neighbours, shall be ready to help.

Vladimír Benč

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APPROACHING THE POST-HELSINKI EUROPE

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“The time headed up to the truly political work”¹. This statement was placed at the beginning of the political Manifesto titled “Democracy for all” published by the Movement for Civic Freedom at the end of 1988. Such sentence is fully applicable now, if we think how to reassess the Eastern policy of the EU. The EU strategic documents related to its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership were suited for the pre-crisis period of stability, for the euphoric period after EU enlargement. The Eastern policy of the EU followed the technocratic approach; the cooperation with the EU eastern neighbours had been understood as a routine process and its authors didn’t expect the need for competition with other integration projects. The EU was not prepared to become a geopolitical and security actor in the East; therefore it has been involved to play such a role against its own will. The possible reactions of the Russian Federation (economic blockade of Ukraine or military actions) were not taken into account. However, there are also other signs that the EU didn’t expect the intensification of the cross-border dialogue on its Eastern borders. Although some of the border regions of Ukraine were involved in the EU Strategy for the Danube region, the infrastructure priorities proposed by Poland like Via Carpathia didn’t receive financial support from the EU within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region².

Unlike previous trends in the former USSR area with almost negligible successes of the integration efforts, the project of Eurasian Economic Union, inspired by the president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, is going to

¹ “Demokracie pro všechny. Manifest Hnutí za občanskou svobodu. Document nr. 8”, in: R. Hlušíčková, B. Císařovská, eds., *Hnutí za občanskou svobodu. Sborník dokumentů*, Praha: ÚSD AV ČR – Maxdorf 1994, pp. 25-34.

² Via Carpathia – projected highway from Lithuania through the Eastern areas of Poland and Slovakia to Romania and Bulgaria. See: “Action Plan. Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. European Union Strategy for the Danube Region,” SEC(2010) 1489 final, European Commission December 8, 2010. Available online: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010SC1489&from=EN>

be introduced in a consequent way. At the same time RF demonstrated its preparedness to prevent any attempts to weaken its position in the CIS. Russian invasion into Crimea has become a symbolical beginning of the new era of international relations in Europe. The recognition of the unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo by the major part of the EU members as well the recognition of the separatist provinces of Georgia - Abkhazia and South Ossetia – by the Russian Federation, were a violation of principles of political and security architecture of Europe after World War II as well; however the occupation and later incorporation of Crimea by the Russian Federation was the first direct act of military aggression and the first case of open annexation of the territory of one state against another in Europe after 1945. Therefore the case of Crimea means the symbolical end of the Helsinki paradigm of the principles of territorial integrity of the states, and the principles of impermissibility of wars between European states, which are the essential parts both of the U.N. and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe adopted in Helsinki in 1975.

Although the first reactions of the West, both the EU and the U.S. were tough, in fact the postponing of the implementation of the chapters of the EU – Ukraine Association Agreement related to the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area shows that Russia really received a veto right in the case of the future of Ukraine and its relations with the EU³. Such decision was accepted by the Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko as well; however it happened only because of the atrocious Russia's pressure. Ukraine needs time-out in order to avoid more severe defeats than recently in Donetsk, in order to prevent the loss of additional territories. However, there is still a danger that such time-out in the European integration process of Ukraine will turn the implementation of the Ukraine – EU Association Agreement in full extent taperwise.

Ukraine crisis showed the weakness of NATO as well. Although the ceasefire agreement has been officially signed, in fact the military clashes in the Eastern part of Ukraine continue. The leaders of separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk are not satisfied with the provisions of special status of the region, approved by the Ukrainian parliament. In spite of repeated violations of ceasefire, the NATO summit in Cardiff in September 2014 issued only the political declarations supporting the territorial unity of Ukraine and criticizing the direct involvement of Russia's military forces in the conflict in the East⁴.

³ R. Sadowski, A.Wierzbowska-Miazga, *"Russia is blocking a free trade area between the EU and Ukraine"*, Warsaw: Center for Eastern Studies 17. 9. 20014. Available online: <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-09-17/rosja-blokuje-strefe-wolnego-handlu-ukrainy-z-ue>

⁴ "Joint Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission Published 4 September 2014", Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defense, September 4, 2014. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nato-summit-2014-joint-statement-of-the-nato-ukraine-commission/joint-statement-of-the-nato-ukraine-commission>

However NATO and U.S. administration of president Obama didn't decide to provide military assistance to Ukraine. They didn't do it even in an indirect way, by means of weapon supply to Kiev.

The fear of escalation of the conflict with Russia, the economic interests of European members of NATO and the escalation of the military conflicts in the Middle East could be accepted as possible reasons. However, the economic interests and problems in the Middle East will remain even if Russia will directly or indirectly attack Moldova or in the case of Latvia. Some radical activists of the Latvian Russian-speaking community are already fighting among the separatists in Donetsk and Lugansk area⁵. The political tensions between Moldova and Pridnestrovie are increasing and the pro-European orientation of Moldova itself is under consideration, as the main opposition party – the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) that has a chance to become the winner of the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for November 2014, promotes the strengthening of cooperation with the Russian Federation. The situation in Moldova and in the Baltic states is a consequence of insufficient application of the democratic conditionality principle to the local ruling elites by the EU and the lack of communication with the opposition in Moldova and with the Russian speaking minorities in case of Baltic States. Also in Lithuania, which applies the most inclusive minority legislation among the Baltic countries, the leader of the Polish minority Waldemar Tomaszewski supported Russia's policy in Ukraine in a symbolical way wearing the "ribbon of St. George" on the Day of Victory celebration⁶.

The main weakness of EU was not the lack of political approach, or lack of infrastructural projects, but the public opinion in many particular EU-member states. The supporters of Russia are no more the followers of the radical right or left, but Russia is currently presenting itself, according to Putin's "Valdai speech" from September 2013, as a defender of traditional European values, criticizing Europe for "denying moral principles and all traditional identities"⁷. Thus the supporters of Russia now represent the very heterogeneous front of protest and Euro-sceptic voters. By many of them the Western engagement in Ukraine, even in the framework of the Eastern Partnership program and the EU's political support of the Ukrainian Maidan since November 2013 is perceived as a continuation of the unpopular U.S. policy of "unilateralism" in

⁵ "Latvians claimed among pro-Russian volunteers in Ukraine", *Public broadcasting of Latvia*, September 1, 2014. Available online: <http://www.lsm.lv/en/article/politics/ludza-residents-among-armed-pro-russian-volunteers-in-donbas.a96674/>

⁶ "Na 9 maja Tomaszewski wpiął „gieorgijewską” wstążeczkę i flagę Polski", *Znad Wilnij*, May 9, 2014. Available online: <http://zw.lt/wilno-wilenszczyzna/na-9-maja-tomaszewski-wpial-gieorgijewska-wstazeczke-flage-polski/>

⁷ "Vladimir Putin Meets with Members the Valdai International Discussion Club. Transcript of the Speech and Beginning of the Meeting", Moscow: Valdai Discussion Club, September 20, 2013. Available at: <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/62880.html>

international relations (the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq). The economic and financial crisis, deterioration of quality of democracy and increasing social tensions not only undermined the position of the ruling elites, but they also undermined the legitimacy of the foreign policy targets of the West.

Whereas the governments in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary belong to the main critics of the politics of sanctions against Russia, at least for the purposes of the purposes of domestic policy, a large segment of public opinion in Germany support Russia's activities against Ukraine and is willing to accept Ukraine as part of Russia's sphere of influence. According to the public opinion poll conducted by TNS and Der Spiegel weekly, almost 55 percent of German respondents expressed their understanding for the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation⁸. In fact, Ukraine is still not perceived by many EU members as a fully European state, which can become eligible to apply for EU membership in the future.

The policy of sanctions against Russia imposed by the European Union is not welcomed even by any of its allies and candidate states. Turkey refrains from direct confrontation with Russia, as it is its key energy supplier; although after the secession of Crimea it stressed the importance of preserving Ukraine's territorial integrity⁹. However the economic interests and security challenges on Turkey's southern borders have priority above Turkish concerns about the situation of Crimean Tatars. Turkey is interested in the boosting of its food export to Russia¹⁰. Turkish Minister for EU Affairs Volkan Bozkir also reminded that Russia should be taken into account when resolving the problem of Syria and ISIS¹¹. From this point of view the threats of the Turkish Prime Minister (and contemporary president) Recep Erdogan to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization from January 2013 seem to be more realistic than even before.

Also another candidate for EU membership – Serbia – is opposing the policy of sanctions against the Russian Federation. Serbia's support to RF is not only the matter of public opinion, but it is accompanied by the strengthening of mutual ties in terms of economic and military cooperation¹².

Europe is approaching a new era of international relations characterised by the strengthening of the realist paradigm of political thinking. The role of na-

⁸ R. Neukirch, "The Sympathy Problem: Is Germany the Country of Russia Apologists", *Spiegel Online*. Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/bild-961711-674691.html>

⁹ D. Arslan "Turkey expected to join with West over sanctions on Russia", *Sunday's Zaman*, September 5, 2014.

¹⁰ Y. Schleifer "Turkish Food Exporters still Seeing Russian Market", *Eurasianet.org*, September 22, 2014. Available online: <http://www.eurasianet.org/taxonomy/term/3733>

¹¹ "Turkey refuses to join anti-Russian sanctions", *Vestnik Kavkaza*, October 16, 2014. Available online: <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/politics/61111.html>

¹² J. Milić, Jelena, "The Russification of Serbia", *New Eastern Europe*, October 16, 2014. Available online: <http://neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1360-the-russification-of-serbia>

tional states in international relations is going to increase. However, it should not come as a surprise, as Russia at least since the war with Georgia in August 2008 has introduced its own version of the policy of “unilateralism” in the former USSR area. However, according to its representatives, Russia on a global level promotes the new security architecture based on the principles of “multilateralism”. The recent development in Ukraine shows that unbalanced multilateralism, which is not accompanied by the strengthening of international institutions and rules, could increase the role of violence in international relations and shift the power into the hands of the big actors. Smaller countries, even in Europe, thus found themselves in an unfriendly international environment.

Russia’s engagement in the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea means the legalization of the principle of ethnic nationalism and territorial revisionism as an element of inter-state relations. There is emerging a group of “dissident states” dissatisfied with the current political architecture in Europe and with the arrangement of European borders. However, the crisis of Ukraine is not only an international crisis. The lack of willingness of many Ukrainians, not only in Donetsk, to take part in war shows how a “weak state” destroyed by corruption and clientelism, with minimal concern for the living standards of people, could lose its legitimacy in the eyes of its own citizens.

Recommendations

1. The destabilization of Ukraine continues also because of the reluctant approach of the EU and NATO to protect the sovereignty of this country. Therefore the EU must say how it sees Ukrainian future. Ukraine needs a clear EU-membership perspective and more active support from NATO, including the supplies of military equipment.
2. There is still a threat of continuation of the disintegration and destabilization process in Ukraine. Therefore the assistance of the EU is needed in the domestic conflict management and its pressure to keep the principles of democratic conditionality even towards the new Ukrainian elites.
3. An important signal of support for the pro-European orientation of Ukraine would be the introduction of a visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine. The visa policy in the case of the European neighbours of the EU should be understood as a political, not a purely technocratic issue; as such message will have a stabilizing effect on Ukrainian society.
4. The involvement of Ukraine in the regional strategies of the EU has to be strengthened.
5. The financing of the Eastern Partnership Program should be increased. As Ukraine is facing the collapse of some state institutions (public administration, police, military forces etc.), the building of institutions should become one of the key priorities of the EU’s financial aid to Ukraine.

6. Although the implementation of DCFTA has been postponed, the terms of implementation of these parts of the Association Agreement, which do not concern DCFTA – political cooperation, security, justice, security, freedoms, migration policy, sectoral cooperation (macroeconomic policy, energy policy, environmental issues, public finances, statistics, transportation etc. have to be kept to be conducted as scheduled.
7. The radical neoliberal reforms required by the EU and the International Monetary Fund would deepen the recent crisis of Ukrainian statehood and the collapse of state policies. Therefore they should not be presented as the condition for granting financial support to Ukraine.
8. Increasing cooperation within the framework of the Visegrad Group and a wider area of Central Europe is required, including security and military affairs.

EXPERIENCE OF SYSTEM REFORMS AS THE MAIN GOALS OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN EU COUNTRIES AND UKRAINE IN NEW GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION CONDITIONS

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Based on a general analysis of barriers in social and economic development, based on a summary of reforms in Ukraine separately initiated in 2010 and 2014, and based on the experience of the decentralization processes and system reforms in Slovakia and Poland, this policy paper concludes that there is a high unsatisfied demand for system reforms in all spheres of public life in Ukraine after 23 years of its independence.

It is a fundamental truth that no country in the present globalized world can plan and carry out system reforms without analysing geopolitical influences and their forecasts. However, the geopolitical situation in Europe and the World is constantly changing under the influence of many factors – economic, demographic, social, environmental and political, as well as financial factors, information, communication, and cultural globalisation. Experts in international policy and global development often give different evaluations of the role of geopolitical influences on the development of Ukraine as a state in the heart of Europe formed 23 years ago on the territory of the former USSR.

However, most experts have similar visions and positions on the followings:

1. the current geopolitical situation has significantly changed compared to the situation 15-18 years ago in terms of being favourable for reforms, when Eastern European countries developed and implemented their reforms – of course, for the worse;
2. while, further delays or postponing system reforms will critically expand challenges and threats to economic and political independence of Ukraine and its national security due to many factors reducing competitiveness of the country and its regions; and,

3. an alternative to system reforms in Ukraine simply does not exist. The unfavourable geopolitical factors should be considered, on the one hand, from a perspective of their neutralization or reducing their impact by means of these very reforms; while on the other hand – there is an internal temptation to use the worsened geopolitical situation and the critical lagging behind reforms for the implementation of hidden false reforms for the benefit of oligarchic groups and the willingness to satisfy the growing geopolitical ambitions of Russia.

What should be understood under false reforms?

Briefly, these are legislative, regulatory and constitutional changes realized by public authorities potentially or in practice, which do not correspond to the national interests of the population. Thus, the concept of reforms and false reforms lies in the nature and content of the planned and realized social changes that meet or do not meet national interests. Thus, public attention should focus not on the very fact of reforms, as presented by tame media and the political forces in power, but on their essence and content.

The logic of this approach poses the key question: Who determines if the reforms comply with national interests by their nature and content? Of course, it is a rhetorical question in the countries of real grass-roots democracy because the answer is always clear: national interests are protected by the effective system of the law-governed state and an opportunity to advocate for and express those interests in form of a consolidated public position, which has numerous channels and ways to address authorities – up to the referendum. This happens there and what about Ukraine?

Indeed, compliance or noncompliance of system reforms in Ukraine with national interests could be the main initial barrier to their implementation in five priority areas of reforms:

- political and institutional organization of the state;
- competitive economy;
- social sphere;
- civil society and human rights; and,
- security and foreign policy.

It could be if the society is aware of the nature and content of the reforms proposed. However, we have false reforms in five major areas:

- autocracy or managed democracy;
- non-competitive, shadow and corrupt economy;
- degraded infrastructure and human potential;
- weak and controlled civil society with restriction of human rights; and,
- vulnerable security and dependent foreign policy.

An unhampered start of system reforms (or false reforms?) based on certain credit of national trust to the new government took place in Ukraine in 2010. The results of expert monitoring and annual assessment of this unhampered launch done at the beginning of 2013 are not successful. Looking ahead, let us mention that ignoring initial barriers between reforms and false reforms in many areas and specific reforms, caused by non-transparent development of their essence and content led to public confrontation and protest moods throughout the country. Of course, a considerable share of public confrontation was called forth by unpopular measures and difficulties encountered that would temporarily accompany reform process in any country. However, there are numerous questions arising in expert environment and in wider society concerning the strategy (or its absence), the nature, content and approaches of the ongoing reforms as well as information support and awareness raising actions within the implementation process.

A plenty of researches of well-known public (for instance, the National Strategic Research Institute) and independent institutions (for instance, the Ukrainian Institute of Economic and Political Studies of Oleksandr Razumkov) were dedicated to the analysis of geopolitical situation in Ukraine at the turn of the first and second decades of the XXI century. Therefore, we shall rely only on the summarized results of these studies in this policy paper.

The main factors determining the current geopolitical situation in Ukraine in the context of system reform are as follows:

- high dynamics of the globalization processes;
- weakening of the international treaty system for global security and global balance of powers;
- global financial and economic crisis that unfolded in late 2008; and consequently search of opportunities for large-scale foreign loans on favourable terms, as for instance, through IMF satisfying its conditions;
- a new need to protect such vital interests for Ukraine as its sovereignty and territorial integrity, national economic and energy security, democratic and constitutional order, supremacy of law, preserving of active and equal membership in the international community, safety of information and cultural space;
- certain difficulties, changes and transformations in foreign policy currently typical for global players of the world politics: the European Union, Russia, USA and China, which are reflected to some extent upon the geopolitical situation of Ukraine;
- external positioning of Ukraine in the world community by such key attributes:
- the first country in the world having renounced its nuclear arsenal, a country of the largest man-made environmental disaster in history, i.e. Cher-

nobyl, a state producing rocket motors and missile weapon systems, a country of energy and transport transit, an area which is potentially the best one for effective farming and agricultural production, a country with hard-working and amicable population tolerant even to the ineffective government, a country where no major internal conflicts, terroristic acts of bloodshed happened over 23 years after the USSR collapse, including the peaceful events of the Orange Revolution, a country where many oligarchs emerged controlling the state, which according to many global ratings came down to the status of third world countries, a country, where authorities, the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and many spheres of social life are penetrated with corruption; a country from which people went and are going abroad (over five million people) to feed their families or to fulfil their capacities.

The international and domestic security as well as the geopolitical situation Ukraine ended up in during between 2004 and 2011 escalated the issue of civilization choice of Ukraine: the European or a neo-imperialist one. This choice can be a determining factor either for degradation or for the development of the State of Ukraine as an independent, competent and competitive player in the international processes in Europe and Eurasia. No one can make this choice for the Ukrainian people; at least, no one has the right to make it. This choice is closely linked to the nature and content of the reforms launched only in 2014. Both the society and the government should listen to their “instinct of self-preservation” if it is not blunted by hidden and overt anti-Ukrainian (in the sense of the Ukrainian state) forces in the current complicated geopolitical situation in Ukraine.

In terms of modelling approaches applied to complex multi-parametric systems, particularly in physics, following the reform Ukraine is in a so-called “bifurcation point” now, when an input of slight changes into the system parameters from outside is enough to direct it irreversibly along another qualitatively different trajectory of development. Thus, who and how will introduce what changes into the parameters of the system “society-government” may become fatal for Ukraine at present time.

Why do we talk about “new geopolitical situation” in Ukraine now?

Ukrainian internal factors:

- The chain of events in Ukraine during autumn 2013 - summer 2014.
- The Revolution of Dignity and Euromaidan in the majority of cities in the country against the autocratic regime of Yanukovych and his refusal of European integration.
- Annexation of Crimea by Russia in spite of international law and security guarantees to Ukraine from the United States, Great Britain, and Russia.

- Support by Russia of the armed separatist rebellion in Eastern Ukraine.
- Direct Russian military aggression on the territory of Ukraine in August 2014.
- At the same time – full signing and ratification in the Parliament of the Association Agreement with the EU (September 2014).

Other factors:

- Awareness of security threats in the number of European countries of the former Soviet Union and the camp of “socialism” (Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, Georgia, etc.).
- Inefficiency, the fallacy of the current NATO doctrine: the neglect of Russian threat.
- The use of the Russian energy exports: pressure and blackmail of Europe and Ukraine.
- Disagreements in EU countries concerning the policy of Ukrainian support and sanctions against Russia.
- Division of the Eastern Partnership into 2 groups: 1 pro-European impact: Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine; 2 – pro-Russian impact: Armenia, Belarus, and Azerbaijan.

Global factors:

- The impact of events in Ukraine on the whole global system of international security and cooperation after World War II due to the Russian policy (the new “Cold War”)
- Reducing levels of capacity and confidence to many international institutions (UN, OSCE, a system of international agreements in the spheres of security and cooperation, NATO, etc.).
- Exacerbation of other areas of political instability, wars and conflicts in the world (Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, etc.).
- Challenges and threats in connection with the policy of sanctions of Western countries against Russia

Is there a state in the World that would begin major social transformations and changes in many areas simultaneously (which usually can be defined as system reforms) without having a concept, programs or strategies for their implementation consolidated in the society at the start (with emphasis on “consolidated in the society”); at least with some elements of vision, optimization and forecasting the impact of such transformations and changes in medium and long-term perspective and elements of a system approach? The answer is “yes”: this country was Ukraine in 2010. The results were very poor.

Without getting into criticism and analysis of reforms in Ukraine done by various independent non-governmental expert organizations in different

forms (and it is extremely important for both society and authorities), let us justify our conceptual vision of system reforms.

Firstly, a concept, strategy or a program of system reforms are documents of community and national significance that are exceptionally expert due to their content, and are of political and legal nature only by the form and manner of public legitimization.

Secondly, such documents of community and national significance should involve extensive public discussions and approval with maximum involvement of NGOs, businesses, scientific and intellectual elite, media and political opposition. Actually it is social consolidation and harmonization of the interests of all stakeholders. This, in turn, reduces opposition to reforms of that part of society who will be discontent with even temporary deterioration in living standards because of reforms.

Thirdly, a concept, strategy or a program of system reforms must necessarily involve justification and development of such components: priorities; optimal sequence or combination of reforms in various fields to achieve synergies; effective mechanisms and “technologies” of reforms, including establishment and investing with authorities reforming institutions; broad and effective public awareness campaign in the community involving experts and media; assessment and forecasts of the “social cost” and financial costs of reforms; and, assessment of social and economic impact of their implementation for specified periods of the state’s development.

Fourthly, development of any even the conceptual reform drafts should be accompanied by a SWOT analysis (including analysis of threats and challenges) for both the diagnostic of internal social and economic situation and for taking into account external and geopolitical factors.

Fifthly, political authority having launched real system reforms should use all possible legislative and regulatory mechanisms to secure progressive and irreversible process of reforms, regardless of the political situation and changes within the configuration of political forces or persons in power after elections.

The abovementioned five requirements to concepts, strategies or programs of real system reforms have been more or less fulfilled in Eastern European countries including Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Most likely, this allowed them to achieve successful results at the end.

Thus, the nature and content of the system reforms suggested in our “SUREC” policy paper in 2011 is fully consistent with national interests of the people of Ukraine: decentralization of powers in accordance with the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government and the principle of subsidiarity; full legal and financial capacity of the constitutionally independent local governance; establishment of executive committees of district and regional councils with relevant changes in the functions and role of local public administrations and liquidation of dual power in the districts and regions;

implementation of an effective administrative reform according to the principles of economization of local governments' activities of corresponding levels and to improve the quality of all types of public services; developing new legal and institutional frameworks for state support of regional development based on the best European practices (with institutional and financial instruments, i.e. regional development agencies and funds).

The Government of Ukraine and the President of Ukraine started real system reforms only in 2014 by using the experience of East-European countries.

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EXOGENOUS FACTORS INFLUENCING SECURITY IN UKRAINE

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Regional security is closely linked to the security of state. Exposing of threats and challenges to regional security is vital for an efficient implementation of both internal and external state policies. State security hierarchy includes constitutional system protection, state sovereignty and independence, internal stability and defence capacity, as well as territorial integrity and state borders inviolability preservation – and Ukraine makes every effort to preserve these. However, Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014 and, subsequently, provoked armed pro-Russian separatist conflicts in the south and east of Ukraine with the aim to divide Ukraine and give birth to the new state formation called New Russia. Putin’s idea has not been successful yet, though, as Ukrainians living in the eastern and southern parts of the country have not supported the Russian plan as much as Moscow expected them to. Support for the separatist ideas in Donetsk and Lugansk - areas with the highest ratio of ethnic Russians (up to 40%) after Crimea – has not been as high as Russian propaganda claimed. As a result of Russia’s aggressive meddling in Ukraine’s internal affairs, public support for the country’s territorial integrity preservation grew from 69% in April, when south-east regions of Ukraine were destabilised, to 75% in August¹³.

This situation serves to prove that the request of inhabitants of south-eastern Ukraine for independence has been an artificially induced problem. Through separatist tendencies and armed conflicts, Russia has been trying to support the formation of the new state – New Russia – stretching from Lugansk region to Odessa region, yet pro-Russian separatists currently control only a part (some 25%) of the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic and Lugansk People’s Republic. And even though the Putin’s scenario is yet to be fulfilled, it has served its purpose – to destabilize Ukraine both economically and in terms of safety and security, thus making the country’s development and its subsequent EU integration more difficult.

¹³ The survey was carried out in August 2014 by the Ukrainian agency “Rejting”.

Irresponsible political approach of the former president Yanukovich has led Ukraine into a difficult economic situation. The country has to implement major reforms, which is not very viable at the time of war. The current militarization of Ukraine disproportionately burdens the state budget and mobilization, speedy arming and unplanned military trainings require considerable funds and place additional burden on the economy of the country. Conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine has impacted the entire country. Human potential is spent mainly on the issues related to the stabilisation of the country's safety and security. Companies operating in the field of defence industry – especially the 134 companies within the UKROBORONPROM group – produce “for the front” (arms and ammunition supplies for the members of the army involved in the counter-terrorism operation) instead of producing for export which would generate income for the state budget.

Even though separatists currently control only 1% of the territory of Ukraine, their activities cause major economic losses in Donbas region. Purposefully, they target local production facilities and flood coal mines, thus causing damages in the field of industrial production, which decreased by 40% in Donetsk region only and by more than 56% in Lugansk region. Of the 12%, this represents the decrease of the overall Ukrainian industrial production, Donbas industry represents as much as 9%. Because of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the state budget loss for this year only will exceed 18 billion UAH (app 1 billion EUR). Moreover, considerable sum will have to be spent for the renewal needed in the region of Donbas – while at the beginning of May the estimated costs were 8 billion UAH (1 USD = 13.5 UAH), current estimates claim the amount would be the same – only now in USD.

In addition, after Russia stopped supplying natural gas to Ukraine (on June 16); the country has to look for alternative suppliers to fill the “gas gap” elsewhere. In the coming winter, Ukraine will need almost 32 billion cubic metres of gas. As of September 15, the 12 underground gas storage tanks (the thirteenth tank is located in the occupied Crimea) with the total capacity of 31 bill. m³ only contain 16.7 bill. m³ of gas. Thus, even though Ukraine managed to lower its gas consumption by 3.4 bill. m³, it will lack almost 4 – 5 bill. m³ of gas even in spite of the reverse-flow gas supplies from Poland, Hungary and Slovakia (negotiations between the Ukrainian Naftogaz and Romania being currently under way). Ukrainian government plans to build a terminal in Odessa for the import of liquidized gas with the annual capacity of 5 bill. m³. Still, this will not solve the current situation that, with the winter season approaching, looks more and more threatening. Gas consumption will have to be decreased in all regions in order for the shortage not to affect the country's industrial production too much.

As Ukraine is in the state of undeclared war, citizens do not trust the local currency which is sinking deeper and deeper every day. Before the Russian

invasion to Crimea, one could exchange 1 USD (that the Ukrainian currency is pegged to) for 8 hryvnias (UAH). At present, 1 USD is sold for 13 UAH and the exchange rate is expected to sink to 15 UAH by the end of the year. In spite of the considerable interventions of the National Bank of Ukraine, the situation regarding the currency is not getting better. Since the beginning of this year, Ukrainians have withdrawn 8 bill. USD from their bank accounts, which represents one third of all deposits. And even though the devaluation of hryvna is good for Ukrainian exporters, on the other hand, it makes import and loan repayments more expensive both for businesses and for inhabitants, which leads to higher unemployment and growing tensions in the society.

Critical economic situation has a negative effect on the development of Ukrainian regions, including Zakarpattia region that cannot rely on the funding and support from the state budget to the same degree as before the outbreak of armed conflicts in the eastern part of Ukraine. In connection with this, Ukrainian government needs to increase the support for regional development which is quite uneven and, as such, also a source of societal instability. Efficient and pragmatic regional development policy should, therefore, become an inseparable part of national security matters.

Unresolved or yet-to-be-settled social, inter-ethnic and religious conflicts all pose a threat to national security. At the time of the artificially induced problem of separatism in eastern Ukraine we should, therefore, bear in mind that 200 thous. ethnic Hungarians live in the Zakarpattia region. In recent years, Hungarian minority non-governmental organisations and political parties supported from Hungary have become more active, pushing for the autonomy for Hungarian minority in the Pritisjansky Okruh of the Zakarpattia region, which further complicates the situation regarding Hungarian separatism.

Apart from the Hungarians, Zakarpattian Rusyns have also been striving for autonomy for Rusyns since 1991. Most recently, the Rusyn minority leader and the self-proclaimed prime minister of the so-called "Republic of Zakarpattian Rus" Peter Gecko published several articles on the Internet in which, on behalf of Rusyns of Zakarpattia, he requested President Putin to carry out a peace operation in the Zakarpattia region in order to support the formation and recognition of the "Republic of Zakarpattian Rus". Ukrainian government sees the calls for territorial autonomy for Hungarians and Rusyns as a separatist move that could threaten integrity of Ukraine.

Events in Crimea and, subsequently, in the east of Ukraine expose the problem of safety forces which had been neglected in terms of weaponry, training and in terms of the selection of personnel loyal to the Ukrainian state. With respect to the recent events, there is an acute need to increase the efficiency of armed forces and to implement personnel changes. Gravity of the problem was pointed out also by the Director of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) Valentin Nalivaychenko, who stated that during the reign of Yanukovych some

30% of SBU officers were disloyal to the Ukrainian government who cooperated with Russian Security Service (FSB). The situation at the Ministry of the Interior of Ukraine was similar. Only in Donbas, more than 20 thousand militia members who supported pro-Russian separatist processes in the region had to be replaced. Thus, it is evident that the Ukrainian government failed to pay sufficient attention to the long-term influence Russia exerted on armed forces members and state authorities. In order to improve the situation, Lustration Bill was passed on September 16, which should help to purge state authorities and armed forces at the regional level.

Apart from recruiting of armed forces members and state officials for collaboration, Russia is very skilled in using the so-called soft power represented by the creation of NGOs which help to influence the situation in the countries where Russia wishes to retain its influence. Thus, Russia meddles in the Ukrainian policy also by creating conflicts among national elites. Ukrainian safety structure needs to be prepared for modern threats of non-military nature. This means they will have to face ideological, diplomatic, psychological and economic pressures and special operations the objective of which is to manipulate public opinion and discredit political leaders and state and regional administration representatives and, consequently, destabilise individual regions and the entire society. As a result of the Russian influence, security situation in the region and in the state deteriorates.

Appropriate training, weaponry and technical equipment are all needed for efficient coping with both non-force and force threats. This is something that the NATO member states leaders are very well aware of, so they approved financial aid for Ukraine in the amount of 15 mil. EUR during the NATO Summit in Wales (Sept. 4-5, 2014). The said funds will be used for the treatment of the injured, cybernetic defence, logistic support and leadership and communication capacities building.

During the visit of President Petro Poroshenko in Washington last September, the US announced that they would grant 53 mil. USD for Ukraine, of which 46 mil. USD will be allocated for strengthening Ukrainian security and 7 mil. USD for humanitarian activities carried out in the eastern parts of the country. However, the US aid will not include lethal arms proposed to be supplied to Ukraine by some of the Republicans.

The Slovak Republic has already earmarked 50 thous. EUR, of which 30 thous. should be used to support the trust fund activities aimed at military personnel retraining and 20 thous. to fund the training of mine clearance experts in the Centre of Excellence in Trenčín (in 2014).

Slovakia could cooperate more with Ukraine in the field of security on the level of the departments of the interior and of defence. It would be fitting to extend the annual Bilateral Cooperation Plans not only in the area of consultations of departmental experts but also within the scope of joint trainings

and exercises of armed forces. In the field of defence, it would be good to plan joint exercises on all levels, starting from the lowest units – like the joint exercise of Slovak and Ukrainian mechanized army units organised as a part of the “The Slavs for Peace” drill – to the training of Special Forces. Military training areas of Kamenica nad Cirochou and Javoriv are located close to the Slovak – Ukrainian border, which would lower the costs and time necessary for the troops redeployment.

Planning and implementing of the multinational engineer battalion Tisa exercises would be similarly beneficial. The battalion serves to prevent natural catastrophes and eliminate their aftermath. The TISA¹⁴ project is an outcome of the international cooperation of military forces and experts from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine and its objective is to assist civilians in the process of natural disasters impacts mitigation in Tisa basin area.

In relation to floods in the Zakarpattia region and in the east of Slovakia, it is important to maintain and develop efficient cooperation in crisis management on the level of regions. With respect to the gradual approximation to the EU, Ukraine will also have to apply legislation changes in the field of custom duties, where experience of Slovak customs office could become handy.

We can conclude by saying that the current situation in the development of bi-lateral cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia has been affected by the ambiguous policy on the Ukrainian side when declarations of the state representatives were often contradictory to the steps taken. Following the disgraceful escape of President Victor Yanukovych to Russia, Ukrainian politicians assumed responsibility for the country’s strategic direction and decided in favour of the EU integration, which brought along major problems particularly in the fields of security and economy. Signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU and its subsequent ratification in the Ukrainian Parliament and in the European Parliament (Sept 16, 2014) raises hopes that Ukraine has set off on the journey heading towards the European value system and the European security system. The Ukrainian government will have to secure the constancy of its strategic decision and implement the reforms in all areas of the society. Only time will show how successful it would be in doing so being under the permanent pressure exerted by Russia.

¹⁴ Agreement on the establishment of the TISA Engineer Battalion was signed on January 18, 2002 in Budapest.

TROUBLE WITH UKRAINE? FUTURE OF THE NEIGHBOUR RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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In 2013-2014 cross-border cooperation among local authorities, business, the civil society of Ukraine and their partners from corresponding bordering EU countries – Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania depended and still depends upon political events in Kiev and the reaction of major interested parties (in them): the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The major challenge for Ukrainian foreign policy till November 21, 2013 was to obtain the consent from all 28 EU countries to sign the Association Agreement (the Russian factor was analysed at this point as an important, but not the crucial one, in contrast to the later period when the real motivation of Kiev as to the Association Agreement delay became clear). At this time Central European countries actively convinced European political and public circles – in the diplomatic and public formats – of the necessity to conclude political association with Ukraine and set up a free trade zone, primarily pointing out not to the economic benefits of this step but, first of all, the necessity to reform the civil sphere and economy on the basis of European security standards.

The countries of Visegrad group have had some discrepancies regarding the conditions, under which the Association Agreement with their eastern neighbour was to be signed. Throughout 2013 Poland was very supportive of this step regardless of the conditions, as this format was to help in solving the problem of democracy preservation, selective enforcement and society modernization. Likewise, Slovakia also agreed on the necessity to sign this document on the summit. The Czech Republic supported the identical scenario but in their press releases representatives of this country associated this step with the previous “Julia Tymoshenko’s” case resolution. Hungary considered latent ethno-political disagreement with Ukraine to be the key to the resolution of issues concerning our country’s European perspectives, thought it was clear that this question would be the subject of a “bargain” on the stage of Agreement ratification to the utmost¹⁵.

¹⁵ S. I. Mytryayeva, M.O. Lendel, A. D. Stryapko, A.M. Kryzhevskiy *Spivrobotnytstvo z krajinamy Viseg-*

Failure to sign the Association in November, Euromaidan, political crisis in February, reformation of state and local authorities, further annexation of Crimea, the spreading separatist movements in the East of Ukraine which got the colouring of terrorism, later on - hybrid war and finally – poorly hidden aggression of Russia – all these political factors force “first rank” Kiev neighbours to determine their position as to the “Ukrainian issue”.

We stay on the position that current Ukrainian crisis was reasoned by the complicated set of factors. Between them is it possible to point on the most important:

- Russia’s strategy on becoming the centre of Eurasian economic, political and space by deepening the institutional forms of the cooperation and widening its borders till borders of European Union;
- Moscow’s willingness to use all possible instruments to preserve its influence on the energy market in Europe;
- The implementation of the plan of Ukraine’s “soft” or “hard” disintegration as the instrument of its falling to un-EU space as a minimum, Eurasia as the aim;
- Ukraine’s political class hidden opportunism or direct assistance to Russia’s plans during the last decade that found the form of the national security system disintegration;
- Euromaidan’s victory that was followed by the rapid change of the government, election of the Acting President O. Turchinov in the parliament that was changed on June 7 by P. Poroshenko elected by the voters;
- Europe’s technocratic and economically centred approach towards Ukrainian-Russian clash that resulted in the insufficient assistance to Kiev.

We still believe that Ukrainian crisis provided Europeans with the opportunity to return to the forgotten rhetoric about the uniting “*peace project*”, “*security and stability zone*”, which as if, have lost their popularity due to the spread of Euroscepticism, which, by the way, now started to lose its power. May elections to the European Parliament which coincided with the Presidential elections in Ukraine have not confirmed the assumption about the possibility to form Eurosceptical majority in this extremely important institution¹⁶. In Central European countries political bodies, openly criticizing Brussels’ rules make up approximately 5 % (if we do not take into account Hungarian FIDESZ, in power now, which also criticizes economic policy of the EU, though does not promulgate disintegrating statements).

radskoji chetvirku jak instrument yevropejskoji integraciji ta modernizaciji Ukrajinu Analytical report, Kyiv: NISD, 2014, 128 p.

¹⁶ Results of the 2014 European elections Available online: <http://www.results-elections2014.eu/en/election-results-2014.html>

At the same time events in Ukraine showed the lack of strategic readiness in Europe and western countries in general for expansionary, cynical policy of Russia, using military strategies of diversion, provocation and manipulation of international law standards. Ukrainian crisis frames hazards for European economy due to risks in business management, outflow of Russian capital, decrease of trade turnover with Russia and the threat of gas blackmail. Countries which had special ties with Russia, such as Cyprus and some Central European countries, Hungary and Slovakia in particular, may suffer more than others. Finally, Europe is ready to honestly admit the high level of dependence on Russian energy sources (40% - gas and 30% - oil). Simultaneously, the positions of main political players as to energy security differ: some insist on the establishment of energy union (de facto, to maintain mutual policy concerning Russian supplies), others – on the necessity to completely refuse from this country's provision, which will mean the increase of their own production and transportation of oil through the North Sea as well as the implementation of "Gas port" project and switch over to shale gas technologies.

Before, during and after Euromaidan countries of Visegrad group primarily tried to act as EU communicators in relations with Ukrainian authorities – whether with the government of V. Yanukovych - M. Azarov after the dispersal of Maidan, November 30, or with the tandem of O. Turchynov – A. Yatsenyuk at the stage of new line of command formation. A rather significant number of state officials' visits to Kiev testify to this fact. For example, the Slovak Republic, not having very tight contacts with Ukraine, has drastically raised the level of its involvement in international politics. The Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, M. Lajčák made working visits to Ukraine at the beginning of December 2013, at the end of February, 2014, two in the first half of April and on September, 11, 2014. The critical position of Slovakia regarding the introduction of sanctions against Russia, at the same time, the agreement, reached after some delay and the most important, the launch of reverse gas flow, proves the pragmatic character of Slovak foreign policy. Moreover, Russophilism, typical of Slovak society, the desire to avoid conflicts with Russia caused by Ukraine, taking into consideration the experience of "gas war" in 2009 and the tendency of Fico government to avoid stereotypical political steps, predetermined the regulated policy of Bratislava. At the same time Slovakia has officially declared its position regarding territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine including Crimea, accentuating the necessity to preserve all standards of international law¹⁷.

We cannot but mention that objectively Slovakia is not interested in the change of European geopolitical schemes, formed after the collapse of the USSR, in contrast to the neighbouring countries, considering security issues to be the

¹⁷ B. Markovic "Behind the V4's Different Position Towards Ukraine and Russia", *Visegrad Insight*, Available online: <http://visegradinsight.eu/divided-more-than-united12092014/>

key factor of resolution or on the contrary expedience (opportunism) in assessing the reasons and ways out of “Ukrainian crisis”. On August 30 Romania, which had rather tense relations with Kiev throughout the past decades (Snake Island, double citizenship, great-power calls of nationalistic parties to join Bukovyna and Bessarabia), supported the idea of sending military equipment to Ukraine, having recognized Russian responsibility for Donbas conflicts. Taking into account “separatist” Pridnestrovie factor in Moldova and Russian military forces on its territory in particular, the desire of Romania to stop the expansion of Moscow in south-eastern Ukraine is absolutely reasonable. Hard-line attitude of Romania, uncompromising policy of Poland and Baltic countries provide the chance to prospectively form the variation of Baltic –Black Sea arc with the strategic task to restrain Russia in its desire to dominate the seas. We would like to mention that Poland has officially recognized Russian military force invasion in the south of Donetsk oblast at the end of August as the act of aggression and confirmed its readiness to sign the agreement concerning arms supply to Ukraine¹⁸. Even Bulgaria, despite its historical and economic Russophilism and energy ties with Moscow has expressed its concern as to the security in the Black Sea. These facts have been proved by the declarations of countries’ leaders regarding their readiness to position NATO forces, including Pro-Systems on their territories on the permanent basis. Although, Hungary and Slovakia have rejected this initiative.

Generally speaking, the fact that Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic criticize European sanctions has its explanations in the continental nature of these countries and their orientation on political accents set by Germany, except for their economic and energy dependence on Russia. Though, if to analyse recent declarations of Hungarian Prime Minister V. Orban regarding the imitation of illiberal state-model, based on nationalistic values; careful admiration of V. Putin’s foreign policy and statements about “returning to East”, it becomes obvious that Budapest openly criticizes economic consequences of the introduced EU sanctions against Moscow in correlation with the demand to extent the rights of Hungarian population in neighbouring countries. It should be pointed out that regardless of the official declarations of Budapest concerning the respect of territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine, FIDESZ, Hungarian party in power, continues to develop the idea of “Hungarian autonomy” formation in Zakarpattia region of Ukraine; Jobbik (the Movement for a Better Hungary), represented in the parliament, openly recognizes the annexation of Crimea and supports separatists in Donbas, accentuating the opportunity of restituting the Zakarpattia region of Ukraine to Hungary. Some Hungarian politicians believe that decentralization of power, declared in the draft of Ukrainian Constitution (which may presuppose this matrix) and other legal documents will support the demand for autonomy.

¹⁸ Ministr oborony Pol’schi” “my hotovi prodavaty” zbrojy Available online : http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/politics/2014/09/140909_siemoniak_weapons_sx.shtml

Thus, we should get ready for further demonstration of “light power” by Budapest, proceeding in the format of cultural and educational expansion.

The policy of Central European countries regarding “Ukrainian” issue may be estimated in different ways. There exists a thesis that this strategy or rather tactics is regarding short-term national interests and does not take into consideration the strategic interests of the whole region. Central European countries in particular, as the closest ones to Eurasian territory, will suffer from sectoral sanctions against Russia. Though, the experience of Poland, “mocking” Russian sanctions against its agricultural products, despite the loss of € 500 million due to apple import veto to Russia, demonstrates the rational/irrational choice concerning “Ukrainian issue”. To be objective, we must mention that official Visegrad representatives are right in their claims that the delay of Kiev in the introduction of similar steps nourishes sanction criticism¹⁹.

Thus, it becomes obvious that due to different strategic interests priorities, even in the sphere of cross-border cooperation, will differ of course, within some limits predetermined by common interests, due to mutual existence on bordering territories and European financial stimuli, suggested by the EU for 2014-2020 (in particular: European Instrument of Neighbourhood and Partnership and Danube Programme for this period). Apparently, Hungarian institutions will actively promote projects, supporting cultural and educational interests of their minorities on the territory of Ukraine, whereas the Slovak ones – small business and the development of border infrastructure. Taking into consideration that Poland has long been Ukraine’s lobbyist in the EU and now is our informal alien in Russian containment, Polish local authorities, public sector, educational institutions and business will include the philosophy of strengthening Ukrainian competitiveness in the spheres of infrastructure, economy and social reforms into their projects.

We must take into account that this and, predictably, next year the cross-border cooperation on EU-Ukraine border will be hampered by the internal and external crisis in an around Ukraine. The desire, and, what is more important, the readiness of Ukrainian western regions – their public structures, national communities, civil society organizations, associations of small business and educational institutions – to take part in cross-border projects with Central European partners will depend on many factors. In particular, it will depend on the format and, more important, the fact of power decentralization in Ukraine and thus, provision of administrative and financial autonomy in

¹⁹ Markovic B. Op. cit.

Premjer Uhorschyny bere pryklad z Putina - vymahaje avtonomiji dlya uhortsiv v Zakarpatti Available online: http://espreso.tv/news/2014/05/13/premyer_uhorschyny_bere_pryklad_z_putina__vymahaje_avtonomiji_i_podviynoho_hromadyanstva_dlya_uhorciv_v_zakarpatti
Zustrich naukovtsiv ta ekspertiv kraju “za chashkoju chaju” z Vice-premierom, Ministrom zakordonnych sprav ta yevropejskych pytan’ Slovac’ koji Respubliku Miroslavom Lajčakom Available online: <http://uz.niss.gov.ua/articles/526/>

promoting cross-border initiatives. It is almost obvious that the new project of Constitution of Ukraine will be not adopted this year and this means that the new construction of governance will not be clear during the short-term perspective. Thus it is necessary to wait for the unclear picture of the competencies division between state and local government authorities in the field of the cross-border initiatives promotion. Also we can mention that the rapid change of the local officials' positions besides positive political implications also may have negative results. First of all, we mean the disintegration of the existing ties and project initiatives with Central European partners, though we expect that new "faces" in Ukrainian local government will start new undertakings on the border very rapidly in case other obstacles do not hamper this process.

There still appear questions regarding the adequate level of skills possessed by actors of cross-border cooperation concerning the project initiatives and management, in particular, the ones financed by the EU. There also arise questions regarding sufficient motivation of potential "cross-border" collaboration members due to domestic problems Ukrainian society faces and due to strengthening of some stereotypes as to the perception of the neighbouring "geopolitical" orientation. At the same time, economic interdependence of adjacent areas and the opportunity to draw additional resources in the short-term perspective should strengthen partners' economy-centred motivation. Many experts hope that the "ethnic card" that sometimes is used by the right-centred politicians in Hungary, the radical wing of Rusyns in the whole region will not cause a formation of new stereotypes in the relations between neighbouring border territories. In any case, we are sure that the main role in the development of the cross-border ties has to be played by the civil society, universities, small businesses that are not dependent from the political configuration of national and local governments.

All this considerations push us to make some policy recommendations for different actors of the cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and countries of Central Europe. First of all, we think that European institutions have to use extra efforts and assistance to support decentralization in Ukraine, and the war in the East can't become the obstacle for this policy. Programs aimed at the stimulation of the transnational cooperation in the region have to pay special attention to the projects developed by local (community) governments and organizations and also of the higher educational institutions that do not depend much from the predicted governance reform in Ukraine. On the other hand, the governments of the countries bordering Ukraine must have, on one side, the feeling of solidarity with it, and the rational arguments for the strengthening of the economic, social and migration security that can be done by the support of the development projects on the border. Ukrainian local leaders, despite of the budget and the economic constraints, have to use all the chances to develop new links, start-ups and infrastructure that, together with gained experience, will help modernize the society.

COHESIVE GROWTH IN EUROPE: INCOME CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE BETWEEN COUNTRIES, REGIONS, AND HOUSEHOLDS

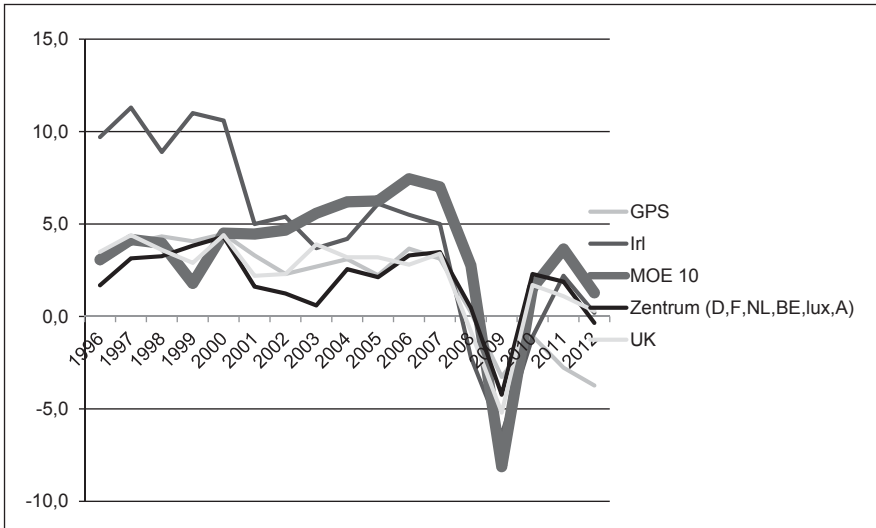
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The European Economic Community (EEC) founded in 1957 by six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands) was a relatively homogenous area with the exception of Mezzogiorno. The founding treaty of Rome mentioned in its opening goals it was „Anxious to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions“ but offered no concrete policies or institutions. Regional policy as a task for the Community did not emerge until the first enlargement in 1972 when the (then) poor Ireland joined the EEC together with Denmark and the UK. It became an important policy area with the Southern enlargements of 1981 (Greece) and 1986 (Portugal and Spain). The task became even more relevant with the two Eastern enlargements of 2004 and 2007 (and Croatia’s entry in 2013).

1. Convergence and divergence among member states

The actual record of the European Union’s (EU) cohesion has been rather mixed while convergence had been quite good in Europe before the crisis of the 1973. Ireland and Greece did fall behind rather than catch up during their first decade of their membership. Portugal and Spain fared better due to a more propitious global environment (declining oil prices), but not in spectacular way. The biggest success story has been that of Ireland (until the financial crisis stroke), which started to catch up fast in the 1990s and became the EU’s second richest member by the mid-2000s. The strongest catching-up in the EU-15 happened after the Monetary Union was established in 1998 due to the lower real interest rates and subsequent consumption and investment booms in the peripheral areas. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) emerged from the transition crisis in the mid-1990s and many countries experienced relatively (in comparison to the old member states) high growth rates (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Growth rates of country groups in the EU (1996-2012)

Source: Eurostat, own calculations, 2014.

The effect of this growth on convergence of income within the EU has been not unambiguous. Sigma convergence, which describes a decline in the dispersion of income levels, could hardly be seen in the data. As Table 1 shows, standard deviation and other indicators of dispersion increased between 1999 and 2012, thus indicating divergence rather than convergence. Nonetheless, there has been a relatively clear beta convergence, which implies that poorer countries grow faster than the richer ones.

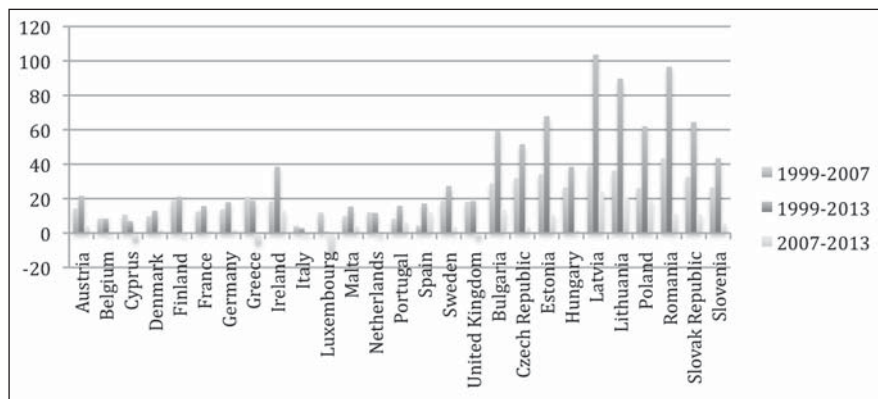
Table 1: Convergence in the EU (1999-2012)

Time period	Level (€)			Change		
	1999	2007	2012	99-12	99-07	07-12
Standard deviation	8202	11270	10544	28,6%	37,4%	-6,4%
Max-Min Absolute	37600	58400	55100	46,5%	55,3%	-5,7%
(Max-Min)/Min	8	5,8	4,6	-42,6%	-27,0%	-21,4%
Max/Min	9	6,8	5,6	-37,9	-24,0	-18,3
Rich North-West	23642	33325	33483	41,6%	41,0%	0,5%
Poorer Southern periphery	14900	22733	21000	40,9%	52,6%	-7,6%
Poor CEE+	9515	16485	18023	89,4%	73,2%	9,3%

Source: Eurostat, own calculations, 2014.

In most countries, catch-up growth was accompanied by a real appreciation of the currency, current account deficits and capital inflows; with Ireland being the exception showing export surpluses and an outflow of investment income payments. Higher inflation, increasing private (rather than public!) debt and relatively high wage growth leading to high unit labour costs were critical features of the growth model adopted by the poorer member states. But the real key has been high productivity growth even in countries like Greece (see Figure 2). The crisis has stopped these growth processes in 2009. After 2010, growth returned in CEE, but the countries affected by the panic in the government bond markets (GIPS: Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain) were hit by the recessions caused by capital flight and austerity policies.

Figure 2: Productivity growth in the EU (1999-2013)



Source: EU KLEMS, own calculations, 2014.

Afterwards, many analysts considered the critical aspects of the catching-up process as the causes of the recession. But, according to economic theory, many of these features are necessary and benign components of development. Poorer countries should import capital in order to build-up their capital stock and improve productivity. Actually, in a free global market, capital should flow from rich to poor countries, as the marginal productivity of capital is higher in these economies and labour is more abundant (hours worked per employed person is approx. 2000h/a, which is substantially higher in CEE than in the EU core where the figure is ca. 1400 h/a). In the opposite direction, labour should flow to the rich countries where its productivity and compensation is higher.

As productivity in the tradable sector increases, earnings have to grow also in the non-tradable sector in spite of its lower productivity growth (Balassa-Samuelson effect). This implies higher inflation in the catching-up economies,

which start with lower price levels anyway. The critical constraint is the current account balance. When a country loses price competitiveness because of rising unit labour costs, it has to rebalance its growth between (real) productivity growth and nominal catching up.

2. Convergence and divergence among regions

Regional growth has been even less cohesive than national growth. There was hardly any effect of EU regional policy to be noticed (except in immediate project environments). The Italian Mezzogiorno is the classical case. In spite of huge subsidies and investments, self-sustained growth has never been achieved there. East Germany is another case where productivity jumped first due to large lay-offs and the closure of inefficient plants, but stagnated later. The (partial) convergence of income could only be achieved and sustained by enormous transfers amounting to about 50% of East Germany's gross domestic product (GDP).

But regions benefitted after 2000 from the catching-up of the nations they belonged to. Nonetheless, regional sigma convergence was rather volatile (divergence from 2000 until 2008, convergence during the great recession, divergence after; see Table 2). Only the indicator giving the income relation of the poorest (Nord-East Romania) to the richest region (inner London) showed an almost continuous improvement, possibly because London suffered from the banking crisis. Generally, regional disparities increased within countries, where capital regions and those bordering to the richer neighbour countries prospered more than regions in the national periphery.

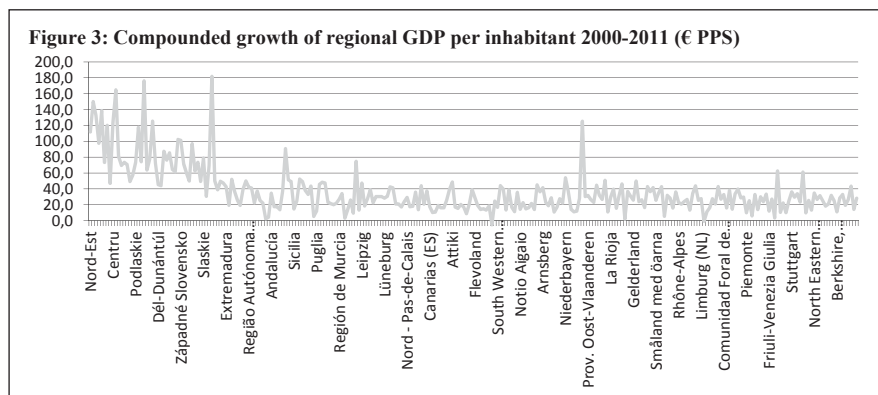
Table 2: Convergence of EU regions (regional GDP PPS in €)

Year	2000	2004	2008	2009	2010	2011
Standard deviation	7671	8234	9216	8461	8885	9217
Maximum	62700	72900	85900	79200	78800	80400
Minimum	3400	4900	7000	6400	6500	7200
Max/Min	18,4	14,9	12,3	12,4	12,1	11,2

Source: Eurostat, own calculations, 2014.

Regional beta convergence is even less clear. Although growth was highest within the group of the poorest regions, there is no strong correlation, as can be seen in Figure 3, where regions are ordered by the per-capita income (increasing from left to right).

Figure 3: Compounded growth of regional GDP per inhabitant 2000-2011 (€ PPS)



Source: Eurostat, own calculations, 2014.

The border regions of the EU towards the East contain some of the poorest regions of the EU. Within CEE (we neglect rich Finland and the Baltic states, because they have no subnational regions on the NUTS 2 level) there are eight such border regions (from north to south):

- Four in Poland: Podkarpackie, Lubelskie, Podlaskie, Warminsko-Mazurskie
- One in Slovakia: Východné Slovensko
- One in Hungary: Észak-Alföld
- Two in Romania: North-East, South-East

All eight regions belong to the poorest 10% of all NUTS 2 regions (ranking regional GDP/inhabitant PPS) in 2000 and in 2011, which implies that they have not improved their relative position. However, their average compounded growth rate (2000-2011) was 81% compared to 37% for the EU average. Východné Slovensko (Eastern Slovakia), Slovakia's border region bordering with Ukraine, is the richest of the eight regions, with a compounded growth rate of 78%.

3. Europe's underestimated inequality in the wake of the crisis

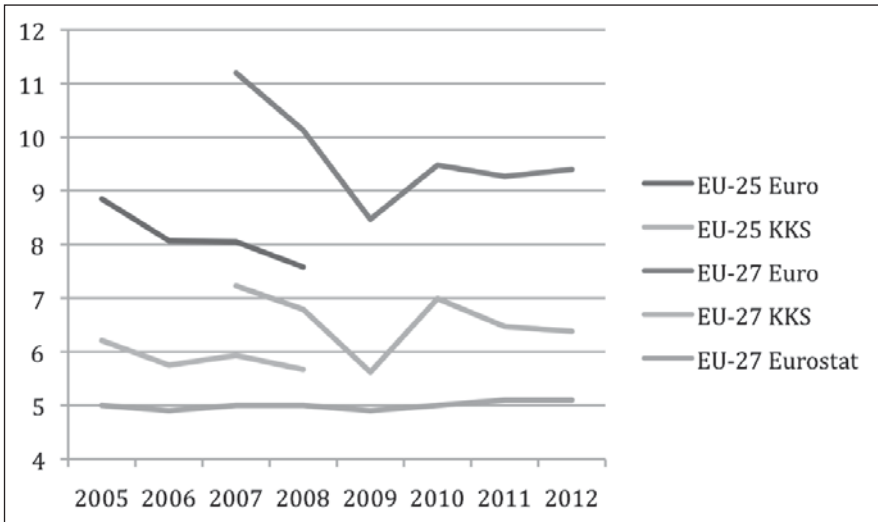
Regional disparities explain to some extent the level of income inequality within member states. Other important causes include the distribution of income between capital and labour and wage dispersion. If one measures inequality by the ratio of the income shares of the poorest and richest fifth, a so-called "quintile", of the population, the resulting indicator ($S80/S20$) is about five for the average of the EU (less than four in Scandinavia, more than 6 in Greece and Spain). In some countries, inequality has recently fallen (for example, in Poland, Portugal and the Baltic states), while in others (for example Greece and Spain) it has risen sharply.

The EU, or more precisely Eurostat, calculates the inequality of the EU in a methodologically wrong way, as the weighted average of these national S80/S20-ratios. That value has been relatively stable or slightly increasing on the average level of five. That approach, however, fatally excludes the income differences between countries. The true poorest (or richest) quintile of the EU is not the sum of all the national poorest (or richest) quintiles, but consists largely of the households in the poorest (or richest) member states. If one estimates the true European S80/S20, the value is much higher and generally rather declining.

This ratio, with values between 9 and 10 (in terms of exchange rates) or between 6 and 7 (in terms of purchasing power) is well above Eurostat's official, false average of around 5, although since 2005 (for the EU25) and since 2007 (for the EU27) the trend has been downwards (see Figure 4). By comparison, values relevant for other major economies, according to the data of the UN Human Development Report, are 4.9 (India), 7.3 (Russia), 8.4 (United States) and 9.6 (China).

Europe's high inequality, systematically underestimated by the EU, has been falling for many years thanks to the catch-up growth in the poorer countries and despite the often increasing inequality within member states. Crisis and austerity have curbed this development, however. After inequality rose again during the great recession of 2009 and the subsequent brief recovery things are now going sideways in the context of generally weak growth (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Europe's stagnating inequality



Source: Dauderstädt, Keltek, 2014.

Measured in terms of purchasing power parities (PPP) the further decline of – in any case lower – inequality was somewhat greater than when measured in terms of exchange rates, with regard to which the value of the quintile ratio is always higher. The difference can probably be explained by exchange rate fluctuations.

The global financial crisis and the recession triggered by it affected the EU countries differently. Between 2008 and 2009 growth fell on average by 6.4 per cent in the 12 richest member states and by 8.2 per cent in the 15 poorest member states. This largely explains the resumption of rising inequality. Especially countries with high external debts, such as the Baltic states, plunged into deep depressions, although they differed in length and severity. The GDP falls in the Baltic and other post-communist countries were dramatic, but fairly short.

The subsequent euro-crisis, which was triggered primarily by the EU's disastrous reaction to Greece's unexpectedly high debts, stopped the economic recovery that started to emerge in 2010 dead in its tracks, especially for the GIPS countries (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain), which at first had not been hit so hard. In contrast to the generally even poorer new member states from CEE they were unable to return to the growth stage because of the implementation of drastic austerity policies.

Nevertheless, the relatively good growth performance of the poorer CEE countries, despite the crisis in the euro-countries implementing austerity policies, was enough to cause inequality in the EU as a whole to fall again slightly or at least not to rise again. It must be borne in mind, however, that especially Ireland is (was) among the richest member states and its decline, ironically, has tended to abate income disparities in Europe.

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ENDOGENOUS FACTORS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CBC AREA: SCHENGEN VISA REGIME

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Visa regime is one of the key endogenous factors in the development of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and its neighbouring EU/Schengen states - Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. It has been asymmetric for the past 10 years. Namely, there is Schengen visa regime for Ukrainian citizens on the one hand, and Ukrainian visa-free regime for citizens of the EU states on the other hand. The asymmetry in visa regimes creates asymmetry in the capabilities of participants on both sides of the border to establish and implement effective cross-border cooperation. So, the introduction of a symmetrical visa-free regime by the EU for Ukrainian citizens has been one of the priorities of the foreign policy of Ukraine in recent years.

Ukraine abolished visa regime for the citizens of the EU states in 2005. Two years later the EU started to liberalize Schengen visa regime for Ukrainian citizens step by step in two directions:

1. for the inhabitants of 30-50 km zone, the so called local border traffic zone, along the border line between Ukraine and Poland/Hungary/Slovakia,
2. for certain categories of citizens all-over Ukraine.

The aim of these step by step and bi-directional approaches to visa regime liberalization is a visa-free regime in the future.

Local border traffic (LBT) was initiated by the border EU/Schengen states as the first tool for the visa regime liberalization for the inhabitants of Ukrainian border areas. LBT is a special regime for systematic border crossing by inhabitants of border regions and their staying in the defined border area of the neighbouring countries on the basis of a special permit for the purpose of family, social, cultural, tourism, recreational, economic and scientific communication. Bilateral agreements on the introduction of LBT were signed be-

tween Ukraine and Hungary in September 2007²⁰, between Ukraine and Poland in March 2008²¹ and between Ukraine and Slovakia in May 2008²², and entered into force on January 11, 2008, July 1, 2009 and September 27, 2008 respectively. There is detailed information about the LBT regimes in Table 1.

Table 1: LBT Regimes between Ukraine and its neighbouring EU Countries

Countries	LBT area		Conditions
	km	number of settlements	
Ukraine-Hungary	50	Ukrainian – 384 Hungarian – 244	- permit price: 20 € and free of charge for the disabled, pensioners, children under the age of 18 and under the age of 21; - waiting period for a permit: up to 10 days; - permit validity: 1-5 years; - term of staying: up to 90 days
Ukraine-Slovakia	30-50	Ukrainian – 280 Slovakian – 299	- permit price: free of charge; - waiting period for a permit: 60-90 days; - permit validity: 1-5 years; - term of staying: up to 90 days per one visit and no more than 90 days during 6 months
Ukraine-Poland	30	Ukrainian – 1,545 Polish – 1,822	- permit price - 20 € (and free of charge for the disabled, pensioners, children under the age of 18); - waiting period for a permit – 60-90 days; - permit validity: up to 5 years; - term of staying: up to 60 days per one visit and no more than 90 days during 6 months

The EU started the process of visa regime liberalization for certain categories of citizens all-over Ukraine in 2008²³. The list of privileged categories was amended in 2012²⁴. Facilitated visa regime provides free of charge and/or multiple entry Schengen «C» visas for certain privileged categories of Ukrainian

²⁰ Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on local border traffic / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 6, February 4, 2008. Available online: http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/348_072

²¹ Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Poland on Local Border Traffic / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 53, July 24 2009. Available online: http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=616_138&p=1251789577690164.

²² Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic on the local border traffic / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 77, October 20, 2008. Available online: http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/703_076

²³ Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on the Facilitation of the Issuance of Visas / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 8, February 11, 2008. Available online: http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_850.

²⁴ Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine Amending the Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on the Facilitation of the Issuance of Visas / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 51, July 16, 2013. Available online: http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_b15.

citizens, and visa-free regime for owners of official passports. More details about visa facilitation and current list of privileged categories in Ukraine is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Facilitation of the Schengen visa regime for citizens of Ukraine

Privileged categories	Purpose of the trip	Facilitation
pensioners	no requirements	Fees for processing the visa application are waived
children under the age of 18 and dependent children under the age of 21		
disabled persons and the person accompanying them		
participants aged 25 years or less participation in seminars, conferences, sports, cultural or educational events, organised by non-profit organisations	participation in events	
relatives visiting for burial ceremonies	visiting for burial ceremonies	
pupils, students, post-graduate students and accompanying teachers	study or educational training	- Fees for processing the visa application are waived; - Issuance of multiple-entry visas with the term of validity of one year (if the need or the intention to travel frequently or regularly is manifestly limited to a shorter period, the term of validity of the multiple-entry visa shall be limited to that period) or with the term of validity of a minimum of two years and a maximum of five years (if during the previous two years they have made use of the one year multiple-entry visas in accordance with the laws on entry and stay of the visited State unless the need or the intention to travel frequently or regularly is manifestly limited to a shorter period, in which case the term of validity of the multiple-entry visa shall be limited to that period)
persons needing to visit regularly for medical reasons and necessary accompanying persons	medical care	
drivers conducting international cargo and passenger transportation services to the territories of the Member States in vehicles registered in Ukraine	professional activity	
persons participating in scientific, cultural and artistic activities, including university and other exchange programmes		
participants in official exchange programmes organised by twin cities and other municipal entities		
members of train, refrigerator and locomotive crews in international trains, travelling to the territories of the Member States		
participants in international sports events and persons accompanying them in a professional capacity		
participants in official European Union cross-border cooperation programmes		
representatives of civil society organisations		
representatives of religious communities		
members of the professions participating in international exhibitions, conferences, symposia, seminars or other similar events held in the territory of the Member States		
members of national and regional Governments and Parliaments, Constitutional Courts and Supreme Courts, national and regional prosecutors and their deputies,		
members of official delegations		
journalists and the technical crew accompanying them		
close relatives — spouse, children (including adopted), who are under the age of 21 or are dependant, parents (including custodians), grandparents and grandchildren	visiting relatives	
business people and representatives of business organisations	professional activity	- Issuance of multiple-entry visas multiple-entry visas with the term of validity of five years (multiple-entry visas with the term of validity of five years)
holders of valid biometric service passports	professional activity	visa-free regime

During the period 2009-2014 the radical differences in the number of LBT permits issued by the consulates of Hungary, Poland and Slovakia for Ukrainian inhabitants of border areas are obvious (Table 3). This tool of visa liberalization is in demand, mainly, by the inhabitants of Ukrainian-Hungarian and Ukrainian-Polish border areas. In particular, Hungary produces over 30,000 LBT permits annually. As for Slovakia, the number of issued LBT permits is insignificant. The modification of the Agreement on LBT between Ukraine and Slovakia²⁵ had a positive effect, however, the proposals of experts concerning the necessary of the LBT area expansion were not taken into account and this tool is not much popular for now²⁶.

Table 3: Dynamics of issued LBT permits for Ukrainian inhabitants of border areas (number)

Year	Hungarian Consulates in Uzhgorod and Berehovo	Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in Uzhgorod	Polish Consulates in Lviv and Lutsk
2009	20,960	631	24,000
2010	18,144	749	39,445
2011	20,474	465	37,738
2012	34,092	-	54,851
2013	39,127	1,176	45,859
2014 (9 months)	34,849	873	29,646

Note: - no data.

For the period 2010-2013 there are following trends in issuance Schengen visas for Ukrainian citizens by the Schengen consulates, including:

- increasing the number of issued Schengen “C” visas by 65 per cent;
- increasing the number of issued multiple entry Schengen “C” visas (MEV) by 45 per cent and increasing their share in the total number of Schengen visas by 10 per cent;
- reducing the number of Schengen “C” visas refusals from 4.3 per cent to 1.7 per cent.

²⁵ Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic on the local border traffic / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 3, January 20, 2012. Available online: http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/703_090.

²⁶ S. Mytryayeva. Local Border Traffic: Modification of the Agreement between Ukraine and Slovakia: Analytical material / Regional Branch of NISS in Uzhgorod. Available online: <http://uz.niss.gov.ua/articles/434/>

Table 4: Dynamic of issued “C” Schengen visas by consulates of Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in Ukraine (number)²⁷

Consulates of the neighbouring EU/Schengen countries with Ukraine in total	Applications for «C» visas including MEV	«C» visas		«C» visa re-fusals	Years	
3 Hungarian Consulates, including:	102,574	100,795	36,002	1,779	2010	
	124,642	122,466	41,433	2,176	2011	
	137,574	136,257	48,113	1,317	2012	
	152,073	150,697	58,930	1,376	2013	
	2 in border region (in Uzhgorod and Berehovo)	58,275	56,978	33,619	1,297	2010
	75,830	74,604	38,089	1,226	2011	
	68,811	68,017	42,197	794	2012	
	72,331	71,468	43,455	863	2013	
7 (5 in 2010) Polish Consulates, including:	311,337	302,266	134,470	9,071	2010	
	379,214	369,893	227,648	9,018	2011	
	455,526	447,813	283,635	7,713	2012	
	538,181	517,725	298,124	9,904	2013	
	2 in border regions (in Kviv and Lutsk)	229,614	221,975	104,064	7,639	2010
	243,274	235,974	179,357	7,297	2011	
	282,509	276,737	214,012	5,772	2012	
	334,252	318,987	213,366	7,348	2013	
2 Slovak consulates, including:	28,003	27,647	6,518	356	2010	
	41,155	40,678	10,367	485	2011	
	44,602	44,296	13,591	328	2012	
	88,144	82,275	64,171	711	2013	
	1 in border region (in Uzhgorod)	11,826	11,618	5,128	208	2010
	19,693	19,335	7,460	369	2011	
	20,328	20,053	8,931	283	2012	
	41,266	38,670	30,652	638	2013	
In total	441,914	430,708	176,990	11,206	2010	
	788,285	533,037	279,448	11,550	2011	
	637,702	628,366	345,339	9,358	2012	
	778,398	750,697	421,225	11,991	2013	
<i>Note: In total</i>	<i>33 consulates</i>	<i>972,580</i>	<i>930,407</i>	<i>268,469</i>	<i>42,173</i>	<i>2010</i>
<i>the EU /Schengen consulates</i>	<i>32 consulates</i>	<i>1,082,172</i>	<i>1,044,655</i>	<i>379,032</i>	<i>35,900</i>	<i>2011</i>
<i>in Ukraine</i>	<i>35 consulates</i>	<i>1,313,727</i>	<i>1,283,014</i>	<i>494,749</i>	<i>26,646</i>	<i>2012</i>
	<i>35 consulates</i>	<i>1,587,223</i>	<i>1,534,972</i>	<i>598,364</i>	<i>27,165</i>	<i>2013</i>

²⁷ Visa Policy and Complete Statistics on Short-stay Visas Issued by the Schengen States / European Commission. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm.

In accordance with the figures of 2013, the border Schengen countries - Poland, Hungary and Slovakia issued nearly half (49 per cent) of all “C” visa and 70 per cent of all issued MEV.

Thus, each of these countries has one or two consulates in the border regions of Ukraine. Poland has two consulates in Lviv and Lutsk, Hungary has two consulates in Uzhgorod and Berehovo, and Slovakia has a consulate in Uzhgorod. In 2013 these 5 consulates issued 28 per cent of the total number of issued Schengen “C” visas to Ukrainian citizens. It should be noted that in total there are 35 consulates of the Schengen countries in Ukraine. In general, the dynamics of issuance of Schengen “C” visas by these consulates is positive. There are positive trends in the issuance of Schengen “C” visas, including MEV for residents of the border areas of Ukraine. In particular, the Consulate General of Slovakia in Uzhgorod increased the number of issued Schengen «C» visas from 11 thousand in 2010 to 38 thousand in 2013 and the number of issued MEV in 6 times - from 5 thousand to 30 thousand.

Mainly, the majority of visa refusals in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia for Ukrainians are made by these 5 consulates in the border regions. Four consulates of Poland and Hungary in the border regions decreased the number of visa refusals from 7,639 in 2010 to 7,348 in 2013 and from 1,297 in 2010 to 863 in 2013 respectively and only the Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in Uzhgorod increased the number of visa refusals from 208 in 2010 to 638 in 2013.

So, there is a general increase in Schengen visa application activity in Ukraine. The high figures, achieved by 5 consulates of Poland, Hungary and Slovakia in the border regions of Ukraine demonstrate the importance of the cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and these neighbouring countries of the Schengen zone. The high figures are also caused by the rule of the first Schengen area country that is planned to visit during the planned trip. Ukrainians mostly preferred cars and buses for travelling to the EU. That’s why Schengen visa applications are made in the consulate of the first Schengen area country that the applicant plans to visit, i.e. at the consulates of the neighbouring countries. Moreover, travelling to neighbouring countries is a part of the everyday life for the inhabitants of the border regions of Ukraine.

Main challenges for the visa liberalization process between Ukraine and the EU are the following:

1. Usage of false and fictitious documents for visa applications and border crossing. (According to the results of the last stage of the Monitoring of the visa policy and practice in Hungarian and Slovak consulates in Zakarpattia region, carried out by the Regional Branch in NISS in Uzhgorod²⁸ visa appli-

²⁸ Rating of Visa Policy and Practice Dynamics in Consular Offices of Hungary and Slovakia in Zakarpattia Region : Analytical report / Regional Branch of the NISS in Uzhgorod, 2013. 43 p.

cants submitted false and fictitious invitations, false hotel booking confirmation. In 2013 the Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in Uzhgorod fixed over 300 cases of false stamps of the Border Guard Services of Slovakia in the passports of Ukrainian visa applicants. The Border Guard Service of Ukraine constantly stops persons who are trying to cross the border with non-personal or counterfeit passports. In particular, 49 persons were stopped in 2012.

2. Misuse of Schengen visas.
3. War in Eastern Ukraine. (Fear of a large flow of refugees from Ukraine to the EU has always been one of the main arguments for the EU in deterring liberalization process. Military actions in Eastern Ukraine can increase the flow of refugees from these regions of Ukraine to the EU. Currently, refugees are resettled in Western and Central regions of Ukraine. Those unemployed and “homeless” people are proposed to work in the EU by the labour supply coordinators).

Last steps towards visa regime liberalization:

- May 7, 2014 adoption of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On approval of the form, technical description, procedure for registration, issuance, exchange, transfer, removal, return to the state and destruction of Ukrainian passport for travelling abroad with contactless electronic chip, its temporary detention and removal” (valid from June 11, 2014)²⁹ that creates the basic legal background for issuing biometric passports starting from January 1, 2015;
- June 23, 2014 adoption of the Decision of EU Council on Ukraine’s transition to the second phase of implementation of the Action Plan on visa liberalization;
- September 16, 2014 ratification of the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the European Parliament³⁰;
- October 2, 2014 signature of the Agreement between Ukraine and Romania on Local Border Traffic.

As for biometric passports, the targeted capacity of Ukraine in their issuance is 1.5 mil. passports per year. The number of those people who regularly

²⁹ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On Approval of the Form, Technical Description, Procedure for Registration, Issuance, Exchange, Transfer, Removal, Return to the State and Destruction of Ukrainian passport for travelling abroad with contactless electronic chip, its temporary detention and removal” / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 45, June 13, 2014. Available online: <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/152-2014-%D0%BF>.

³⁰ The Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement / Official Herald of Ukraine, № 75, September 26, 2014. Available online: http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/984_011

travel isomer 8 mil. persons. It is obvious that 5 years will be needed for the transition to biometric passports.

Regarding the implementation of the Action Plan on visa liberalization, during 10 days (September 16-26, 2014) the group of experts of the EC, the EU Member States - and FRONTEX evaluated the situation with implementation of the second phase of the Action Plan (migration, asylum, security documents).

For the optimistic scenario, Ukraine may get visa-free regime with the EU in 2015. In particular, this date was proclaimed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine MFA Lana Zerkal, "the EU Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga in May 2015 is a realistic date for introducing visa-free regime for Ukraine"³¹.

So, generalizing the above mentioned facts, we can say that the visa regime and its liberalization are definitely among the most important endogenous factors for the development and intensification of cross-border cooperation. Currently, visa regimes are asymmetric. The governments of Ukraine and its neighbouring EU states work to achieve its symmetry. In the border regions of Ukraine, the local border traffic is actively used as the tools for visa regime liberalization.

³¹ "Ukraine will receive a visa-free regime with the EU in May 2015", *Ukrainska Pravda*, September 19, 2014. Available online: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/09/19/7038274/>

SITUATION ON THE SLOVAK – UKRAINE COMMON BORDER AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

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Introduction

Slovak State border with Ukraine began to make part of the external border of the European Union from May 1, 2004³² and of the external Schengen border from December 21, 2007³³. From the moment of the entry into the European Union, the Slovak Republic was obliged to follow common measures on the execution of the border controls on external borders and common visa policy³⁴, this fact has had an important influence on crossing the common Slovak – Ukraine Border. The Slovak Republic took full co-responsibility for the security of the whole Schengen area by the day of the entry into this area, when the internal border controls were abolished. The principle, that the degree of quality of the border controls carried out by one of the Schengen area states influences the security of the whole area both in positive and negative way, applies.

Actual state at the common border in the field of the legal and irregular migration

³² On the basis of the Treaty of Accession from 2003, signed on April 16, 2003 in Athens, OJ L 236, 23. 9. 2003.

³³ On the basis of the 2007/801/EC Council Decision of 6 December 2007 on the full application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovak Republic (OJ L 323, 8. 12. 2007).

³⁴ Except for the joint Schengen Visa issuance system introduced by the Slovak Republic only after joining the common Schengen area.

Table 1: Number of persons and vehicles having crossed the SK-UKR border

		2011		2012		2013		
		from SK	to SK	from SK	to SK	from SK	to SK	
SK-UKR BORDER	Number of persons by the direction of crossing in total		936 074	984 748	921 422	1 022 341	899 692	969 733
	There of:	Nationals of EU (including nationals of SK)	553 947	556 265	524 335	582 539	480 173	498 242
		Third country nationals	382 127	428 483	397 087	439 802	419 519	471 491
	Number of persons in total		1 920 822		1 943 763		1 869 425	
	Number of vehicles by the direction of crossing in total		385 713	405 449	404 529	433 206	401 654	446 921
	There of:	Passenger cars	317 329	327 576	338 061	351 837	335 972	363 147
		Buses	4 716	4 769	4 224	4 557	4 226	4 724
		Lorries	56 776	66 118	55 231	69 709	54 462	72 045
		Passenger trains	1 448	1 457	1 459	1 459	1 452	1 441
		Cargo trains	5 444	5 529	5 548	5 644	5 542	5 564
Others (bikes, for example)		-	-	6	-	-	-	
Number of vehicles in total		791 162		837 735		848 575		
		1. – 8. 2013		1. – 8. 2014				
		from SK	to SK	from SK	to SK			
	Number of persons by the direction of crossing in total		590 893	646 348	577 009	618 240		
	There of:	EU Nationals (including nationals of SK)	315 662	325 162	295 304	304 315		
Third country nationals		275 231	321 186	281 705	313 925			
SK-UKR BORDER	Number of persons in total		1 237 241		1 195 249			
	Number of vehicles by the direction of crossing in total		263 789	297 438	263 184	289 619		
	There of:	Passenger cars	220 820	242 154	226 206	242 130		
		Buses	2 963	3 250	2 848	3 043		
		Lorries	35 434	47 468	29 354	39 657		
		Passengers trains	964	953	972	972		
		Cargo trains	3 608	3 613	3 804	3 817		
		Other (bikes, for example)	-	-	-	-		
Number of vehicles in total		561 227		552 803				

Source: Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Presidium of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic, 2014.

There were no relevant changes in the number of travellers in the field of the irregular migration for the last three years. A minor change was recognized in the number of personal vehicles that increased as a consequence of new legal regulation in Ukraine; when Ukraine operators owning personal vehicles registered in the Slovak Republic had to periodically leave the territory of Ukraine with these vehicles.

When comparing irregular migration for the first eight months of 2013 and first eight months of 2014, we may state, that there was a slight decrease what was probably caused by the course of the security situation in the territory of Ukraine. A more important decrease (17 per cent) has arisen in the field of the truck transport (haulage), which was probably caused by the suspension of the transport routes through East Ukraine leading to the Russian Federation.

The development in the field of the irregular migration has gradually shown a decreasing trend since 2004, except for the year 2012 when an increase was noticed caused in a substantial part by the citizens of Somalia. An increase in irregular migration was registered also in 2012 on the border crossing points, mainly due to the citizens of Congo (proving their identity by falsified or modified residence permits issued by a Member States of the European Union).

We may observe a considerable decrease in irregular 'green' border crossing when comparing irregular migration in the first half of 2013 with the first half of 2014 (in first half of 2013 – 156 illegal crossings and in first half of 2014 - 61 illegal crossings). In percentage this represents a decrease by more than 60 per cent. This decrease is probably connected to the development of the security situation in the East of Ukraine, where the routes of irregular migration from the Russian Federation were disrupted.

Table 2: Overview of illegal migration by nationality – green border

2011		2012		2013		1. – 6. 2014	
Somalia	111	Somalia	256	Afghanistan	75	Afghanistan	29
Moldova	75	Afghanistan	64	Somalia	55	Somalia	10
Georgia	41	Moldova	55	Georgia	49	Ukraine	6
Afghanistan	39	Georgia	48	Ukraine	44	Eritrea	3
Russia	36	Eritrea	32	Moldova	32	Georgia	2
Ukraine	16	Ukraine	14	Eritrea	28	Sudan	2
Vietnam	6	Bangladesh	13	Syria	16	Bangladesh	2
Syria	4	Russia	8	Russia	9	Russia	1
Bangladesh	3	Turkey	7	Turkey	5	Vietnam	2
Armenia	3	Syria	2	Bangladesh	3	Palestine	2
Other	6	Other	15	Other	35	Other	2
Total	340	Total	514	Total	351	Total	61

Source: Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Presidium of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic, 2014.

A slight increase was noticed in irregular migration through the border crossing points (with 19 cases in the first half of 2013 and 22 cases in the first half of 2014). In this category there were predominantly the cases of detected falsified stamps in travel documents of the citizens of Ukraine. By such an action individuals try to legalize their illegal residence in the territory of the Schengen area (falsified stamps shall declare the fact that these individuals were staying out of the territory of the Schengen area for a specific time and so they did not exceed the maximum stay).

Table 3: Overview of illegal migration by nationality – border crossing point

2011		2012		2013		1. – 6. 2014	
Ukraine	31	Congo	49	Ukraine	35	Ukraine	18
Democratic Republic of the Congo	10	Ukraine	39	Georgia	4	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2
Moldova	2	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29	Congo	2	Benin	1
Russia	2	Cameron	10	Ukraine	1	Romania	1
Belarus	2	Guinea	4	Cameron	1		
Angola	2	Niger	2	Denmark	1		
Armenia	1	Senegal	2				
		Armenia	1				
		Ivory Coast	3				
Total	50	Total	139	Total	44	Total	22

Source: Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Presidium of the Police Force of the Slovak Republic, 2014.

In cases of prohibition of entry there was an increase (with 279 prohibitions in the first eight months of 2013 and 377 prohibitions in the first eight months of 2014), which was related mainly to the launching of new methods to calculate the duration of authorized stay of the third country national in the territory of the Member States. According to the new methodology, the third country national may stay on the territory of the Schengen area for the maximum 90 days within any time of 180 days (according to the previous methodology the period included three months in the course of six months with the period of six months running from the first entry of the person, while the identification of the first entry was almost impossible in many cases).

New challenges in crossing the common border

External borders of the European Union are nowadays crossed by approximately 700 million individuals. About two thirds of them are citizens of the European Union and one third is made up by the nationals of third countries, whereby it is presumed that this number will grow in the future³⁵. The European Union presents itself as an opened society and its aim is to strengthen the level its external border crossing by so called bona fide travelers on the one hand, and to fight irregular migration effectively on the other.

New measures which shall have influence on accelerating the external Schengen border crossing (common Slovak – Ukraine border) on the one hand and on strengthening the efficiency of combating irregular migration on the other hand are mainly the following:

- creation of a new information system for registering the entry and exit of third country nationals (Entry Exit System)³⁶,
- establishment of the Registered Traveller Programme³⁷,
- launching full operation of the EUROSUR system³⁸,
- obligatory fingerprinting checks in the Visa Information System³⁹ and
- amendment of the Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine on local border traffic⁴⁰.

One of the main objectives of creating an information system for registering the entry and exit of third country nationals is to combat irregular migration on the territories of the Member States of the European Union. According to conservative estimates, the number of illegal immigrants in the European Union Member States ranges between 1.9 and 3.8 million. Out of this number the larger part includes individuals who travelled to the territories of the Member States legally, but they stayed illegally, exceeding the maximum duration of stay⁴¹.

The mechanism to register the entry and exit of third country nationals will consist of recording personal data, travel document information, date and time of crossing the external border, the Member State and designating the

³⁵ See p. 2 of the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council „Smart borders – options and way ahead,“ KOM(2011) 680 final.

³⁶ KOM(2013) 95 final.

³⁷ KOM(2013) 97 final.

³⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 establishing the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), OJ L 295, 06.11.2013.

³⁹ Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas (VIS regulation), OJ L 218, 13.8.2008.

⁴⁰ Notification n. 441/2008 Collection of Laws of the Slovak Republic.

⁴¹ See p. 1 document KOM(2013) 95 final.

border crossing point and, in the case of third country national who is not a visa holder, also of taking the fingerprints of the person in question⁴². Archiving of fingerprints is nowadays one of the key elements when launching new technologies used during border checks⁴³.

The entry and exit registration system will be equipped by an 'automatic calculator', which evaluates the data at each entry and exit of a third country national through the external border as well as at other checks within the territories of the Member States, making it possible to find out the time during which this person may still stay in the territories of the Member States within the short-term stay, or whether this short-term stay was exceeded or not.

Putting a system of entry and exit registration into practice will replace the current marking of travel documents of third country nationals with a stamp imprint. This will simultaneously shorten the checking time needed by the border guard, because it will not be necessary to search for the stamps in the travel document manually and count the total authorized duration of short-term stay of the third country national. Facilitated identification of illegal immigrants staying in the territories of the Member States will be yet another significant benefit. In case a third country national travels legally through the border crossing point, it will be always possible to prove the traveller's identity even in case they get rid of the travel document, based on the fingerprints of the person stored in a database.

The main objective of creating the Registered Traveller Programme is to accelerate external border crossing for bona fide travellers in certain categories of persons of third countries such as employees of state institutions or large industrial companies, scientists who are often sent out on business trips to the Member States of the European Union, etc..

The Registered Traveller Programme shall be based on a security token, which will be issued to the third country national, containing an unambiguous identification sign, and a central register where the data on this third country national will be stored. A comparison of the data stored on the security token, the data in the travel document, the data from the taken fingerprints and the data stored in the central register shall be carried out during the border check. Electronic gates shall be used for this purpose, when after a successful comparison of the said data the third country national will be allowed to enter the territory of the Member State. Acceleration of the handling procedure shall be accomplished also in case the Member State will not yet have established the automatic gates, because the officer of the border guard is no more obliged to

⁴² The fingerprints of a third country national, who already is a Schengen visa holder are taken when they apply for visa, therefore it is not necessary to record this data.

⁴³ See Guild, E., Carrera, S.: *EU Borders and Their Controls: Preventing unwanted movement of people in Europe*, Centre for European Policy Studies, n. 6 of November 13, 2013 (<http://www.ceps.eu/book/eu-borders-and-their-controls-preventing-unwanted-movement-people-europe>).

ask a person with a registered traveller status questions regarding their travel destination or ask them to prove they have enough finances for their stay.

The common European EUROSUR system⁴⁴ which was launched on December 2, 2013 shall contribute to better situation knowledge and augmentation of reaction capacity on external borders of the Member States of the Union for the purpose of detection, prevention and suppression of immigration and cross border crime and help protect and safeguard the lives of migrants. Recently, under the auspices of Frontex Agency, activities have been implemented to ensure full operation of this system, which shall cover all external land and sea borders of the Member States. The Slovak Republic is recently fully involved in the development of this system, mainly in relation to the land border with Ukraine⁴⁵.

The Visa Information System was launched on October 11, 2011⁴⁶, although there was a transitional period of three years during which the Member States had no obligation to carry out systematic fingerprint checks during border checks⁴⁷. This means that since October 11, 2014 (after the transitional period of three years has expired), the Slovak Republic has had the obligation to carry out searches in the Visa Information System on the common Slovak – Ukrainian border. This applies only if the fingerprints had been taken from a person when granting visa at the Embassy in a third country where the Visa Information System has already been launched.

Until the present day, the Visa Information System has already been launched in 16 regions⁴⁸. Ukraine has already been integrated into the following 17th region⁴⁹, what practically means that when granting visa at the Embassies in Ukraine, the fingerprints shall be taken obligatorily⁵⁰. This fact will have an important impact also on the procedure and mainly on the duration of the border check at the border crossing points on the common Slovak - Ukrainian border, making it necessary to compare the fingerprints in the Visa Informa-

⁴⁴ European Border Surveillance System.

⁴⁵ National Coordination Center of EUROSUR system in the Slovak Republic has been established at the Directorate of the Border and Alien Police in Sobrance, which is responsible for the control of the whole part of the external border with Ukraine.

⁴⁶ 2011/636/EU Commission implementing Decision of September 21, 2011 determining the date from which the Visa Information System (VIS) is to start operations in a first region, OJ L 249, 27 9. 2011.

⁴⁷ See Art. 18 par. 2 of regulation (EC) n. 767/2008.

⁴⁸ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey are part of this region.

⁴⁹ See 2013/493/EU Commission Implementation Decision of September 30, 2013 determining the third and last set of regions for the start of operations of the Visa Information System (VIS), OJ L 268, 10.10.2013.

⁵⁰ According to progressive launching of the Visa Information System in new regions, we may anticipate the launching of the 17th region towards the end of the year 2014 or early in the year 2015.

tion System against those visa holders whose fingerprints have already been taken.

The latest significant change in the regime on the common Slovak – Ukrainian border relates to the Judgement of the Court of the European Union in the case C - 254/11 (Shomodi), regarding the regime of the local border traffic at the external borders of the European Union. According to this judgement, it is not possible to impose limitation on the maximum duration of stay within any time period in the bilateral agreements concluded between the Member States of the European Union and third countries. According to the verdict of the judgement, which is based on Art. 5 of the regulation (EC) 1931/2006⁵¹, the holder of a local border traffic permit is authorized to move within a border area of the Member State up to the period of three months, in case his stay was not interrupted and after each suspension the holder has a new right of residence for three months period. In compliance with the judgement in question, the current Art. 4 of the Agreement between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine on local border traffic, which is not in compliance with the mentioned judgement, has already been amended (the current one restricts the duration of stay to 90 days within a period of 180 days). Border police units that carry out border checks on the common Slovak – Ukrainian border exercise the procedures in practice according to the judgement of the Court of the European Union in question despite the mentioned inconsistency.

Conclusion

Rules governing the exercise of checks at the external borders of the Schengen area shall on the one hand ensure the security of the European Union and its citizens, however simultaneously on the other hand they shall not create obstacles for legitimate bona fide movement (and bona fide travellers). The latest initiatives as they are mentioned in the previous chapter are in my opinion the correct steps for ensuring the balance between these two key aspects.

The Slovak Republic as a fully-fledged member of the European Union and of the Schengen area shall co-participate actively in fulfilling the objectives of the European Union, among which ranks also a development of the cooperation with the neighbouring third states, therefore the common border between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine shall not be considered an obstacle, but on the contrary, rather as an invitation to enhance mutual relations.

⁵¹ Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders of the Member States and amending the provisions of the Schengen Convention, OJ L 405, 30.12.2006.

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CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN HUNGARY AND UKRAINE: CASE OF SZABOLCS-SZATMÁR-BEREG COUNTY

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Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County (located in the North-East Hungary) is in a special geopolitical situation. The county is bordering with Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine. There are two external borders – one is a Schengen border – and one external border of the EU. Our county is the only one in Hungary which has a border with Ukraine, so for our county it is extremely important to support our partner especially in this crisis situation.

With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary, the EuroClip Public Foundation was founded in 2003 by the General Assembly of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and the General Assembly of Nyiregyhaza (capital city of the county) in order to promote democratization and European integration of the Eastern European countries. One of the main reasons for the establishment of the Foundation was to encourage the development of cultural, economic, administrative and other cooperation between the countries of Eastern Europe and Hungary (so called “Nyiregyhaza Initiative”), as well as other EU member states.

Nyiregyhaza Initiative focuses on enhancing cooperation with the Eastern European Region. The underlying reason is obvious: the Initiative has been closely tuned for the means of Hungarian foreign policy and regional policy. It is in fact one of the means of the European Union’s Wider Europe concept with the purpose of effectuating the principle of partnership. The Nyiregyhaza Initiative and its institutional structure, EuroClip Public Foundation represents the regional-level contribution of Hungarian foreign policy to the European Union’s Eastern Policy (Wider Europe concept) being currently shaped, and at the same time has a key role in Hungarian-Ukrainian relations (in particular cross-border cooperation). EuroClip Public Foundation developed cooperation, and strengthened good neighbourhood partnership, as well as contributed to even more concerted cooperative efforts.

In order to promote European integration and deepen relations and cooperation between the European Union and its eastern neighbours, the Foundation organizes conferences, events, trainings, retraining sessions. These events target the regional and local authorities of public administration and law enforcement in the countries of the region, especially Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, their economic actors, and representatives of scientific, cultural, and educational life. Furthermore, it takes an active role in the encouragement of dialogues towards the promotion of transformation of the region, stability, security, and development.

In order to encourage integration, as well as the extension of relations and cooperation between the European Union and her Eastern neighbours, EuroClip Public Foundation organizes and conferences, events, trainings and retraining sessions, announces calls for proposals – grant applications. Most of these grant applications are targeted at the Zakarpattia Region, Lviv, Chernovci, Dnipropetrovsk, Kiev, as well as Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County.

The Public Foundation has also supported more than 200 projects in the Hungarian-Ukrainian cross-border area, and a number of other events and initiatives in the past few years. The associated topics just as headings, without limitations, have included support of local governments, reform of public administration, management training, social partnership, information technology and information flow, training of experts of regional development, exchange of experience in jurisdiction, management studies, identification of potential business partners, training of foreign-language interpreters, history, culture, tourism, competition of media reporters, Europism, and supporting the relationship between the EU and Ukraine.

These programs have also involved the sharing of Hungarian experience in the fields of disaster management and protection, border police services, Schengen requirements, as well as the issues of traffic safety, transport and transportation, and a special event was the “Law and Media” conference with the participation of the British Council and the British Embassy to Budapest. Heightened interests accompanied the multi-venue videoconference dedicated to the topical issues associated with NATO and the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine.

With the support of EuroClip Public Foundation, several publications have been released, including a Hungarian–Ukrainian dictionary, several studies, a map of tourism of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region or the Ukrainian/English bilingual volume entitled “Link that connects”. Continuous information is provided through the regularly published newsletter and the website. With the activities of the Public Foundation, endeavours to arrive at the state of good neighbourhood have been “institutionalized”, and a process has been started in the tracks of our exemplary operations.

The cross border cooperation has got more and more attention from the EU institutions and at the same time the support is significantly growing. Ter-

territorial cooperation became one of the three main objectives of the EU for the 2007-2013 period, where the objectives are the basic elements of the supporting system. And it will be also a priority in 2014-2020. Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County is involved in the programming process for the 2014-2020 period of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI Cross-border Co-operation Programme, the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Co-operation Programme, and the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Co-operation Programme. These programs are being prepared under the experience of previous CBC programs.

Such example is the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 that was focused on cooperation with Ukraine. According to the experience, the areas of need for most development are represented in the 5 Thematic Objectives (TO) among the submitted projects were (representing 78% of the total number of projects):

- TO 3 Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage (27.8%)
- TO 6 Environmental protection, climate change adaptation and disasters prevention/ management (18.6%)
- TO 1 Business and SME development (excluding financing enterprises directly) (11.9%)
- TO 2 Support to education, research, technological development and innovation (10%)
- TO 4 Promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty (9.4%)

The Top 2 most needed areas of development represent almost 50% of the projects; the Top 3 categories represent almost 60% of the total number of projects.

Contracted projects:

- TO 3 Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage (22.2%)
- TO 6 Environmental protection, climate change adaptation and disasters prevention/management (17%)
- TO 4 Promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty (16.3%)
- TO 1 Business and SME development (excluding financing enterprises directly) (11.1%)
- TO 8 Common challenges in the field of safety and security (10.4%)

The Top 3 most needed areas of development represent 55% of the projects.

There are a lot of projects implemented in the last years in the area, last examples “the CBC Parliament”, the main aim of which is using the ICT technology for creating a database on regional development, providing and disseminating information among the target group and supporting the decision making

process. Another interesting project is “Borders Through The Eyes of People – Sociological system for CBC and the Tourist Routes of Medieval Churches”.

Self-government of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County is managing two projects: “Touristic heritage in Little-Europe”, and “Sustainable development of Border Regions provided by effective functioning of the Carpathian Euroregion”. The second project is aimed at improving the functioning of the Carpathian Euroregion. In 2014, member countries of the Carpathian Euroregion celebrated the 21st Anniversary of its existence. Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County shows strong willingness for common way of thinking and cooperation within the Carpathian Euroregion. Therefore it is strongly supporting all initiatives that create possibilities for enhanced cooperation within Carpathian Euroregion.

It is actively involved in project implementation which aims are:

- To raise efficiency and predictability of cross-border cooperation and providing the sustainable development of border regions by forming the effective instruments for establishment of systemic and lasting cross-border cooperation.
- To strengthen the role of the Carpathian Euroregion in the cross-border cooperation by providing new approaches for Euroregional development;
- To provide for an effective making decision process in border regions by using the existing instruments and forming new ones according to sustainable development.
- To establish a new level of cooperation between authorities, self-government as well as NGOs and other stakeholders.

Estimated results of the project are:

- Effective model of functioning the Carpathian Euroregion that agreed by all national sides of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine.
- Sustained partnerships and informational flow between Authorities, self-governments, NOG and experts groups in border regions
- Developed CBC initiatives that have the strategic importance for the cross-border cooperation in the context of sustainable development (infrastructural projects)

The main activities include forming the national and international experts groups according to priorities of CBC development, identification of the new approaches in Carpathian Euroregion Development, development of the recommendations and the action plan. It also includes the forming of new initiatives and proposals of strategic importance for the cross-border cooperation development within priorities, trainings for the main stakeholders in investment projects development, workshops, round tables and conferences.

The new Carpathian Euroregion strategy is being created in an atmosphere of crisis in Ukraine and it will also react to the challenges that have emerged. It will also respect the priorities of the EU, e.g. on 5th March 2014 the European

Commission agreed on a financial assistance to Ukraine in loans and grants from the EU budget and EU-based international financial institutions, to:

- help stabilize Ukraine's economic & financial situation,
- support transition,
- encourage political & economic reforms,
- support inclusive development.

Such European initiative we would like to support by regional ones. The new mission of the Self-government of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County focuses on regional development. The development strategy and program of the county determines the development targets for 2014-2020 period. Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County development strategy for 2014-2020 has these objectives:

Overall objectives:

1. Active County: Value-added employment and increase activity
2. Solidarity County: Eradication of extreme poverty and lagging behind regions to catch up
3. Attractive County: Creating an attractive natural, social, cultural and economic environment

Strategic objectives:

1. Competitive food industry: Strengthening the agricultural economy in a focused way
2. Green County: Green economy, climate-friendly energy, adaptation to climate change
3. Proactive County: Create the conditions for county-level economic and social self-development
4. Qualified County: Flexible design of vocational training, higher education and innovation her environment
5. Advanced centre: Nyiregyhaza agglomeration as an economic, employment, public service and cultural centre of development
6. Energising services centres and district centres: The county and district centres of economic decentres function expansion and coordinated development
7. Catching up with viable rural and external peripherals: Integrated development of the county complex levelling outer peripheries and rural areas

Successful implementation of the county strategy can help develop the cross-border region and enhanced cross-border cooperation can help implement the strategy. Therefore cross-border cooperation with our neighbours is a very important factor of development, so Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County is open and welcomes any forms of cooperation with our partners and friends from Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

THE MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLISH- UKRAINIAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Today, the observed processes of socio-economic development are the result of many entities, including authorities on the central, regional and local level as well as a number of non-state actors (regional and local stakeholders) with different resources and instrument that have impact on the development processes. Traditionally, the development activities corresponded to public authorities which were responsible for supporting territorial development (mandatory task). In addition, they have all adequate resources and capacities to act in this filed. Presently, according to the concept of *governance*, the development of territorial units occurs through the involvement of a larger group of entities operating at the local level, including representatives of public, private and social sector as well as individuals living in this area.

The main purpose of this article is to present the specifics of multi-sector partnerships (cross-sector partnerships or three-sector partnerships) operating at the local level and the possibility of their commitment to work towards socio-economic development of the border areas. In the article the nature of a particular type of partnership (in form of Local Action Groups) has been presented. In addition, to show the possibility of multi-sector partnership involvement in the processes of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland development, the author has presented the case study of LAG "Zielone Bieszczady" (LAG "Green Beszczady") based in the Podkarpackie region. The presented article certainly does not exhaust the subject of the cross-sector partnerships, or the possibilities of their involvement in international projects that support cooperation in the border area. The author expects that the paper will be at least a contribution to further research and discussion on partnerships involvement in the territorial development of borderland.

Multi-sector partnerships under the LEADER approach

The multi-sector partnerships are the key element of the new public governance approach⁵². It seems to be specifically well suited to regional and local contexts where the relations between public actors, as represented by the local administration, private and civic actors are often based on everyday interactions. Therefore, it might be assumed that in the framework created by territorial self-government, both institutional and social conditions will be conducive to arrangements involving representatives of all sectors in activities focused on ways to improve local development by better governance of collective aspirations and resources⁵³.

Initially, the multi-sector partnerships started to be implemented in the early 90's across the rural areas of the European member states at that time. In Poland, this process started in 2004 with the accession to the European Union. The notion of a three-sector partnership can be understood in terms of voluntary but institutionalized cooperation between actors representing three sectors – public, private-economic and social (non-profit). The major aim of a multi-sector partnership is to identify and define common problems that appear in local communities and find together the best ways to tackle them. Within the framework of the partnership, the participating actors are granted an equal footing irrespective of the represented sector. Moreover, all partners involved agree to pool their resources and competences. Also, they agree to share costs and benefits generated by their actions.

At the local level, the idea of this form of multi-sector partnership is related to the new idea of local development and public policy that has been implemented across the European Union since the early '90s. This new idea focussed on the value of endogenous inputs, decentralization processes and subsidiarity principle as one of the main European principles. The main field of the EU activity in which this approach started to be applied were rural areas and the policy of rural area development. It has been institutionalized in the form of the LEADER initiative. Its main features were multi-sector partnerships - so called Local Action Groups⁵⁴.

In Poland, LEADER started in 2004 under the Sectoral Operational Program "Restructuring and modernization of the food sector and rural development 2004-2006", the Pilot Leader + Program and was implemented

⁵² J. Kooiman, "Governance and Governability", in S.P. Osborne, ed., *The New Public Governance: Emerging perspectives on the theory and practice of public governance*, London&New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 72-86.

⁵³ A. Gasior-Niemiec, A. Pawlowska, A. Kolomycew, "Enhancing local governance through three-sector partnerships? The case of the Podkarpackie region (Poland), the unpublished paper presented at the 21st NISPAcee Annual Conference "Regionalisation and Inter-regional Cooperation", May 16-18, 2013, Belgrade, Serbia.

⁵⁴ The LEADER Approach. A basic guide 2006, Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/fact/leader/2006_en.pdf (accessed on October 10, 2014).

as Measure 2.7. Positively evaluated, it was then launched in the full scale in the programming period 2007-2013. Between 2004 and 2006, the first steps in the LEADER approach resulted in the creation of several three-sector partnerships across rural Poland, whose major task was to elaborate their Local Development Strategies. Following the experiences of the 2004-2006 pilot activities, the LEADER approach has been granted a status of a fully-fledged program to be carried out as the so called axis IV of the Rural Areas Development Program (2007–2013). As a result, several hundreds of Local Action Groups have been called into existence, covering virtually all of the Polish rural areas. Each of the LAGs is composed of several self-governing municipalities (Polish *gminas*) which have authored joint Local Development Strategies. The LAGs are authorized to organize grant competitions for the local people and institutions with a view to stimulating activities which are congruent with their Local Development Strategies. They thus collect, review, select and recommend locally prepared projects for EU's financial support.

The Polish-Ukrainian borderland development

The development of border areas is one of the aspects of regional policy. The pursuit of cooperation, finding consensus and avoiding negative effects on borderland such as the drain of resources (including human), marginalization, alienation and exclusion are the main tasks of central government, regional and local authorities as well as other stakeholders in regional development that operate in the border area.

A. Miszczuk indicates that the model of regional policy and the specific nature of the tasks undertaken in the border area depend on the types and positions of regions in each state (different levels/range of independence and autonomy of regions)⁵⁵. At the same time, the nature of relationships in the border area depends on the national systems and the form of the neighbouring countries as well as the specificity of relations between the local communities on both sides of the border. All these indicators determine the specificity of the border. It is essential that, the character of the border is variable and conforms to modifications. It evolves passing 4 stages: hostility, coexistence, cooperation and interdependence⁵⁶.

The type of the border determines the possibilities of territorial development in neighbouring regions (and their local units). Generally, border

⁵⁵ A. Miszczuk, *Zewnętrzna granica Unii Europejskiej – Ukraina. Możliwości wykorzystania dla dynamizacji procesów rozwojowych*, Ekspertyzy do Strategii Rozwoju Społeczno-Gospodarczego Polski Wschodniej do roku 2020, Warszawa: Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego, 2007, p. 658.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 658-659. Also Ssee O. Martinez, "The dynamics of border interaction: new approaches to border analysis", in C.H. Schofield, ed., *World Boundaries - Global Boundaries*, vol. 1, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 1-15.

areas are seen as territories of concern due to the occurrence of negative phenomena such as the outflow of population, low level of urbanization (with inefficient agriculture) and entrepreneurship as well as lack of newly created companies. These phenomena mean that socio-economic development is limited, which makes it impossible for them to compete with other areas. This situation further deepens the processes of depopulation and migration, especially among young people (potential employees and entrepreneurs). The consequences of the mentioned above processes include changes in the regional demographic structure, which is dominated by older people⁵⁷.

According to A. Miszczuk to counteract these negative phenomena, it is necessary to transform the nature of the border from the "enemy" model to the model of coexistence (and even further to the cooperation model). However, an important question remains, who should initiate the process of transformation and become its leader? Theoretically, because of the location, possessed knowledge, access to resources, experience and public confidence, the natural leader of cross-border cooperation could be the local or regional authorities. However, their leadership role depends on the given scope and independence in the respective countries. The model of coexistence (and even cooperation) is expected to be easier achieved in countries in which territorial units (regional and local) have a wider range of independence (autonomy or self-governmental territorial units)⁵⁸.

Besides legal and institutional constraints resulting from a particular state model and territorial structure, the development of cross-border cooperation may also be limited by mutual hostility of local communities on both sides of the border. The authorities (both central and territorial) can prevent hostilities and tensions using available tools. The set of available instrument may include inter alia creation of tourist zones, facilitation of border crossing for border area residents⁵⁹.

Over the years the Polish-Ukrainian border has evolved. As A. Miszczuk indicated, since 1991 one could observe the development of cooperation in the border areas. The cross-border cooperation has been developed thanks to such factors as: construction of new border crossings, international trade development, capital flows and growth of the tourism sector. The changes of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland occurred due to available EU funds. Poland could benefit from PHARE - EU pre-accession program. Another opportunity was the USAID program, available in both countries⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 658. Also see: S. Ciok, „Wybrane obszary problemowe Polski Południowo-Zachodniej”, *Studia Geograficzne* vol. LXII/1994, pp. 9-38.

⁵⁸ Miszczuk A., *op. cit.* p. 659.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 662.

Leaving aside the other conditions of development of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, it is worth mentioning that one of the main potentials of this area is tourism. The resources of these areas, important in the context of tourism development, include primarily⁶¹ natural resources (jointly 10 national parks, therein - 4 Polish and 6 Ukrainian), national and historical diversity and rich multicultural heritage, that make tourism the strategic plan of growth in the border areas. The unique resources of this area create conditions for different forms of tourism development, including the residential tourism and qualified (active tourism or water tourism). Despite the potential resources, development of tourism sector in the borderland areas requires improvement of tourism infrastructure as well as communication infrastructure that makes the access to this area easier⁶². Nowadays, cooperation on the Polish-Ukrainian border can be supported by the EU funds.

One of the main financial instruments in the period 2007-2013 was The European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) – *Cross-border Cooperation Program Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007-2013*⁶³. The instrument was created as the initiative of the European Commission. Its main aim was to support the development of cooperation between the European Union and the partner countries by providing integrated and sustainable regional development. The program was established on the basis of the regulation of European Parliament no. 1638/2006 and regulation of the European Commission no. 951/2007 of August 9th 2007. The Cross-border Cooperation Program Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007-2013 has been approved by the EC on November 6th 2008 becoming full-fledged European cooperation program. In practice, the program will be implemented till the end of the year 2015 (all the activities under this program have to be completed by this term), but the contracting period ended December 31st 2013. The total budget of the program was 202,9 million euro⁶⁴.

The program is composed of 3 priorities: priority 1 - Increasing competitiveness of the border area, priority 2 - Improving the quality of life and priority 3 - Networking and people-to-people cooperation. The priority 1 consists of 3 measures (activities) such as: Better conditions for entrepreneurship (measure 1.1), Tourism development (measure 1.2), and Improving access to the region (measure 1.3). The priority 2 is composed by the following measures: Natural environment protection in the borderland (measure 2.1) and Efficient and secure borders (measure 2.2). The last priority included 2 measures: Re-

⁶¹ Generally, the Polish-Ukrainian borderland covers together 5 units NUTS – 2 according to the EU statistical nomenclature. It includes two Polish regions: Podkarpackie and Lubelskie. On the Ukrainian side, three districts (oblasts): Volhynian, Lviv and Zakarpattia.

⁶² Mischuk A., op. cit., p. 669.

⁶³ *Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007-2013*, Available online: <http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/en,3> (accessed on October 12, 2014).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

gional and local cross-border cooperation capacity building (measure 3.1) and Local community initiatives (measure 3.2)⁶⁵.

The first priority was mostly focused on the creation of conditions for business development in the border areas, improvement of infrastructure (including technical and technological) to increase the attractiveness of this area. The program also created the possibilities for tourism sector development (including agro-tourism and tourism based on the natural resources of the borderland). The program provided support for natural environment protection and quality of natural beauty protection. The important aspect of the Polish-Ukrainian border cooperation – in the context of the external border of the EU – were activities focused on safeguarding border security, which could have been financed under the program. Apart from the infrastructure support, environment and border security protection, the mentioned program provided funds for so called “soft” activities such as the cooperation of local communities and networking in the border areas. The last priority was focused on both institutional as well as “people-to-people” cooperation that included schools and higher education institution cooperation, students and pupils exchanges, joint seminars, workshops and conferences⁶⁶.

The cross-border cooperation is now becoming important not only for the national authorities and EU institutions (focused on the EU external border security), but also for the regional and local authorities in the border areas. The growing interest and importance of this matter has been expressed in the strategic document for the Polish-Ukrainian border cooperation titled “Joint Polish-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy. Lublin, Podkarpackie, Vohlyn, Lviv 2005-2015⁶⁷”. The strategic document was created in cooperation with regional authorities (Polish and Ukrainian) and non-state actors (regional stakeholders), reflecting the growing importance of cooperation in the Polish-Ukrainian border region⁶⁸.

In the context of a new governance approach as a model of public policy creation and implementation (and in general public sphere organization) including regional policy, inclusion of a wide range of regional stakeholders (including representatives of public, private, social sector as well as members of the border local communities) seems to be extremely important. The cooperation of local communities is a real proof of the changing border specificity.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The Polish title of the strategic document is: „Wspólna Polsko-Ukraińska Strategia Współpracy Transgranicznej. Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Wołyńskie, Lwowskie na lata 2005-2015. Razem ku przyszłości”, Centrum Integracji i Współpracy Samorządowej „Dom Europy”, Lublin 2005.

⁶⁸ The mentioned strategic document was created under the Polish-Ukrainian project titled „Polish-Ukrainian Cross-border Agency – into the future” that was implemented since 2004 and financed by funds provided on the TACIS CBC programme implementation. See more: *Wspólna Polsko-Ukraińska Strategia Współpracy Transgranicznej...*, op.cit., p. 7-8.

Lack of local community inclusion in the process of building cooperation in the borderland, based on the arbitrarily (top-down) imposed legal and institutional solutions may give the illusion of cooperation and integration. The true cooperation in the border areas is likely to become reality, provided it is accepted by the residents of these areas and implemented with their participation.

The cross-sector partnerships in the form of LAG seem to be a well-designed instrument to allow the involvement of residents of the border areas in the process of territorial development, letting them affect and shape the goals of future growth. The process of local community involvement cannot be limited only to the process of earlier adopted (agreed) decisions implementation or narrowed down to the possibility of their acceptance or rejection. Territorial development, according to the Community-Led Local Development model has a chance to occur also in the border areas supposing the various entities (stakeholders of border regions) and local communities are involved in its creation and implementation (from the conceptual phase of planning development activities, till their realization).

Activities for cross-border area development. The case study of the Local Action Group “Green Bieszczady”

One of the multi-sector partnership establish under the European LEADER Program that operates in the Podkarpackie region is the Local Action Group “Green Bieszczady”. According to Polish regulations and the rules of the LEADER Program, the partnership formally functions according to legal provisions as an association. LAG “Green Bieszczady” was registered in 2009 and has its headquarters in Lower Ustrzyki. This partnership is composed of representatives of three sectors coming from the five municipalities (local units) of the Podkarpackie region (Czarna, Lutowiska, Solina, Ustrzyki Dolne and Olszanica). The process of local partnerships creating in the area began in 2008. The founding meeting was attended by 16 people that became the initiators of this partnership⁶⁹. Therefore, LAG “Green Bieszczady” benefited from support under the LEADER program in the term 2007-2013 (in the so-called II Scheme)⁷⁰.

The LAG “Green Bieszczady”, like any partnership formed under the LEADER approach must fulfil the formal requirements contained in the EU regulation, in the Polish legislation and the rules of the national Rural Development Program 2007-2013 (Axis IV LEADER)⁷¹. Each partnership in form of LAG needs

⁶⁹ Lokalna Strategia Rozwoju (LSR) w ramach Programu Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich oś IV LEADER, Lokalna Grupa Działania „Zielone Bieszczady”, Ustrzyki Dolne 2014, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Pilotażowy Program Leader+, Available online: <http://www.leaderplus.org.pl/pilotazowy.php> (accessed on October 13, 2014).

⁷¹ Art. 62, § 4, COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), 21.10.2005, L 277/1. See also: The Rural Development Program 2007-2013, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural

to be formed by the representatives of three sectors: public, social and private, whereby the representatives of the public sector cannot dominate the decision-making bodies of newly created partnership⁷². Currently, this partnership consists of 36 people of which 6 represent the public sector, 22 the social sector and 8 the private sector. The representatives of the public sector come from the five municipalities involved in the partnerships and one person represents the county/district authorities (Bieszczady District)⁷³.

According to the current law, cross-sector partnerships created under the LEADER approach operate under the legal form of association, but in addition they are obliged to respect the provisions the legal act adopted on March 7th 2007 as well as the European regulation for the LEADER program implementation and support of rural area development with the use of the EU funds⁷⁴. Referring to the regulations, partnerships in LAG form should appoint the board (7 to 16 members) and the council as the decision-making body, in which at least 50% of members must represent the social and private sector (to prevent public sector domination in the partnership structure)⁷⁵. The exclusive competence of the council was to decide about the planned actions taken to implement the Local Development Strategy⁷⁶. In addition to the council, every partnership in form of LAG has the elected board and audit committee as the internal mandatory bodies. The current activity of partnerships (LAGs) is supported by their offices.

Partnerships in form of LAG have been established in order to achieve goals indicated in the strategic document and select projects for the financial support of the LEADER program that are consistent with the Local Development Strategy. The bottom-up nature of the LEADER approach results from true involvement of local community members in the process of development (its planning and implementation). It is assumed that residents of the local units – due to the fact that they live in these units and are part of local com-

Development, <http://www.minrol.gov.pl/eng> (14.10.2014).

⁷² Art. 62, § 4, COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), 21.10.2005, L 277/1.

⁷³ Lokalna Strategia Rozwoju (LSR) w ramach Programu Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich oś IV LEADER, Lokalna Grupa Działania „Zielone Bieszczady”, Ustrzyki Dolne 2014, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁴ Ustawa z dnia 7 marca 2007 r. o wspieraniu rozwoju obszarów wiejskich z udziałem środków Europejskiego Funduszu Rolnego na rzecz Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich, Dz.U. 2007 nr 64 poz. 427.

⁷⁵ Art. 62, § 4, COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), 21.10.2005, L 277/1.

⁷⁶ The Local Development Strategy (LDS) is a document prepared separately by each partnership and designed based on local needs, resources, and potentials. The activities undertaken within the framework of the LEADER programme are aimed at implementing the objectives and goals identified in the strategic documents. The Local Development Strategies cannot be identified with the strategies of local development prepared by local authorities for municipalities which they govern. The LDS is designed for the area where the created partnership (in form of LAG) operates. See more: Art. 62, § 4, COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), 21.10.2005, L 277/1.

munities – better recognize local needs and problems and are able to better assess the future development opportunities.

The area covered by the scope of the LAG “Green Bieszczady” is inhabited by the population of nearly 28 thousand people, representing 1.32% of the population of the Podkarpackie region. Three of the five municipalities involved in the partnership – Czrana, Ustrzyki and Lutowiska – are situated on the border with Ukraine. This area is typically mountainous (Bieszczada mountains), characterized by a high forestation (reaching up to 70% of the area). Rivers spring from these areas, including: San, Dniester, and Uz. In addition, areas on which the “Green Bieszczady” partnership extends are commonly considered exceptionally clean. These areas are characterized by a low level of industrial waste and clean air⁷⁷. These features indicate the potential of these areas and their development which includes tourism and agro-tourism as well as an active form of tourism.

The natural conditions that constitute the potential of these areas and their border location caused that the LAG “Green Bieszczady” became the executor of one of the micro-projects titled “School of Tourism and Recreation Creation” implemented under the umbrella project “Cross-border Cooperation for the health tourism sector on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland”, carried out co-financed by the *Cross-border Cooperation Program Poland - Belarus - Ukraine 2007-2013*.

The institution responsible for the implementation of the umbrella project “Cross-border Cooperation for the health tourism sector in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland” was the “Pro Carpathia” Association. The whole project consists of 12 micro projects implemented by various actors (mostly from the social sector). Two micro projects were implemented by partnerships in form of LAG located in the Podkarpackie region⁷⁸.

The main objective of the umbrella project was to develop cooperation among different entities located in the border area and coordinate their activities for the development of spa tourism. The specific objectives of the project were: to analyse the potential of natural and cultural heritage of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland and design promotional instruments; promote cross-border area; professionalise services for tourists and residents; and promote healthy lifestyle⁷⁹.

⁷⁷ Lokalna Strategia Rozwoju (LSR) w ramach Programu Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich oś IV LEADER, Lokalna Grupa Działania „Zielone Bieszczady”, Ustrzyki Dolne 2014, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁸ In this paper only the case study of LAG „Green Bieszczady” has been presented. The second LAG involved in the umbrella project – “Cross-border Cooperation for the health tourism sector on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland” - was LAG „Kraina Nafty” responsible for micro project no. 4 (Agro-tourism in spa centers) implementation. See more: ProCarpathia, Available online: http://www.procarpathia.pl/pl/projekty/miedzynarodowe_realizowane/transgraniczna_wspolpraca_na_rze/mp_4_agroturystyka_w_uzdrowisk/ (accessed on October 6, 2014).

⁷⁹ Transgraniczna współpraca na rzecz turystyki uzdrowiskowej pogranicza polsko-ukraińskiego,

The Local Action Group “Green Bieszczady” is committed to the implementation of micro project no. 11 “School of Tourism and Recreation Creation” as a partner. The Lviv Municipal Organization “Tourist Club Manivci” was the leader of this micro project⁸⁰. The implementation of the micro project was planned from May 1st to November 30th, 2014. The discussed micro-project consisted of four groups of activities (measures) such as: workshops (5 series of meetings), a promotional film (qualities and attractions of Bieszczady Mountains), promotional folder and the Polish-Ukrainian expedition to pave the ways/trails for active tourism⁸¹.

Hitherto, two measures were implemented – the workshops organization and the Polish-Ukrainian expeditions to Ukraine. The other two measures are still being implemented and are expected to be completed by the end of November 2014. In general, the series of workshops concerned the protection of the environment, promotion of natural and cultural heritage of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. The whole series of workshops was attended by 20 people from Poland and Ukraine⁸². The second measure completed so far, was the organization of expeditions to find the most attractive tourism destinations on the Ukrainian side of the borderland. The joint international expeditions were preceded by theoretical lectures in the field of active tourism and the possibility of its implementation in the border area as well as training on travel tours organization. This measure has been divided into 2 editions lasting 5 working days. This part of the micro project was completed in August and September. The expeditions to the Ukrainian part of the borderland included spelunking (visited caves), hiking, canoeing, and bike tours. This part of the project was carried out mainly by the Ukrainian partner - the Tourism-Sports Club “Manivci”⁸³.

Conclusions

The author wanted to present the specificity of the cross-sector partnerships (in form of LAG) and the possibility of their commitment to border area development. In addition, the involvement of local communities in the international (cross-border) projects seems to be an interesting idea in the context of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland development and the integration of its

ProCarpathia, Available online: http://www.procarpathia.pl/pl/projekty/miedzynarodowe_realizowane/transgraniczna_wspolpraca_na_rze/ (accessed on October 6, 2014).

⁸⁰ Tourism-Sport Club „Manivci”, Available online: <http://manivci.org/> (accessed on October 7, 2014).

⁸¹ Ruszył polsko-ukraiński projekt poświęcony turystyce, Available online: <http://www.mojebieszczady.com/aktualnosci/2014/05/12/ruszy%C5%82-polsko-ukrai%C5%84ski-projekt-po%C5%9Bwi%C4%99cony-turystyce> (accessed on October 7, 2014).

⁸² Bieszczady łączą – Utworzenie Szkoły Turystyki i Rekreacji, Warsztaty, Available online: <http://bieszczadylacza.pl/warsztaty/> (accessed on October 7, 2014).

⁸³ Bieszczady łączą, – Utworzenie Szkoły Turystyki i Rekreacji, Wyprawy, Available online: <http://bieszczadylacza.pl/wyprawy/> (accessed on October 7, 2014).

residents. The public debate on the possibility to develop border areas, create new institutional solutions and supranational structures has been present for many years at the EU and national level. However, it should be remembered that the process of border areas development depends mainly on the involvement of local communities and on the conditions created for the related actions.

More attention should be paid to territorial partnerships (in form of LAG) in the forthcoming period of EU functioning. The partnerships are expected to become important actors in the processes of public policies creation and implementation. Such entities – due to their nature and possibilities to act – should also be involved in international cooperation. In the period 2014-2020 cross-sector partnerships in form of LAG have been designed as the primary instrument to implement the concept of Community-Led Local Development that will be implemented as the main tool of cohesion policy across the EU. The experience from the LEADER approach and the bottom-up nature of partnerships in form of Local Action Groups caused that these solutions will no longer be implemented not only in the framework of rural development policy, but will be treated as an instrument of local development co-financed by the EU structural funds. CLLD is expected to be responsible for mobilization and local community involvement to contribute to and achieve goals of the strategic document titled Europe 2020, which includes smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, territorial cohesion improvement and the reaching of specific objectives of European sectorial policies⁸⁴.

To increase the effectiveness of the existing solutions and instruments (especially those created with EU support) it seems to be important to engage them in the development of the border areas. The partnerships working at local level appear to be an ideal instrument because of their possibility to act and the knowledge of specificities of these areas. Although they are relatively new, the previous practice shows that in addition to the implementation of the objectives of the LEADER approach – partnership in form of LAG may be involved for other purposes. The partnership creation process is not an end in itself. Such partnerships are established as an instrument to support local development. So far the cross-sector partnerships have gained limited experience from independent project implementation, but they can successfully participate as a partner in cross-border projects. Thanks to their participation in large projects, the so called “umbrella” projects, cross-sector partnerships have a chance to learn and establish contacts for the future projects.

⁸⁴ Community-Led Local Development, Cohesion policy 2020, Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf (accessed on October 7, 2014).

THE SHARE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE CARPATHIAN EUROREGION POLAND IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

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The Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland (ACEP)⁸⁵, based in Rzeszow, the capital of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, one of 16 highest-level administrative subdivisions of Poland, is a nongovernmental organization. It was founded in 2000 as a representative of the Carpathian Euroregion (CER) on the Polish side. Since 2001 it has been implementing some components of its larger portfolio of the EU cross-border cooperation in the territory of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Its portfolio involves especially promoting social and economic development of the Carpathian Mountains, participation in projects at international level, forming authentic structures of cooperation based on the principles of partnership, subsidiarity and democratic representation of entities from the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

It is an active and important participant in Polish-Slovak and Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, since 1 October 2011 it has been implementing a range of its plans under the Swiss Financial Mechanism, in particular the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme between Switzerland and the new member states of the European Union. The ACEP is specifically involved in the “Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation Bridge” project (there are two kinds of grants approved – the Local Export Promotion Fund and the Study Tour Fund, in addition to that, since 2012 three international fair-conference events called Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation Forum have been held).⁸⁶

The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Slovak Republic 2007-2013 is not the first instrument through which the ACEP participates in the Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation. Even before that, the association was fostering cooperation with partners in Slovakia. Its founding member Dawid Lasek, currently the Vice President of its board and the Secretary General, has

⁸⁵ See www.karpacki.pl. In Polish: Stowarzyszenie Euroregion Karpacki Polska, in English: Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland. The current registered office is at Rynek 5, 35-064 Rzeszów.

⁸⁶ See the ACEP’s separate website for this area – at <http://www.alp-carp.com>.

considerable merits in this respect. In the current programme he is the leading partner in the umbrella project called the Implementation of Micro-Projects in the Polish-Slovak Border Areas in 2007-2013 within Priority Axis III - Supporting local initiatives, micro-projects based on people to people actions. The financial contribution from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for each micro-project ranged from €5,000.00 to €50,000.00.

In this project the ACEP has two partners on the Polish side – the Tatras Euroregion Association based in Nowy Targ and the Beskydy Mountains Euroregion based in Bielsko-Biała and two partners on the Slovak side – the upper-tier territorial units (VÚC) in Prešov and Žilina.

In the entire programme period of 2007-2013 over €26.7 million was allocated from the ERDF to all five partners (It included over €22.8 million for beneficiaries to implement micro-projects; the remaining part included managing costs). Until the end of 2013 three calls for grant applications were issued. The first round (already completed in terms of formalities as well as funds) was held between 30 March 2009 and 29 May 2009, the second round (already completed in terms of formalities) between 16 August 2010 and 15 October 2010 and the third one (opened as continuous) started on 1 June 2012. The objectives of micro-projects based on people to people actions for local cross-border communities include, but are not limited to, promotion and preservation of historical, cultural and natural heritage, promoting the development of services in tourism, development of culture, sports, promoting the active lifestyle of disadvantaged groups.

Until the end of 2013 the situation of the umbrella project was as follows: in the three rounds all the five partners received 1,676 grant applications for the total amount over €63.6 million from the ERDF. Altogether 685 micro-projects totalling over €22.8 million from the ERDF went into contract. According to individual project partners, VÚC Žilina went into contract with 156 micro-projects (22.77% out of all micro-projects implemented), VÚC Prešov 144 (21.02%), the Beskydy Mountains Euroregion 143 (20.88%), the Tatras Euroregion Association 130 (18.98%) and the ACEP 112 (16.35%).

At present, intense negotiations in working groups (also formed by the representatives of the partners of the current large umbrella project) are taking place concerning the shape of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Slovak Republic in the area in which the ACEP has been engaged in the new EU programme period. There are many opened questions. However, it is evident that there is not going to be a single large umbrella project anymore but rather three similar projects in which not more than the three current partners will participate. The amount of allocation should be a bit smaller than its current amount in the ending programme period. Anyway, the Slovak-Polish neighbour cooperation in “soft” projects has already had its legal frameworks and is rich in experience. Also the ACEP is a leader in this process in many respects.

The ACEP's participation in fulfilling the objectives of the Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation is more difficult. The cooperation runs under the Polish programme of Eastern Partnership and programmes of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013. The complex processes are a result of more or less generally well-known problems accompanying the cooperation with Ukraine. However, the ACEP is trying to overcome them also through its sister and active organization, the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Ukraine based in Lviv.

Despite the problems and complexities of the political development of Ukraine that have increased due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine in its eastern regions (including the occupation of Crimea) since the end of 2013, the ACEP is currently implementing more projects with partners in Ukraine. Despite the fact that they are located near the Polish-Ukrainian border it does not mean that the impact of their activities should only be marginal. They focus on cooperation with local governments, media and youth.

The first project in the current programme period 2007-2013 was the one called Local Development Network of the Carpathian Euroregion – Opportunities for Ukraine. The ACEP implemented it in partnership with the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Ukraine and two partners from Slovakia and the Czech Republic. It was funded by the International Visegrad Fund in the amount of €69,955.00. Its objective was to use the best practices in the local development network within the cross-border mountainous regions, improve the skills of professional staff in the area in Ukraine and form local cooperation networks.

Another completed project called the Carpathian Media as a Key to Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation within the Carpathian Euroregion was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. Its total amounted to PLN 156,480.00 (At the exchange rate of PLN 4.20 = €1, it was over €37,257), while the ACEP's costs amounted to PLN 11,300.00 (€2,690). It focused on improving the quality of informing on regional development and cross-border cooperation by elevating the level of cooperation with the media in the territory of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and Lviv, Zakarpattia and Ivano-Frankivsk regions within the CER. An exceptionally successful conference was held in Lviv and one of the activities was to publish a collection of academic papers on the project title topic.

The ACEP also got involved in the implementation of the multilateral programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 as a leading partner in the umbrella project called the Promotion of Common Historical and Cultural Heritage of Poland and Ukraine – "Twierdzy Przemyśl" / the "Fortress of Przemyśl", total amount of €541,772.63. The promotion of social and economic development of cross-border areas in the district of Przemyśl in Poland and the district of Mostyska in Ukraine through promoting the infrastructure of "Twierdzy Przemyśl" / the "Fortress of Przemyśl" was fulfilled through 22 partners

participating in implementing 10 micro-projects. They included a full range of activities, including small investment activities, in both countries, and their central idea was to promote the remains of the fortress system in the city of Przemyśl near the Polish-Ukrainian border, well-known from World War I.

In autumn 2014 the ACEP reached the culmination of the umbrella project called the Cross-Border Cooperation for the Benefit of the Spa Tourism in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland, while its elements included three micro-projects. The first project called Spa Tourism Development Strategy in the Polish-Ukrainian part of the Carpathian Euroregion aimed at analysing the natural and cultural potential and preparing promotion instruments for the development of spa tourism. This will result in the strategy containing a system of activities in this area.

Its final beneficiaries include the bodies of local authorities, entities providing health services and travel agents. The total project amount on the ACEP's side is €32,810.00. The second project called Promotion of the Potential of the Carpathian Mountains – forming a cross-border promotional platform – focused on promotion of natural and cultural potential and its use in the cross-border cooperation development by creating a common internet portal as a source of information and promotion of recreational potential. The project's objectives were to create instruments for promotion of recreational potential, for study stays for travel agents in Poland and in Ukraine. The total project amount on the ACEP's side was €21,020.00. The third project called the Development and Promotion of Spa Treatment in the Polish-Part of the CER, particularly, in the Lviv district and the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, had the objective to promote healthy lifestyle by spreading best practices in the spa industry within the Lviv District and the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Its objective was to support and expand spa treatment in the territory. The leader of the micro-project was the nongovernmental Agency for Development of Schidnycja Spa based in the Ukrainian city of Boryslav, and the ACEP acted as a partner. The total project amount was €49,070.00.

The objective of the project called the Alphabet of Studying and Working in Poland, with the ACEP as a micro-project leader, and the West-Ukrainian centre of resources based in Lviv as a partner, was to develop cross-border cooperation in the area of investigated needs and improve educational opportunities and labour market opportunities for young people from cross-border regions in Belarus and Ukraine. The initial survey involved 60 students of the first year at Zakarpattia universities in Belarus and Ukraine. (The students from Ukraine have been the most numerous group among international university students in this voivodeship in the recent years.) The second survey will involve a group of 200 young persons in Ukraine and Belarus (the survey will be conducted through the internet) who intend to study in Poland.

At the moment the second project that focuses on youth as a target group is a project called Conscious Students at Labour Market. Again the ACEP as a project leader, Fund for Development of Eastern-European National Univer-

sity of Lesya Ukrajinka based in Luck as a partner. Its objective is to develop cross-border cooperation and improve opportunities of studying in Poland for persons from Ukraine and finding jobs for students in their final year from Poland and Ukraine who are preparing to enter the labour market. There will be two study visits in the companies focusing on assistance in finding jobs and a Polish-Ukrainian workshop on this topic.

The founding document of the Carpathian Euroregion (CER), an international association of cross-border cooperation, was signed in Debrecen on 14 February 1993; until 1999 the Slovak side in the CER only participated in a limited role of an affiliated member (the Slovak Republic became a regular member on 25 November 1999). The CER has never been a legal entity or an entity of international law. After a few years the CER as an organization got at a crossroads of its future existence. I just would like to mention that the networking process that initiated the ACEP in Rzeszow has gradually touched the fundamental spheres of “influence” of local governments, nongovernmental organizations and regional development agencies. However, it is at the beginning— in the phase of proclamations, and in the phase of adopting programme documents.⁸⁷

One of the potential instruments of change for the benefit of sustainable social and economic development of the areas that belongs to the CER and is the subject of ACEP’s activities is the strategic concept titled Carpathian Horizon 2020. It has been designed by the ACEP since 2004. Unfortunately, they did not manage to transfer it to a separate operational programme funded by the EU sources in the programme period for 2014-2020. It should merge any scattered EU financial injections for the regions in the CER into a single programme for the promotion of the CER development. The political support of the project has failed. However, the concept is alive in its virtual version is to be found on the website. It is based on coordination and harmonization of records in terms of the programming respect in the remaining operational programmes implemented in the territory of the CER within the future EU cohesion policy. It is compatible with the Europe 2020 strategy, the Carpathian Convention, principles of the Eastern Partnership and has a relation with the Danube Strategy. In its principle it is a long-term perspective connected to the strategic character of the concept of the Operational Programme called Carpathian Space Programme. It is believed that the CER will act as an institution, as a body managing the Carpathian Space Programme. Also this currently negative knowledge documents the conceptualisation of work and obduracy of the ACEP in working in cross-border cooperation.

⁸⁷ Further: JURČIŠIN, Jozef: *Aktivity Karpatského euroregiónu Poľsko v oblasti slovensko-poľskej spolupráce.* (Activities of Carpathian Euroregion Poland in Slovak-Polish cooperation), BENČ, V., DUDINSKÝ, V. (eds.) *Výzvy a príležitosti pre rozvoj slovensko-poľskej cezhraničnej spolupráce.* (Challenges and opportunities for development of Slovak-Polish cross-border cooperation) Prešov University, Prešov 2014, pp. 57 – 61.

„JOINT COOPERATION NETWORK WITH- IN CULTURE AND WELFARE ON BEHALF OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITIES OF POLISH – UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND” – EXAMPLE OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERA- TION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ENPI

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Introduction

Cross-border cooperation is part of the foreign policy of nation-states, as well as an important element of cohesion policy of the European Union (EU). Its aim is the mobilization and efficient use of the existing potential of border regions⁸⁸. “The European Union [...] accepted that the best instrument for overcoming the peripherality of the border areas, [...] will be the intensification of contacts and activities of a trans-boundary nature”⁸⁹. The essence of a cross-border policy becomes the creation of network of connections to consolidate and strengthen economic relations, both political and social⁹⁰. The article, based on an analysis of the implementation of the cross-border project by the three cities of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, shows how in practice EU financial instruments are used to support the development of cooperation in border areas. The author has pointed out the difficulties and limitations that arise in the case of cooperation that encompasses areas that lie outside the European Union.

⁸⁸ A. Kyrydon, S. Trojan, „Euroregiony: współpraca transgraniczna między Ukrainą a Polską” in: D. Chmielewska et. al., ed., *Transgraniczność w perspektywie socjologicznej VII. Pogranicza kultur i narodów*, Zielona Góra: Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2010, p. 149.

⁸⁹ M. Trojanowska-Strzemboszewska, *Trzy oblicza unijnych granic*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Poltext, 2011, p. 144.

⁹⁰ D. Błaszczak, „Sieciowa infrastruktura instytucjonalna we współpracy transgranicznej”, in: R. Łoś, J. Reginia-Zacharski, ed., *Sąsiedztwo i pogranicze – między konfliktem a współpracą* Vol. 1, Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2012, p. 50.

The Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007–2013

One of the financial instruments supporting the territorial cooperation of the European Union is the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), addressed to “partner countries”⁹¹ outside the European Union “to provide community assistance for the development of an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness”⁹². The scope of support is wide and includes, among others, political, economic and social reforms, sectoral cooperation, regional and local development, regional integration and participation in community programmes and agencies⁹³.

ENPI is being implemented with the help of national and multi-national programmes, cross-border cooperation programmes as well as joint operational programmes for cross-border cooperation. For the period 2007–2013 support in the amount of 11,181 million Euros was provided, out of which sum 95 per cent was directed to the implementation of national and multi-national programmes, and 5 per cent to cross-border cooperation programmes.

Among the cross-border programs launched under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument is the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007–2013, which is a continuation of cooperation in the framework of the Neighbourhood Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine INTERREG IIIA CBC 2004–2006. The main objective of the program is to promote cross-border development processes through non-commercial projects in the framework of the activities included in the three priorities: 1) Increasing competitiveness of the border area (actions: Better conditions for entrepreneurship, Tourism development, Improving access to the region); 2) Improving the quality of life (action: Natural environment protection in the borderland, Efficient and secure borders); 3) Networking and people to-people Cooperation (action: Regional and local cross-border cooperation capacity building, Local communities’ initiatives)⁹⁴. The activities adopted in the programme are consistent with the strategic objectives set out in the European Neigh-

⁹¹ They are: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Russian Federation, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine. Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament And of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

⁹² Ibidem.

⁹³ European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (2007–2013), Summary. Available online: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:r17101&from=PL&isLegissum=true> (accessed on October 3, 2014).

⁹⁴ Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007–2013, final version approved by EC (Decicion number K(2008)6411), 6 november 2008, p.4. Available online: http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/upload/en/PL-BY-UA_ENG.pdf (accessed on October 3, 2014).

bourhood and Partnership Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy Paper 2007–2013⁹⁵.

The programme area consists of cooperation areas and adjacent cooperation areas⁹⁶ and it includes the following administrative units: in Poland – sub-regions: Krosniensko-Przemyski, Bialostocko-Suwalski, Bialskopodlaski, Chelmsko-Zamojski, Ostrolecko-Siedlecki, and also as adjacent cooperation areas: sub-regions – Rzeszowsko-Tarnobrzanski, Lomzynski and Lubelski. In Belarus – Grodno and Brest Oblasts, seven western districts of Minsk Oblast and as adjacent cooperation areas eastern part of the Minsk Oblast, whereas in Ukraine – Lvivska, Volynska, Zakarpatska Oblasts and as adjacent cooperation areas: Rivnenska, Ternopiiska and Ivano-Frankivska Oblasts. The total area encompassed by the programme is 75.3 thousand square kilometres and is inhabited by almost 21 million people.

Over 186 million euro was allocated from the EU budget for the implementation of the programme. In terms of value it is the largest program under the ENPI. The allocation of funds to individual priorities is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicative financing plan of the ENPI CBC Poland–Belarus–Ukraine Programme, for the whole programming period, the indicative amount of funding by priority

The indicative amount of funding by priority, for the whole programming period (in Euros)				
	EC Funding*	Co-financing	Co-financing rate (in %)**	Total funding
Priority 1	55 860 410.10	5 586 041.01	10%	61 446 451.11
Priority 2	65 170 478.45	6 517 047.85	10%	71 687 526.30
Priority 3	46 550 341.75	4 655 034.18	10%	51 205 375.93
Technical Assistance	18 620 136.70	0.00	–	18 620 136.70
Total	186 201 367.00	16 758 123.03	9%	202 959 490.03

* In accordance with the Strategy Paper

** Co-financing rate shall be calculated on the basis of the Community contribution to the joint operational programme, minus the amount of technical assistance financed from the Community contribution (see: Article 20.1 of the Regulation no 951/2007)

Source: Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007–2013, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

In order for the programme to be implemented the following joint institutions have been created: Joint Monitoring Committee, Joint Managing Author-

⁹⁵ European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument. Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy Paper 2007-2013, Indicative Programme 2007-2010. Available online: <http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/upload/en/ENPI%20CBC%20Strategy%20Paper.pdf> (accessed on October 3, 2014).

⁹⁶ In special, duly justified cases, region adjoining to a border region may also be included in the eligible programme area.

ity – the Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland, Joint Technical Secretariat – located at the Centre for European Projects in Poland and National Bodies in partner countries: for Belarus – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus jointly with the Co-ordinating Unit of Belarus for the European Union's TACIS Programme, for Ukraine – Ministry of Economy of Ukraine.

Operationally, the program is implemented through projects, of which there are three types: integrated projects, where partners carry out part of the actions of a joint project for their respective side of the border; symmetrical projects, where similar activities are carried out in parallel on both sides of the border, and simple projects with a cross-border effect taking place mostly or exclusively on one side of the border but for the benefit of both partners. For each project, all participants elect the Lead Partner who submits an application, signs a grant agreement with the Joint Managing Authority and is responsible legally and financially for the project.

Joint cooperation network within culture and welfare on behalf of the development of the cities of Polish – Ukrainian borderland

“Joint cooperation network within culture and welfare on behalf of the development of the cities of Polish - Ukrainian borderland” (hereinafter the Project) is a joint venture of three cities: Rzeszow (Poland), Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk (Ukraine) under Priority 3. of the Cross-border, Cooperation Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007–2013 Action 3.1 Regional and local cross-border, cooperation capacity building. As stated in the application, the project is a response to inadequate use of the cultural potential of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, insufficient effectiveness of social assistance institutions in the cities, especially Ukrainian, as well as the lack of permanent and formalized structures of cooperation between Rzeszów, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk .

The overall objective of the project is to create a network of cooperation among the cities of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland in terms of culture and social welfare, which should lead to a greater activation of border areas, the improvement in the quality of life and the preservation and strengthening of social bonds. The project implemented three specific objectives: 1) the involvement of a wide range of local governments and social institutions in the cooperation through joint activities of a cultural and social nature, 2) the exchange of information and experience in the field of cross-border cooperation by partners on both sides of the Polish-Ukrainian border, 3) increasing the competence of 60 employees in the skills essential for carrying out joint activities relevant to Polish-Ukrainian relations.

To achieve the set objectives, a series of actions have been planned: the organization of a three-day meeting on network cooperation in Rzeszow, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk, workshops on obtaining EU funds for Ukrainian partners, courses of the Ukrainian and Polish languages for workers from the cities participating in the project, the organization of five Polish-Ukrainian cultural events (festivals, open-

air workshop in photography, a joint theatre performance), an organization of six projects in the field of social services (workshops, painting, photography, art therapy, ceramics, seminars), the creation of an information website, development of Cross-Border Network Cooperation Programme for Rzeszow, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk in the period 2014–2020, other promotional activities as well as a conference summarizing the implementation of the Project.

Project implementation time is specified for two years, starting from April 2013. Its value is 387,402 euro, with funding from the CBC Programme Poland – Belarus – Ukraine 2007–2013 covering 90 percent of eligible costs, i.e. 348,662 euro. The target group are representatives of local authorities of Rzeszow, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk (staff of the Municipal Offices, employees of the organizational units operating in the spheres of culture and social welfare, councillors), representatives of institutions and organizations active in the sphere of culture and social welfare in Rzeszów and partner cities in Ukraine, artists and creators (artists, photographers, musicians, writers), social assistance payees. The target group consists of a total of 510 people. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project are the residents of the participating cities.

The application of Project partners under Priority 3. Network cooperation and local communities' initiatives' should be assessed positively. Primarily due to the specificity of cross-border cooperation between countries, not all of which are members of the European Union, and whose citizens do not enjoy freedom of movement within the Schengen area. The barrier of the border, despite the use of certain facilities related to the agreements on small border traffic, impedes normal contacts, including those of economic nature. Hence, the projects related to Priority 1. The increase of competitiveness of the border area, or 2. Improving the quality of life, in the case of cross-border cooperation between Poland, Belarus and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast) do not seem to clearly favour the achievement of a greater integration. However, they can contribute to levelling the differences in socio-economic development on both sides of the border and increasing coherence in this respect, but still the direct consequences of the actions taken are mainly felt by the residents of one of the two sides of the border. This problem was pointed out in a report summarizing the implementation of the INTERREG IIIA Community Initiative with Polish participation in 2004–2006, commissioned by the Polish Ministry of Regional Development. According to the report, "the scale of the impact of INTERREG IIIA on socio-economic development is negligible".

In view of the circumstances indicated, which are of an objective nature for the border regions, the cooperation in the "soft projects" framework seems to be particularly beneficial. This leads to the raising of human capital, promotes the establishing of direct relations and a better knowledge of the neighbour's culture. In the context of Ukraine's aspirations to join the European Union it is not without significance that the employees of government institutions should study the functioning of local governments in Poland, or acquire the

skills to apply for EU funds for cross-border cooperation of municipalities. This may make it easier in the future to carry out the necessary reforms of the public administration of Ukraine, and prepare local government officials to effectively implement the projects under the EU's Cohesion Policy.

To achieve the stated objectives in improving the competence of local governments, a meeting was organised between councillors and employees of municipalities – partners within the framework of the Project sprang in Rzeszów in February 2014. It was attended by 28 representatives from Lutsk and Ivano-Frankivsk. A mutual understanding of cultures and establishing direct relationships by creators and artists from both countries was made easier by the organized events, especially those with a broader scope, such as the “Colours of the Borderland” Festival in Rzeszow, with the participation of 70 artists from Ukrainian cities.

Quite an original element of the Project are actions concerning “the organization of the six joint Polish-Ukrainian events in the field of social welfare”, particularly in the section on workshops for people on social assistance (including chronically mentally ill people and the disabled, both physically and intellectually). They certainly contributed to the diversification of the forms of aid, helped to improve the conditions of self-realisation of the residents and showed them how to spend their time more effectively. It is difficult to assess the wider cross-border effects of such actions.

In the context of the institutionalization of cooperation in the longer term, we should also appreciate the undertaking of the development within the “Cross-border Network Cooperation Programme for Rzeszow, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk for 2014–2020” project. According to the accepted assumptions, the program is to focus not only on cooperation in the field of culture and social welfare, but also draw the directions of cooperation in other areas relevant to local governments, such as the economy, education, health and the environment.

Conclusion

Cross-border cooperation along the external borders of the European Union is characterized by a number of difficulties. Proposals for action to reduce them can be considered as recommendations for entities that affect the EU's external policies. One of the most important demands is to eliminate the fundamental obstacles to achieving the right effects of cross-border cooperation, which is the difficulty of crossing the border. It would be advisable to expand of the area covered by the small border traffic into the administrative units implementing projects under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. It would be a circumstance not only facilitating the implementation of projects, but also encouraging individuals to start them. In the longer term it would help people to attach less importance to the state border between cooperating entities and would promote the achievement of actual socio-economic cohesion of the borderland areas.

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SELECTED EXAMPLES OF UKRAINE-RELATED STORIES IN THE MASS MEDIA OF THE PODKARPACKIE VOIVODESHIP

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Introduction

The goal of this paper is to present the analysis of selected examples from the mass media of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship (it was the territory of Rzeszów, Przemyśl, Krosno and Tarnobrzeg provinces before the administration reform of 1999) for the presence of Ukraine-related publications in these mass media. The Podkarpackie Voivodeship is a neighbouring region for Ukraine. Due to this circumstance, publications related to the subject of Ukraine can be a natural part of the content of the mass media – for example presenting cross-border cooperation, investment opportunities, business development or cultural cooperation. The article analyses whether and how often such publications appear in the Podkarpackie mass media. The analysis is based on the results of the press research, which included two main newspapers of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The article presents an analysis of examples in publications about Ukraine in these mass media. They are mostly related to the various events, both from the mid-1990s, the 20th century and the present.

Podkarpackie Voivodeship – general information

Podkarpackie Voivodeship was created as a result of the reform of the administration, which took effect from the 1st January 1999 and it is one of the 16 provinces in Poland. It was created as a result of amalgamation of the provinces of: Rzeszów, Krosno, Przemyśl and partly of provinces of Tarnobrzeg and Tarnów. Podkarpackie Voivodeship is situated in south-eastern of Poland with an area of 17 844 sq km. As it is a border region it is next to the Ukraine and Slovakia. The length of the border with Ukraine is 236 km and with Slovakia 134 km. It should be mentioned that at the top of the Kremenaros peak in the Bieszczady Mountains there are borders of Poland, Slovak Republic and Ukraine. As a result Podkarpackie Voivodeship is bordered with the Ukrainian Zakarpattia Oblast and Lviv Oblast, and on the side of Slovakia with Prešov Region.

In Podkarpackie Voivodeship, there live about 2 million and 97 thousand people, which is 5.5% of the whole population of Poland. The residents are quite young – more than a half of the inhabitants are less than 33 years old. 51% of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship residents are women.

Main mass media of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship

Before the analysis of the presence of Ukraine-related subjects in the Podkarpackie mass media is presented, we should be briefly present the history of these mass media in this region. It includes the press, radio stations, TV station, and Internet portals as well.

Podkarpackie press media market has several titles. When it comes to regional journals in the province, three newspapers are published: *Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny*, *Super Nowosci*, and *Gazeta w Rzeszowie* (which is a part of the nationwide *Gazeta Wyborcza*).

The longest history has *Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny* which has been issued since 1949 – firstly titled as *Nowiny Rzeszowskie* and *Nowiny*. At the time of Polish People's Republic (after World War II) the newspaper was a tool of propaganda for the communist party – Polish United Workers' Party. Political changes in Poland after 1989 were the beginning of a new chapter for the newspaper – it was privatised, and the political profile was also changed. At the end of January 1990, the journal began to appear as “*Nowiny – Gazeta Codzienna*”. Soon, in 1991, the owner of the title was the company “*R-Press*” whose major shareholders were the Board of Directors of *Solidarity* in Rzeszow and PSL “*Solidarity*”. In the year of 2005, the only owner of the newspaper was a Norwegian group *Orkla*, which has owned shares in the company since 1993. A year later, the group “*Orkla Media*” has been taken over by the British company *Mecom*, the owner of “*Media Regionale Group*” in Poland. In the year of 2013 *Mecom* sold “*Media Regionale Group*” to *Polskapresse* group.

The newspaper *Super Nowosci* was first issued in 1997. The owner of the newspaper is a Polish entrepreneur from Rzeszow. The argument of the local ownership was used in the competition with *Nowiny* – for some time the *Super Nowosci's* masthead had a subtitle reading “*The only Polish newspaper in the province*”.

Since 1992, there appears the *Gazeta w Rzeszowie* which is part of the nationwide journal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, issued by the “*Agora*” group.

Since 2008 and 2009 there have been two magazines issued every two-months – *VIP Biznes i Styl* and *Ludzie Sukcesu*. These magazines are both business and life-style oriented, with similar target group of local opinion leaders, businesspersons, freelancers and managers. The distribution of the newspapers is similar – they are delivered for free to the target group and partly purchased in the newsstands.

The main TV station in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship is *TVP Rzeszow*, which is a branch of the *TVP – Polish State Television*. The digital broadcast is

transmitted of the five transmitters and it can be received from the space of 95% of the province. The main radio station in the Podkarpackie province is Polskie Radio Rzeszów and can be received in the whole province.

Podkarpackie mass media also exist on the Internet. The newspapers, radio stations and TV station have their own web portals (www.nowiny24.pl, www.supernowosci24.pl, www.rzeszow.gazeta.pl, www.radio.rzeszow.pl, www.tvp.pl/rzeszow). There are also other well-known web portals, for example www.biznesistyl.pl, the owners of which want to make it one of the most influential Podkarpackie web portals.

Ukraine-related stories in the Podkarpackie newspapers

The Ukraine-related stories in the Podkarpackie newspapers will be presented from different perspectives. They are both the results of own press research and examples of selected broadcast, as well.

The press research presents conclusions about the publications which show the subject of foreigners. These analyses are based on the publication issued by Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny and Super Nowosci. The analysed data comes from ten issues of each title from the period of time of 1st-14th October 2013. Though the analysis was made in 2014, the data was selected intentionally. The main goal was to verify whether the Podkarpackie press is interested in presenting stories about the foreigners. On the one hand the aim was to analyse the range of topic presented in the main Podkarpackie newspapers, but on the other hand this subject seems to be interested due to geographic reasons.

As it has been already mentioned, Podkarpackie Voivodeship is a border region which makes it possible that Ukraine and Slovakian related stories can be a part of the content of the Podkarpackie mass media. The author decided to analyse a publication which appeared just before the wave of protests in Ukraine, in autumn 2013, when Viktor Yanukovych - the President of Ukraine of that time - denied strengthening the integration with the European Union. Obviously that topic was among the interests of mass media.

The study concluded the following criteria: subject matter of the publication, the fact of presence of Ukraine or foreigners matters, the selection of the publication which has been created by the newspapers' own journalists or by agencies, the journalistic form, the exposure of the subject (the leading text, the non-leading text with and without any picture) and the place where it was published in the newspaper (the page number).

During the analysis Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny 65 articles have been selected related to the subject matter of foreigners. These were the publications that directly moved around topics related to foreigners, or in which there have been mentions of other nationals or representatives of foreign companies. Finally, 21 different strands have been separated, and the most interested strands published in Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny were related to show business (20 exam-

ples) and sport (15 examples). In the publications concerning foreigners there has been information related to various countries but the amount of examples was not so impressive – most examples were related to the UK and Germany. Out of 65 articles, there were only 6 publications about Ukraine. Most of these stories presented historical issues and the matter of memorialising the victims of Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the announcement of the dentist conference in Rzeszow, some short news about the car crash of two Ukrainian citizens and the attempt to cross the Polish-Ukrainian border with the vehicle that was listed in the database as stolen. It is worth noticing that these news were published in *Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny*, however none of them was the leading text.

In the same period of time *Super Nowosci* published 77 articles which dealt with foreigners. 17 strands have been separated, whereby most were related to show business (28 examples) and sport (17 examples) – but only two of them were Ukraine-related stories. They presented information about the memorialising of the victims of Ukrainian Insurgent Army. These publications were created by the journalists of *Super Nowosci*, in form of short information.

The number of publication related to the Ukrainian subject was not so big, it should undoubtedly be noticed that there was a similar situation concerning information about and from the Slovak Republic, but the amount of publication was even smaller – there was only one such publication.

Ukraine-related mass media initiatives

It may be interesting to present not only the analysis but also the Ukraine-related mass media initiatives. Such projects were conducted in the past but some of them are still carried out through the *Podkarpackie* mass media.

One of the noteworthy projects is issued every month in the supplement “*Sąsiedzi. Polska Słowacja Ukraina (Neighbours: Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine)*” which was published in *Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny* in 1994-1995. It presented the relations between these three countries. It is 4 pages long (one of the pages was usually a place for ads). At the beginning it was published on the third Tuesday every month, but finally *Nowiny* decided to publish it every month on the last Tuesday.

The first issue of “*Sąsiedzi*” was published on 21st June 1994 (*Nowiny* 118), and the last one on 28th November 1995 (*Nowiny* 230) – in that period of time there were 19 issues of the supplement. The content for it was prepared by the *Nowiny*’s journalists, Polish Press Agency’s journalists, and there was language interpretation of articles from Ukrainian mass media. The subject matter in the supplement presented the relations between Poland and Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine, cultural aspects and political and economic processes which took place in Ukraine and the Slovak Republic.

Some of the “*Sąsiedzi*” issues should be mentioned in order to present the Ukrainian subject matter. In the first issue of “*Sąsiedzi*” there were two articles concerning the analysis of Ukrainian political arena and its economy. There

were also published statistics about the condition of the Ukrainian economy in the first quarter of 1994, information about common tariff policy, Ukrainian cooperation with the European Union and its relations with Russia. The journalists presented also information dealing with the privatization processes in Ukraine and the list of companies that were to be privatized in the near future. There always was a column called "Za miedzǎ" that reviewed news from Ukraine and Slovakia. The issue of 30th May 1995 (Nowiny 103) presented Bill Clinton's (the President of the USA of that time) visit to Kiev and interviews about Polish cooperation with the eastern countries. By contrast the issue of 31st January 1995 (Nowiny 122) had not only the column "Za miedziǎ", but the articles also presented the Ukrainian statement about the war in Chechnya – there was statement from the perspective of the state and of Ukrainian mass media. It also concerned the economic field in Ukrainian economy in 1995 – for examples prices, taxes and unemployment. Analysing the issue of „Sąsiedzi” of 26th September 1995 it can be pointed out that there were Ukraine-related articles about tourism, economic changes and the state role in these changes processes published.

In the 19th issue of "Sąsiedzi" of 28th November 1995 there were presented the Ukraine-related stories and what is more interesting, some of them informed that in the Polish State Television (TVP) 10-minutes long auditions in Ukrainian will be emitted (and other nationality minorities' languages). Rzeszow was also presented by the journalists as a perfect place for Slovakian and Ukrainian consulate offices. For the Podkarpackie Voivodeship it was a unique possibility to develop economic, cultural and political relations with the neighbours from abroad. The articles of 19th issue of "Sąsiedzi" pointed some of the international matters – for example the one about the fact that Ukrainian representatives called the G7 group members to decide whether they would help shot-down the nuclear power station in Chernobyl. In this issue there was also space for culture and a story about a Ukrainian choir from Lviv which had a show in Przemyśl (Poland).

Other Ukraine-related mass media initiatives which are noteworthy came from the Polish State Television (TVP) and the radio station Polskie Radio Rzeszów. The TVP emphasizes that due to the geographic reasons it is clearly understandable to present information dealing with Ukraine. In TVP's opinion this subject is highly interesting for the Podkarpackie viewers. Some of the examples of TVP's initiatives included a charity event for Polish schools located in Ukraine and an event called "Świąteczko dla Łyczakowa", the main goal of which was to collect candles and light them at Lychakiv Cemetery on 1st of November – on All Saints' Day. The TVP's journalists prepared also subjects related to the life of Ukrainian national minority in Poland.

By contrast the Polskie Radio Rzeszow has a radio audition called "Skrynia", which is broadcast in Ukrainian – and as it says at the Radio's web portal this

audition is dedicated to the Ukrainian residents of the south-eastern part of Poland and to those who are interested in Ukrainian culture and language. The history of the audition is quiet long as it appeared in Polskie Radio Rzeszow in 1958 for the first time. The audition since 2006 is called "Skrynia". Thanks to the audition the listeners can learn about important events (cultural, religious, academic) which are shown from the Ukrainian minority's perspective. "Skrynia" presents interviews with local opinion leaders and information about Ukrainian associations in Poland etc. The music presented in the audition is Ukrainian pop, rock and folk. In Polskie Radio Rzeszow there is also a news service for Ukrainian people, which is emitted in Ukrainian – the creators are journalists from "Program dla Zagranicy Polskiego Radia S.A." (audition for abroad created by Polish Radio).

Summary

The analysis allows the author to indicate some phenomena and conclusions. There have been some changes in attitude about of international matters - Ukrainian and Slovakian - that have been presented in Podkarpackie press in last two decades.

The paper presents the official supplement to *Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny* called "Sąsiedzi. Polska Słowacja Ukraina" was issued in mid nineties. It dealt with numerous important topics dedicated to Ukrainian matters – especially political, economic and cultural. Not only the number of articles concerning Ukraine-related matters, but also the fact that such supplement existed shows that *Gazeta Codzienna Nowiny* really was particular about the neighbouring countries. However, Podkarpackie press research (presenting subject of foreigners in Podkarpackie daily newspapers in October 2013) shows different results. Although the research was not extensive, it presents other conclusions. In fact, the general number of articles dealing with foreign matters was quite high, but the most popular strands were connected with the subject of show business or sport and the strands dedicated to Ukrainian citizens were few. These publications were short and informative, and usually dedicated to local news (related to Ukraine and Ukrainian people) and associated with history, rather than presenting political, economic issues, linked with cooperation between Poland and Ukraine. Similar trend was observed during the analysis of Slovak Republic-related matters in Podkarpackie mass media – however this analysis was not the main point of the research.

What is more, it should be definitely pointed out that Podkarpackie mass media offer radio and TV auditions dealing with Ukraine-related matters as journalists are interested in topics related with Polish citizens who live in Ukraine.

INTEGRATION ACROSS FIVE COUNTRIES. STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES OF ZAKARPATTIA REGION

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The European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership policy, and other European instruments are aimed at bringing Ukraine closer to the European Union. European Instruments are used to help the border countries and regions with their transformation. This support is effective for the reform efforts of the governments and also designed to increase the role of the civil society which has an important part to play in the transformation of Ukraine. Border regions of Western Ukraine play an important role of a catalyst in the European integration processes with further multiplication in other regions of Ukraine. In the context of the Association Agreement signed by the European Union and Ukraine, European integration transformations became strategically important for Ukraine for the years to come. On the one side there is the optimistic scenario of development of Ukraine taking into account the signed Association membership, and on the other side there is the political and economic crisis in Ukraine caused by absent reforms and absent strategic approach agreed on by the self-governments in Ukraine.

External challenges and internal problems of Ukraine cause differentiation of Ukrainian regions as cross-border regions with integrated characteristics of development of human resources. An important step to solving the internal problems of Ukraine is using an innovative tool – the cross-border cooperation potential in border regions as an effective instrument of state regional policy. It is important to indicate that 19 of 25 regions in Ukraine are cross-border regions and the territory of the border regions extends over 77 per cents of the total territory of Ukraine.

Taking into account the existing borders of 4 EU countries and the number of European initiatives that had been implemented in the region, Zakarpattia region has a great potential and may play the role of a European Union window in Ukraine.

The integration of Ukraine into the European Union causes changes in the geopolitical situation on the European continent that require an adjustment of

the EU policy. As a result, the further developed and future oriented strategies of cross-border cooperation in the EU have an additional value and importance, and so do the new strategies of cross-border cooperation among the countries of the Carpathian region based on European principles. The task to formulate a new instrument to promote joint cross-border cooperation projects is especially important for the border communities and regions in Ukraine, including new approaches to strategic planning in Ukraine and the border regions.

The importance of modern development of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine in accordance with the European criteria is caused by a number of objective reasons that are already influencing the Ukrainian border regions and will be determining their future in short-term and middle-term perspectives, namely:

1. Approaching of Ukraine to the EU that considers cross—border cooperation to be one of the important tools of European Integration of Ukraine
2. Putting cross-border cooperation on the priority list of the State Concept of Regional Policy
3. Additional attention of the government of Ukraine to the activation of Ukrainian regional and community participation in cross-border cooperation (the Ukrainian Law about Cross-Border Cooperation dated 18-th November 2003 is a good evidence of such attention).
4. The opportunity to use the existing experience of cross-border cooperation of western regions of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania.

Zakarpattia region is a region at the crossroads of international programs and networks. A specific role in the coming years will be played by those territories of Ukraine that are located on the borders with EU countries. Zakarpattia region is one of such territories. Zakarpattia region is situated in the South – West of Ukraine and borders Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Romania. Zakarpattia has a wide experience in cross-border and inter-regional cooperation, it has sustainable partnerships between local and Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Polish communities, self-governments, authorities, professional institutions as well as NGOs and there are strong economic relations with 94 countries. Common border lines with Ukraine are the follows: Slovak-Ukrainian border (97.9 km), Hungarian-Ukrainian border (134.6 km), a part of Romanian-Ukrainian border (366.4 km) and a part of Polish-Ukrainian state border (32,6 km). In recent years Zakarpattia was a leading region in Western Ukraine in terms of intensification of international cooperation taking place in the border regions of Ukraine. A number of strategic projects and initiatives that had been implemented resulted in a new level of partnership between professional institutions, non-government organizations, self-government and authorities in Zakarpattia Region and the neighboring countries - members of the European Union and the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The following European Programs had a great influence on local development, forming new partnerships, making intensive experience exchange between the target groups:

1. Cross-Border Cooperation Programs:
 - Programs SPF CBC TACIS, Phare CBC,
 - Neighbourhood Programmes “ Poland – Belarus – Ukraine” , “Ukraine – Romania”, “Hungary – Slovakia – Ukraine”, 2004 – 2006 Interreg III A / Tacis
 - ENPI Cross-Border Cooperation Programme “ Poland – Belarus - Ukraine”, “Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Ukraine” 2007- 2013
 2. Transnational Cooperation Programs:
 - South-East Europe program
 - Central Europe Program
 - Danube Strategy
 3. Eastern Partnership
 4. Educational and Youth development programs:
 - FP7, Youth in Action Program, Horizon 2020, Erasmus Plus
- Besides, a number of initiatives of strategic importance had been implemented in Zakarpattia region with financial support of the following international organizations and funds:
- United State Agency of International Development USAID,
 - Canadian International Development Agency CIDA,
 - Norway Grants,
 - International Foundation “Renaissance”

Each implemented initiative created the territorial and professional partnerships in target countries / regions / cities/communities. The partnerships and initiatives in Zakarpattia region can be divided into the 2 groups: Bilateral cooperation and Multilateral cooperation.

Bilateral cooperation. Strategies and strategic initiatives.

Within bilateral cooperation a number of very important strategic documents had been developed with active participation of Zakarpattia Region:

- Strategy of the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation in 2020.
- Polish-Ukrainian Cross Border cooperation Strategy 2005 – 2015.

Strategy of the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation in 2020 is the output of the project: “Slovak-Ukrainian cultural Centre - forming and strengthening cooperation between Prešov self-governing Territory and the Zakarpattia region of Ukraine” that was implemented in 2012-2014 with the financial support of the EU in the framework of the ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine”. The purpose of the Strat-

egy – to establish an informational and strategic platform for further development of cross-border cooperation between Zakarpattia region of Ukraine and border territorial units of the Republic of Slovakia, namely: Prešov and Košice self-governments.

The strategy had been developed and based on a number of strategic documents on socio-economic development of the target regions in particular, and in the context of the Slovak -Ukrainian border cooperation. The plan of the strategy agreed on with stakeholders from Slovak border regions (Košice and Prešov self-governing regions) and Zakarpattia region of Ukraine on the following principles of cooperation:

- Implementation of public benefit results from Cross-Border Cooperation activities considering the mutual interests of the parties involved and co-operation through cooperation institutions.
- Joint development of the Concept of future development of Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation in the medium term (until 2020), with consideration of the long-term vision.
- Co-production of the strategic goals of Slovak-Ukrainian development, and proposals of operational tasks in the context of each of the strategic priorities with identification of funding sources.
- Implementation of joint expert work on the development of the Strategy with public engagement and participation of representatives of all interest groups on both sides of the border.

The methodology to develop the Strategy includes the elements of system analysis (particularly analysis of different CBC directions and their interrelations and synergies). In some cases, a *positional approach* was used, according to which a region was compared to other regions of Slovakia and Ukraine based on certain indicators. *Average and regulatory approaches* to diagnose the state of the target regions in Slovakia and Ukraine were used with caution and consideration of relevant national systems with many differences. *Vision approach* used primarily to account for qualitative assessments of stakeholders in the development of key elements of the Strategy – strategic purposes as well - ranking the problems on the Slovak-Ukrainian border. This approach is realized through the development of questionnaires and conducting public opinion polls in the border regions of the principles of symmetry and ‘pyramid involvement’ of different stakeholder groups. Moreover, the Strategy provides scenarios of relations between the EU and Ukraine in the medium term (to 2020), which forms the strategic framework for further development of bilateral relations between the EU and Ukraine, as well as cross-border cooperation at the regional and local levels.

The strategy was developed in 2013 on the basis of results of common activities involving the main stakeholders (representatives of state and local governments, the public and businesses), namely, seminars, roundtables, surveys of selected social groups on both sides of the border, working meetings and expert groups. To streamline the collection and analysis of all materials and drafting of the Strategy, a group of experienced experts in strategic planning, cross-border cooperation and regional development from Slovakia and Ukraine was involved.

To achieve a deeper involvement of different stakeholder a community survey was conducted in the context of the seven target groups:

- Representatives of local authorities (municipalities, regional council, village councils) and associations of local governments.
- Representatives of state authorities.
- Representatives of various NGOs.
- Representatives of budgetary institutions - education, health and social security culture, etc. ..
- Representatives of Higher Education, Science, and experts.
- Small and medium-sized businesses.
- Young people and students, high school students.

A number of respondents were interviewed in the context of the above 7 target groups responsible both cross-border symmetry and “pyramids engagement” on both sides of the border. The processing of the survey was conducted in the context of each of the target groups and in an integral way for the entire Ukrainian-Slovak border sub-region, and also separately for the Slovak and the Ukrainian border. The project strategy is based on a number of strategic documents on socio-economic development of the CBC, in the target regions in particular, and in the context of the Slovak-Ukrainian border cooperation. Identified objectives of Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation on the medium - terms period till 2020:

Objective 1: Increase the intensity of socio-economic development of border regions.

Measure 1.1: Create better conditions for the joint development of SMEs in the border areas.

Measure 1. 2: Creating new conditions for new investments in the border area.

Measure 1.3: Improving the cooperation of enterprises, manufacturing know-how, intermediaries and users, and the creation of cross-border clusters.

Objective 2: Improving border management in the Slovak and Ukrainian side - a common procedure and transfer of best practices.

Measure 2.1: Education and social development activities of customs officers, border guards and interested members of the public and private sector on both sides of the border.

Measure 2.2: Regular monitoring of border management and visa issuance.

Measure 2.3: Information measures for passengers, workers, applicants for visas and permits for local border traffic.

Objective 3: Modernization of border infrastructure.

Measure 3.1: Improve infrastructure by improving functionality and power points.

Measure 3.2: Increase the number of border crossing points at the common border.

Measure 3.3: Modernization of transport corridors (road, rail), leading to the common border.

Objective 4: Multi-development of cross-border cooperation for sustainable growth in the border regions.

Measure 4.1: Increase the intensity of research and education collaborations.

Measure 4.2: Improvement of cooperation in tourism.

Measure 4.3: Increase cooperation in the cultural sphere.

Measure 4.4: Strengthening cooperation in the development and protection of natural heritage, including the elimination of the negative effects of human activities and prevent flooding.

Objective 5: Improving the quality and intensity of contacts between people.

Measure 5.1. Support for the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

Measure 5.2 Development of a strategic framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Measure 2: Assist in the development and technical assistance.

Measure 3: Cooperation, focused on the leaders of the integration process of Ukraine: visa dialogue and cooperation in the energy sector.

Objective 6: Strengthen cross-border management of the Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation.

Measure 1: Establish mechanisms to support cross-border cooperation, especially the discovery of the Fund cross-border cooperation and conduct regular dialogue.

Measure 2: Improvement of joint management of regional development in the border areas.

Measure 3: Increase the intensity and quality of cross-border exchange of information between partners.

The full document “Strategy of Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation of border regions till 2020” can be found on the project website: <http://iardi.org/main/obhovorennya-proektu-stratehiji-slovatsko-ukrajinskoho-transkordnonoho-spivrobotnytstva-trykordonnyh-rehioniv-do-2020-roku>. International expert group received the suggestions and comments regarding the developed document “Draft Strategy Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation of border regions by 2020.” And the document will be presented at the Prešov Regional Council and Zakarpattia Regional Council.

Due to the fact that the border between Košice and Prešov regions and Zakarpattia region is also the state border between Ukraine and the Slovak Republic and the EU external border, the ambitions of the Strategy is to serve as the basis for developing comprehensive bilateral relations between Slovakia and Ukraine at international level.

Polish-Ukrainian Cross Border cooperation Strategy 2005 – 2015.

In 2003 – 2004 the Polish-Ukrainian Cross Border cooperation Strategy 2005 – 2015 was developed. It was a great pity that first version of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategy didn't include Zakarpattia Region but covered Lublin and Podkarpackie Voivodeship in Poland and the Volyn and Lviv regions of Ukraine. After the great example of best practices exchange and on the basis of identified conditions Zakarpattia region was included in the updated version of the Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation strategy 2007 – 2015. It was compiled by the International Association of Regional Development Institutions “IARDI” together with the following partners: European Centre for integration “House of Europe” (Poland), Marshall's office of Lublin Voivodeship, Volyn Region State Administration, Lviv Region Administration, the Agency for Regional Development in Lviv (Ukraine), Euroregion Lutsk, and the Cross-Border Cooperation Fund. The work on the preparation of the programme document started in 2007 with the meeting of executive committee, which consisted of representatives of each and every region. Polish-Ukrainian Cross Border cooperation Strategy 2005 – 2015 has been developed in the frame of the project of INTERREG IIIA/TICIS CBC and within cohesion policy: “European Territorial co-operation”. Separation of territorial cooperation as a separate objective of cohesion policy confirms the importance of joint activities. The increasing importance of this type of cooperation is also confirmed by increasing funds allocated within the European Regional Development Fund. The Strategy consists of two parts. The diagnostic part includes the development conditions in social, ecological, tourist, and recreation aspects that result from the social development features of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border area, its natural and cultural values, as well as infrastructure and tourism. The second part of the Strategy consists of crucial aims and priorities as well as actions within the priorities.

Priorities and objectives of the Polish-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy:

Sustainable management of natural resources

- 1.1. Development of environmental protection infrastructure
- 1.2. Streamlining of water economy and developing water retention.
- 1.3. Health risk prevention and raising the quality of life
- 1.4. Protection of biological diversity and maintaining regional landscape values as well as strengthening the system of protected areas
- 1.5. Strengthening the system of environmental protection management and raising ecological awareness of inhabitants in border regions

Cross-Border social integration and improving living conditions of the inhabitants in border regions

- 2.1. Supporting the integration of education and labour markets.
- 2.2. Building up attitudes for cross-border cooperation in the field of healthcare, social assistance, and active social policy.
- 2.3. Local society initiatives, promoting social integration.

3. Supporting tourism development and protecting cultural heritage

- 3.1. Identification and development of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation region as a tourism region
- 3.2. Development of integrated marketing and promotion system of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border region
- 3.3 Sustainable development and spatial management of cross-border tourism region
- 3.4. Training highly-qualified skilled professional teams for effective tourism management as well as for cross-border tourism development
- 3.5. Forming strong and integrated institutional platform for tourism development in the Polish-Ukrainian border territories.

The specific feature of this Strategy was the first attempt to make comparison of the statistic information on the both sides of the border. A number of indicators had been firstly developed in Ukraine and compared with related indicators in EU countries. The needs and necessity to have unified statistic indicators the both sides of the borders has been identified.

Multilateral cooperation in Zakarpattia Region.

Taking into account the borders with 4 countries, Zakarpattia Region is oriented to multilateral cooperation that is implemented using the existing instruments:

- ENPI CBC “Hungary – Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine” 2007 – 2015
- Euroregional Cooperation (“Carpathian Euroregion” established in 1993, being the oldest and biggest Euroregional unit in Ukraine).
- European Territorial Cooperation

At present 7 Euroregional units are established on the borders of Ukraine. The Euroregional units have been created around the perimeter along all borders of Ukraine. A number of Euroregional units have been established on the external borders of the European Union that include the border regions of Ukraine and the border territories of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, namely: the Carpathian Euroregion, Euroregion “BUG” and “Upper Prut”. From the other side of Ukraine the Euroregions “Dnepr”, “Slobozhanshina”, “Yaroslavna” and “Donbas” form Euroregional units that cover the border territories of Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Moldova. From the geographical point of view, the territories of the Euroregions form compact cross-border regions. Their unity is also characterized by similar economic structure and a set of external economic linkages, by similar human resources characteristics and also by common natural systems especially by the river basins. Each Euroregion has unique experience and best practices in the field of strategic planning, project management and civil organizations engagement. These factors caused the existence of the common needs and constraints as well as existing instruments for cross-border development within each Euroregion. However, from the other side there is a lack of cooperation and a lack of common financial instruments between the regions that are located in different parts of Ukraine. The activity of each border region is aimed at cooperating with specific target groups on the other side of the border, and only a small number of initiatives have been implemented during the past 20 years. There is a lack of cooperation and experience exchange between the Euroregional units established on the different sides of Ukraine. Civil organizations play a key role in promoting democracy, social justice and human rights in each region and they should be engaged into Inter-Euroregional activities to provide a new level of peaceful relations between Ukrainian regions. Taking into account the great potential of operational Euroregions, there is a great need to improve the institutional and communicational foundations of the participating Euroregions, and create a common communication instruments (e.g. by using social media) to provide long-lasting and sustained cooperation for peaceful relations. This is a strategically important task for Ukraine.

Strategies and strategic initiatives. Multilateral cooperation in Zakarpattia Region.

A number of strategic initiatives have been implemented in Zakarpattia Region during the past 10 years that have had a great influence on the further development of the region. In 2003 the project Strategy of cross-border cooperation development in the Carpathian region titled “Carpathian 2004 – 2011” was developed by the Cross-Border Regions, initiated by the Cross-Border Cooperation Partnership Network and supported by the European Union within Tacis CDC SPF, Tocis Cross-Border Cooperation Small project Facility. The In-

ternational Association of Regional Development Institutions “IARDI” established as the output of the project and partner network cooperation Strategy of cross-border cooperation development in the Carpathian region “Carpathian 2004 – 2011” was the first best practice in strategic planning made by the border regions within the EU membership of Slovakia, Hungary and Poland with cooperation of Ukraine, which had the status of a non-European border country. There was a great input into the border regions development for the next program period and the implementation of future European initiatives. The Strategy “Carpathians 2004-2011” covered the following regions of the Central part of the Carpathian Euroregion: Prešov and Košice regions of Slovakia, Sabolch-Satmar-Bereg region of Hungary, Satu-Mare and Maramures regions of Romania, Podkarpatskie Voivodeship of Poland and Zakarpattia Region of Ukraine. Within the development of the Strategy a SWOT analysis of Cross-Border development in the Carpathian region was performed to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the border regions. The border territories of Carpathian countries are situated on the crossroads of Trans-European and Eurasian trade routes, power circuits, and infrastructure systems that have a great influence on the development of the countries included in the Carpathian Euroregion. As a result of cooperation of international working groups in 2003 the following operational programs have been developed according to 5 priorities:

1. Infrastructure
 - 1.1. Border infrastructure
 - 1.2. Transport infrastructure
 - 1.3. Communication infrastructure
2. Economy:
 - 2.1. Entrepreneurship and SMEs
 - 2.2. Technology and innovations
 - 2.3. Qualification and Labour market
3. Environment, nature and rural development
 - 3.1. Environment
 - 3.2. Multifunctional rural development, including agriculture
4. Tourism
 - 4.1. Tourism infrastructure
 - 4.2. Rural tourism
 - 4.3. Cultural heritage
5. Social and cultural integration
 - 5.1. Social and cultural cooperation and networks
 - 5.2. National minorities
 - 5.3. Institutional support of Cross-Border cooperation

According to above-mentioned priorities a package of infrastructural and social projects had been developed and strong partnership networks had been formed within each working group according to each priority. A strong informational and institutional platform has been established within the program period 2004-2011.

Institutional and Informational Platform for sustained Cooperation.

One of the conditions for effective cross-border cooperation in the border areas of Ukraine is a strong institutional platform. The International Association of Regional Development Institutions "IARDI" was established in 2003 and its activity is based on the analysis of the strategic vision and development of the Carpathian region, summarized in the "Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy" Carpathians 2004-2011", and Law of Ukraine "On Cross-border cooperation". It operates according to the importance of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine based on European criteria due to the number of factors that affect the development of the border regions of Ukraine.

An NGO - "Ukrainian-Slovak cross-border cooperation centre called "Carpathians" was established in 2009 according to the needs of border regions to provide a systematic approach to the development of Ukrainian-Slovak cooperation in the Zakarpattia region. The decision to create a new organization was adopted and officially announced at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Ukrainian-Slovak Commission in 2004.

The NGO "Ukrainian-Slovak cross-border cooperation centre "Carpathians"

- carries out researches and surveys in the field of Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation;
- develops and promotes strategic projects and initiatives
- develops program documents
- forms sustainable partnerships
- promotes foreign trade and investment.

According to the goals and objectives of the project "Slovak-Ukrainian Cultural Centre - the creation and strengthening of cooperation in Prešov region and the Zakarpattia region» (HUSKROUA / 1001/083), implemented with the financial support of the European Union and the ENPI Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine 2007-2013 with the leadership of the "Ukrainian-Slovak Cross-Border Cooperation Centre "Carpathians" and the support provided by partner organizations from Slovakia and Ukraine the Slovak-Ukrainian Cultural Centre was established in 2014. The project aims to: activation and deepening of cooperation between the border regions of Slovakia and Ukraine by creating an institutional and information platform for effective cooperation. The project involves the creation of a common information base through the creation of joint databases and conducting cultural events, conferences, seminars,

round tables, etc.. One of the main objectives of the project is: the reconstruction of the building for the Centre for Ukrainian culture in Prešov. As part of this project each partner shall develop a package of projects within the operational programs of the Slovak-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation Strategy till 2020. With the financial support of the EU within the project the reconstruction and equipment have been provided for the “Ukrainian Cultural Centre” in Prešov and the Ukrainian – Slovak Centre in Uzhgorod. The Ukrainian Cultural Centre acts as a cultural institution, which will have its own statute, and a joint Ukrainian-Slovak organizational structure. The Centre will serve the local Ruthenians -Ukrainians, and the entire Ukrainian national minority in Slovakia. The Centre is scheduled to hold an exhibition of paintings, books, talks, round tables, meetings, competitions, etc. It is believed that the Ukrainian Cultural Centre in a certain way will foster the work in the field of Ukrainian culture and education and the work carried out by the Union of Ruthenians-Ukrainians Slovakia.

Taking into account the great need of new partnerships and comprehensive initiatives, the great necessity to provide services in partnership forming and project development, the international expert group identified that the establishment of a cross-border –cooperation and communication instrument based on ICT technologies will improve cross-border cooperation. As a result of the identification of needs in the border regions, the project “CBC Parliament” was developed by the International Association “IARDI” and supported by the ENPI CBC project “Hungary – Slovakia-Romania – Ukraine” 2007 – 2013. Under the leadership of the Agency of Regional Development “Poloniny” (Slovakia) a new innovation instrument has been created and proposed on-line services for NGOs, professional institutions, self-governments and authorities, as well as other target groups.

An ICT instrument called the “CBC Parliament” is being established in the border regions of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. The “CBC Parliament” is a new and unique system to provide for effective regional development. The establishment of this instrument provides the implementation of synchronized actions on both sides of the border, realized by the authorities and self-governments, development institutions, local and regional development agencies, as well as active citizens of border regions. The main partner of this initiative on the Ukrainian side is the International Association of Regional Development Institutions “IARDI” (www.iardi.org). The lead partner is the Regional Development Agency “Poloniny”, Slovakia. Partners groups from border regions include the most experienced agencies and authorities: Association of Regional Development “KIUT” (Hungary), Maramures County Council (Romania) and the NGO “Business Initiatives” Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine.

The International Association of Regional Development “IARDI” was established in September 2003 in the frame of the project: “Carpathia 2003-2011”

within the initiative of regional development institutions and authorities of border regions of Slovakia (Košice and Prešov regions), Hungary (Szabolcs – Szatmár – Bereg region), and Ukraine (Zakarpattia region). The “IARDI” association was founded by leading international organizations: Centre for European Initiatives (Ukraine), Centre for Innovation and Business “CASSOVIA BIC Košice” (Slovakia), the Association of Regional Development “KIUT” (Hungary).

In November 2011 the “CBC parliament” project was presented at the 39th Council meeting of the Interregional Association “Carpathian Euroregion”. Establishing an effective ICT instrument, the International Association “IARDI” has taken the initiative to extend the “CBC parliament” instrument on the territory of Carpathian Euroregion through the development and implementation of the following projects: “Establishment of ICT technologies to ensure a strategic approach and effective communication in the territory of Carpathian region,” “Cross-border ICT network - the institutional and informational basis for sustainable development of border areas of Ukraine, Poland and Belarus”, on the eastern territory through an international initiative: “The Parliament of Eastern Partnership” - establishing a common ICT- instrument to create civil society forums of the Eastern Partnership, and through participation in EU programs, including Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe. An important event for the development of the Association “IARDI” was the signing of agreements with the Association of European Border Regions “AEBR” to represent the interests of “AEBR” in the Carpathian Euroregion through the active functioning of partnership network.

Taking into account the above-mentioned existing instruments, Zakarpattia Region has a great potential and capacity to implement the European initiatives in border countries and in Ukraine in general.

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PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE SLOVAK-UKRAINIAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

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The cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine is currently primarily determined by external factors and unfortunately, to a much smaller extent, by local and regional initiatives, opportunities and partnerships, despite the fact that certain cross-border initiatives have survived in bad as well as good times through their personal commitment and long-term cross-border partnerships at local level but there are just few examples of them. This is also caused by basic institutional conditions for the development of the cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine, including rules for a common border regime, movement of persons, goods, services and capital. To a considerable extent, they depend on agreements between the EU and Ukraine. Without any changes in EU and Ukraine relations no fundamental changes in the institutional conditions for the development of the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation at bilateral and regional levels may be induced.

The second significant factor is the social and economic backwardness of the border region (eastern Slovakia and Transcarpathia), not only behind the other regions in Slovakia and Ukraine but especially behind the other regions in Europe. This hinders the region from creating sufficient resources for investment in encouraging any cross-border cooperation.

When preparing the Development Strategy for Slovak-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation until 2020 the expert team extensively mapped any barriers to cross-border cooperation through interviews with over 200 institutions⁹⁷ that are involved in cross-border cooperation initiatives in the Slovak-Ukrainian border region. The research confirmed a significant influence of external factors on the current state of cross-border cooperation and their dominance.

⁹⁷ Benč, V., Duleba, A., Lukša, O., Nosa-Pilipenko, N. (et all): *Stratégia rozvoja slovensko-ukrajinskej cezhraničnej spolupráce do roku 2020 (so zameraním na rozvoj spolupráce medzi Prešovským a Košickým samosprávnym krajom SR a Zakarpatskou oblasťou Ukrajiny)*. Agentúra regionálneho rozvoja Prešovského samosprávneho kraja, Prešov, 2014.

Only three out of the top ten barriers identified are able to influence institutions more considerably at local and regional levels (See Box 1).

Box 1: Top 10 problems identified in SK-UA CBC area (ranked according priority)

- 1) Migration procedures related to Schengen border: visa, LBM permissions
- 2) Legal Schengen border crossing: long waiting times, ineffective and long-standing procedures (esp. custom), absence of services for travellers at the border crossing points etc.
- 3) *Absence of joint development and territorial planning in the CBC area*
- 4) Poor infrastructure, esp. transport and border crossings
- 5) Different state and administrative systems in both countries (e.g. big differences in competences of regional and local authorities)
- 6) Different access to external funds for development of CBC area, esp. non-existence of regional development funds in Ukraine
- 7) Weak or absent harmonization of Ukrainian legislative with the EU (norms, standards), esp. in the area that could help CBC trade and business cooperation
- 8) *Weak and non-effective regional institutions that should support CBC (esp. Euroregions, regional governments etc.)*
- 9) *Absence of regional/local tools for the support of CBC*
- 10) Absence of statistics and information on CBC and on development of CBC area

European cooperation

The ideal and most positive scenario for the development of the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation is a full membership of Ukraine in the EU, which would result in complete removal of obstacles to cross-border cooperation on the border of Slovakia and Ukraine. The ratification of the association agreement between the EU and Ukraine could offer new modernisation prospects to eastern Slovakia and Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia) and new opportunities for mutual cooperation. However, it is required that all actors, not only at national but also regional level, are prepared. Therefore, it is essential to hold a regular dialogue between the actors at least, and it is necessary to build stable cross-border networks or institutions that develop cross-border cooperation.

The political provisions of the Association Agreement (AA) between the EU and Ukraine were signed on 27 March 2014, and its economic part, including DCFTA, was signed on 27 June 2014. However, only the full implementation of the Association Agreement, i.e. the adoption of the entire set of EU legislation and completion of transitional periods for its adoption and introduction into practice, will mean the integration of Ukraine into the internal area of the four freedoms of the

EU. The ratification of the agreement may take several years and its implementation decades with respect to the current situation in the east of Ukraine.

The implementation of the Association Agreement should help Ukraine to:

- Gradually achieve a visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine;
- Establish the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA);
- Strengthen the sectoral reforms in Ukraine in compliance with the European acquis and adopt the reform process of the integration of Ukraine into the EU;
- Access EU sectoral communitarian programmes in order to integrate with the EU in relevant sectors – the functional initiative of energy safety is a good example;
- Enhance the addressness of the EU financial assistance depending on the progress of Ukraine in implementing the reforms;
- Apply the observance of a differentiated attitude of the EU towards Ukraine according to regular evaluation of progress and political willingness to implement reforms (a possibility of accelerating or slowing down the association process).

The removal of the visa regime and economic integration of Ukraine with the EU will mean a significant change in the character of the border between Slovakia and Ukraine as an EU external border. Visa-free travel and trade without tariff and non-tariff measures will encourage the economic growth of the border regions on both sides of the Slovak-Ukrainian border. The implementation of the association agreement will contribute to the harmonisation of the legislative, administrative and business environments between Slovakia and Ukraine, and last but not least, it will encourage to revive the economic development of the regions on both sides of the border. Such expectations are justified by the experience gained from the impact of association agreements of the V4 countries on the economic development of their neighbouring regions lying along the border with Germany and Austria in the last twenty five years.

Economic factors

The socio-economic status of the border area is a significant factor influencing cross-border cooperation. Similarly, it is significantly dependent on the economic and financial policy of the state or the EU. Eastern Slovakia is one of the most backward regions in Slovakia and Europe in terms of social and economic aspects. It lies in the so-called north-south zone of socio-economic backwardness and “poverty” that extends from Kaliningrad along the Poland-Belarus, Poland-Ukraine, Slovakia-Ukraine, Hungary-Ukraine borders through the Balkans to the Mediterranean Sea. Throughout the European Union the west-east gradient of regional poverty can be seen. It can also be seen in Slovakia to a smaller extent.

Currently, eastern Slovakia is at GDP per capita of less than 49% below the EU-28 average. This region is the worst at the indicator in comparison with the other Slovak regions. However, in the last 15 years a positive fact that Slovakia converges to the average of the EU countries, in terms of economy, has emerged and all Slovak regions are economically growing. However, the west-east gradient is apparent, where the Bratislava region is one of the most dynamic socio-economically developing regions in the EU, on the contrary the growth of eastern Slovakia is the slowest one out of all Slovak regions. However, in comparison with many European regions the growth of eastern Slovakia is positive.

Tab 1: Comparison of the level of GDP per capita against the EU-28 average in %, NUTS 2 level

	1996	2000	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Growth
Praha (CZ)	128	139	163	177	175	176	173	171	+43
Stredná Morava (CZ)	65	58	62	64	64	67	66	67	+2
Chemnitz (GE)	81	77	81	83	81	80	84	86	+5
Stuttgart (GE)	n.a.	143	139	141	142	133	145	152	+9
Észak-Magyarország (HU / Miskolc)	36	35	41	39	40	40	40	40	+4
Wien (AT)	n.a.	182	170	161	162	164	165	165	-17
Mazowieckie (PL)	n.a.	74	78	87	89	97	103	107	+33
Podkarpackie (PL)	34	34	35	37	39	41	42	44	+10
Malopolskie (PL)	n.a.	42	43	47	49	52	54	56	+14
Slaskie (PL)	n.a.	52	57	58	61	66	68	70	+18
Bratislavský región (SK)	104	109	129	160	167	178	179	186	+84
Západné Slovensko (SK)	48	47	54	66	69	68	69	72	+24
Stredné Slovensko (SK)	41	41	47	54	59	58	61	59	+18
Východné Slovensko (SK)	38	38	42	46	51	49	50	51	+13

Source: Author's calculations based on EUROSTAT data, 2014.

There are more reasons of the backwardness of eastern Slovakia. The first one arises from the territory, its position and character, that have been forming the development in the long term. Eastern Slovakia was until the socialistic industrialization predominantly agricultural country with no larger industrial enterprises. During the socialistic industrialization the differences were wiped out but the focus on large enterprises in the times of socialism in order to employ whole districts proved to be disadvantageous after the market economy emerged. Moreover, eastern Slovakia has low population density in bigger cities and a scattered settlement structure in the form of a large number of small villages.

The depressive character of adjacent regions of neighbouring countries is an important development factor. The region of eastern Slovakia is a neighbour of the least developed regions of Hungary, Poland and Ukraine, that with their economic power, potential and cooperation fail to stimulate the economic development to a greater extent. The incomplete transformation process of the regional economy structure and a low investment inflow, whether foreign or domestic, is a problem. With the existence of a significant barrier in the form of the Schengen border, its eccentric, awkward position and lack of transport infrastructure (logistic linking to markets) eastern Slovakia is at a significant competitive disadvantage that is further deepening its backwardness.

An example of a backward neighbouring region is Zakarpattia Oblast. It is one of the most backward regions in Ukraine. Along with Ternopil Oblast and Chernivtsi Oblast they are the three most backward regions in Ukraine, while Zakarpattia in 2012 reached only 53.4% GDP per capita in comparison with the Ukraine average (See Tab 2).

Tab 2: Regional GDP per capita in Ukraine in UAH (Hryvnia)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ukraine	7 273	9 372	11 630	15 496	20 495	19 832	23 600	28 488	32 002
Autonomous Republic of Crimea	4 951	6 460	8 101	10 574	13 898	13 933	16 507	19 467	22 675
Vinnitsia Oblast	4 700	5 966	7 328	9 159	12 061	12 145	14 332	17 768	20 253
Volyn Oblast	4 771	6 285	7 397	9 711	12 340	11 796	13 916	16 993	19 249
Dnipropetrovsk Oblast	8 609	11 909	15 239	20 868	30 918	27 737	34 709	42 068	44 650
Donetsk Oblast	9 713	12 490	15 725	20 197	26 028	23 137	28 986	36 446	38 907
Zhytomyr Oblast	4 397	5 554	6 636	8 485	11 545	11 419	14 616	17 184	19 551
Zakarpattia Oblast	4 238	5 373	6 576	8 452	10 626	10 081	12 278	14 455	17 088
Zaporizhia Oblast	8 093	10 683	13 369	18 022	23 232	20 614	23 657	27 567	30 656
Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast	5 238	6 916	8 157	10 055	12 940	12 485	14 814	19 386	23 379
Kiev Oblast	6 652	8 673	10 918	15 033	20 593	21 769	26 140	34 420	40 483
Kirovohrad Oblast	5 122	6 394	7 723	9 546	13 515	13 096	15 533	19 918	22 082
Luhansk Oblast	5 973	8 131	10 085	13 628	18 338	16 562	19 788	25 067	25 950
Lviv Oblast	5 396	6 657	8 351	10 915	13 902	14 093	16 353	20 490	24 387
Mykolaiv Oblast	6 424	7 801	9 769	12 227	16 175	17 050	20 276	23 402	24 838
Odessa Oblast	7 028	8 619	10 379	13 827	19 638	20 341	22 544	25 748	27 070
Poltava Oblast	8 841	11 574	14 330	18 500	22 476	22 337	29 652	35 246	38 424
Rivne Oblast	4 817	6 269	7 724	9 695	12 217	11 699	13 785	16 735	18 860
Sumy Oblast	5 009	6 497	7 848	10 249	13 622	13 631	15 711	19 800	21 722
Ternopil Oblast	3 516	4 603	5 819	7 510	9 688	10 240	11 713	15 055	16 644
Kharkiv Oblast	7 182	9 025	11 353	15 645	21 294	21 228	23 639	27 966	29 972
Kherson Oblast	4 546	5 713	6 744	8 122	11 944	12 256	14 346	16 990	17 910
Khmelnytskyi Oblast	4 549	5 764	7 023	9 100	11 932	11 780	13 602	17 260	19 920
Cherkasy Oblast	4 853	6 681	8 209	10 331	14 581	14 393	17 325	21 082	24 558

Chernivtsi Oblast	3 589	4 654	5 650	7 369	9 771	9 383	10 939	13 228	14 529
Chernihiv Oblast	5 163	6 474	7 714	10 081	13 213	13 121	15 406	19 357	22 096
Kyiv City	23 130	28 780	35 210	49 795	61 592	61 088	70 424	79 729	97 429
Sevastopol City	5 847	7 452	10 079	12 961	16 592	16 966	20 455	24 564	25 872

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2014.

Coordination of policies

There is a serious problem with support of cross-border cooperation development as a result of poor coordination of individual policies in the horizontal plane but also poor coordination of actors in the vertical plane: the EU institutions – national institutions – local/regional actors. A good example at the horizontal level is local border traffic where the uniform specification of the authorized area within the range of 30 or 50 km from the borderline does not respect the uniqueness of border regions. This regime performs well along the border between Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast. However, this is not the case of Slovakia and Ukraine, especially, for the reason that it is more convenient for the Ukrainians to obtain a visa than a permit for local border traffic, and also for the reason that there is the only bigger town (Michalovce) in the defined area on the Slovak side, i.e. such permits are not attractive.⁹⁸

Support programmes offer more examples. The Slovak-Ukrainian border region is currently receiving some external financial assistance especially from the European funds that support cohesion. They especially include the ENPI Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine multilateral programme, but there are also other bilateral or trilateral programmes overlapping in the region that support cross-border situations, including the Norwegian financial mechanism. The paradox is that, on the one hand, the migration and customs policies introduce measures for limiting the movement of persons and goods, but the programmes focused on supporting cross-border cooperation encourage such mobility.

The Carpathian euroregion is an example in which the coordination of individual programmes does not work. The ENPI multilateral programme does not involve Poland, on the contrary bilateral programmes, such as the ones between Poland and Slovakia or between Hungary and Slovakia prove to be more effective. At the same time Romania is not involved in the Visegrád cooperation with Ukraine or Moldavia either. This could be solved by developing a joint cross-border programme titled “Carpathian Space Programme” following the example of the “Danube Strategy” or also the “Alpine Space Programme 2014-2020” that develops the cross-border cooperation in the regions of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzer-

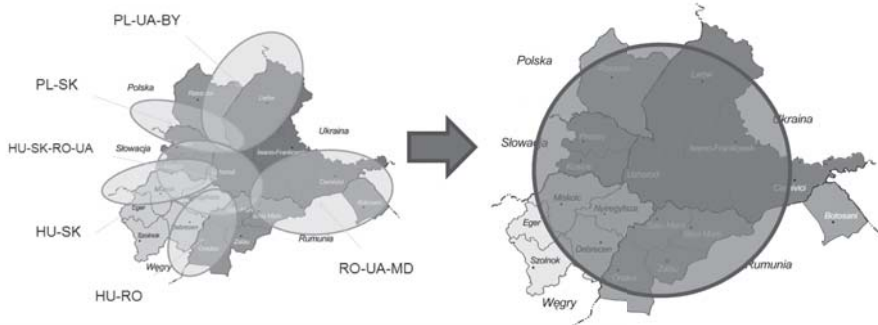
⁹⁸ See more, e.g. Benč, V., Mytryayeva, S.: *Small Border Movement: Possibilities of Modification of the Treaty between Slovakia and Ukraine* (in SK and UA languages). RC SFPA, n.o., Prešov, 2011.

land. Unfortunately, this idea is not much supported among national authorities in some countries of the Carpathian region.

Chart 1: Overlapping of CBC programmes in Carpathian Euroregion and possibilities for the joint “Carpathian Space Programme”

CBC programs in 2007 – 2013

Possible joint CBC “Carpathian Space Programme” after 2020



Source: *Carpathian Euroregion Poland, 2013.*

The way of implementing cross-border programmes also suffers from many shortcomings. Decision-making about allocations for specific projects is to a great extent dependent on decision-making of European and national institutions (e.g. the Government Office of SR, ministries) and to a limited extent it supports the priorities of local and regional actors. The evaluation of implemented projects is often carried out using only a number of projects, funds spent and the allocation of funds to individual countries and regions. There is an absence of evaluating impacts of individual programmes on enhancing cross-border cooperation and mutual relations on the one hand, and on the social and economic development of border areas including job generation, trade development, etc.

At the same time demanding bureaucratic and administrative requirements (as well as other factors) during the implementation of projects often cause that national institutions prioritise the support of large infrastructure projects. It is often questionable whether, e.g. reconstruction of a road, cultural house, school etc. in the border region also has any cross-border impacts. While in the territory of the EU member states national support mechanisms are implemented within the EU cohesion policy, often projects supporting modernization of public infrastructure. Again, no one evaluates overlapping. The limited resources for cross-border cooperation often supply lack of investment in modernization of public infrastructure, which makes cross-border co-

operation poorer, e.g. people-to-people type or projects that should develop human capital for cross-border cooperation in the long run.

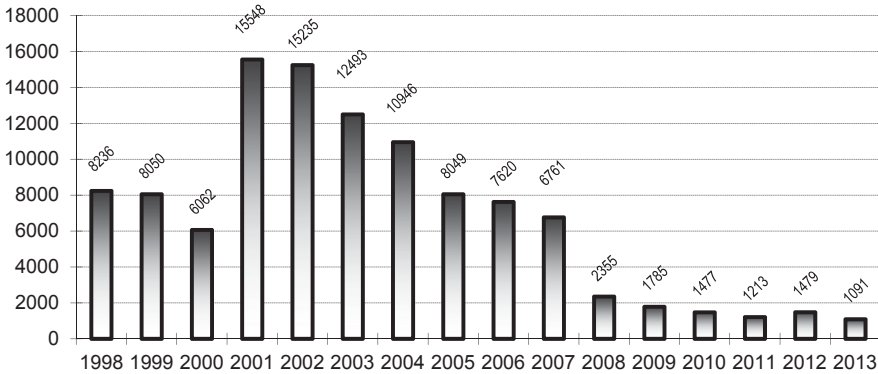
The case of poor joint advocacy of regional interests at EU level and also poor coordination of national and regional actors is also currently unsuccessful project of building west-south transport corridor “Via Carpathia”, that failed to get support for the period of 2014-2020 and did not make it to the priorities of TEN (Trans-European



transport networks). Nowadays, it is not possible for an inhabitant of eastern Slovakia to get to, for example, Warsaw in reasonable time. There are no direct air, train or bus connections. The fastest way how to get, for example, from Košice to Warsaw (air distance 390 km), is by car (minimum 6 hours), by train minimum 11 hours with at least two transfers (Žilina, Krakow) and by plane minimum 6 hours, depending on the fact if you are lucky enough to get a convenient flight via Vienna or you have to travel half of Europe via other airports.

Schengen border

The migration policy and the Schengen border in the regime currently operated are the greatest barrier to the cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine. It is also emphasised by the dominance of safety aspect and related investment in the border control that Slovakia implemented before and after its accession to the Schengen area (in December 2007). It resulted in a positive development in the area of illegal migration, when the number of illegal migrants caught significantly dropped and the border is one of the best-guarded land borderlines in the Schengen area. At the same time the crime rate in the border region as well as the number of illegally employed foreigners in Slovakia was reduced. However, such successes are not only linked to the Schengen border but also to other adopted policies (e.g. higher penalties for illegal employment, etc.). At the same time the Customs Administration authority managed to make the fight with illegal imports of cigarettes, petrol, fake brand clothing, perfumes and other tax and budget sensitive commodities significantly more successful.

Chart 2: Illegal migration over the SK-UA border (number of captured illegal migrants)

Source: UHCP, Presidium of the Police Force of SR, 2014.

On the other hand, tightening the visa policy at the end of 2007 led to a dramatic drop in visa applications among the Ukrainians and also an increase in the number of rejected visa applications. The introduction of the so-called "gradual system" of visa issuance meant that first multiple year visas were not issued until March 2009. These measures caused that since 2009 there has been a dramatic and later smaller fall in the number of travellers who cross the Slovak-Ukrainian border. In five years this decrease meant 1.5 mil persons (See Tab 3)! The drop was also partially caused by the adoption of new European rules on duty and tax free imports entered into force on 1 December 2008, where e.g. on land borders the maximum number of imported cigarettes dropped from 200 pieces to 40 pieces, which greatly reduced "cigarette tourism". At the same time the percentage of travellers significantly changed as well, where e.g. in 2004 the percentage of Ukrainian travellers was 73% out of all travellers, in 2008 Slovak travellers dominated (62%) in comparison to Ukrainians (38%). Currently the percentage gradually equalizes: 52% Slovak travellers versus 48% Ukrainian travellers.

Despite the reduced number of travellers it is not possible to cut down wait time at border crossing points. According to a survey⁹⁹ the average wait time is 234 minutes (about 4 hours) in one way at the busiest crossing point Vyšné Nemecké - Uzhhorod, although recently wait times have considerably been reduced in the direction Slovakia → Ukraine, however, wait times from

⁹⁹ Benč, V., Buzalka, J.: *Analysis of the visa systems of the Visegrad countries – the case of Slovakia*. Research study for Marta Kindler & Ewa Matejko (eds.): „Gateways to Europe Checkpoints on the EU External Land Border Monitoring Report“, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw, 2008.

Ukraine to Slovakia climb up to several hours and some travellers even report days when waiting for over 6 hours despite a low number of vehicles crossing the border. In our research in 2012 we monitored the border crossing wait time, which was on average 12 minutes per car¹⁰⁰. For example, on the Norway-Russia Schengen border the Russian side has a standardized limit of 3 minutes per vehicle, if there are no problems with the passengers of the vehicle, or the transported goods need to be thoroughly inspected.

Tab 3: Legal migration over SK-UA border crossings

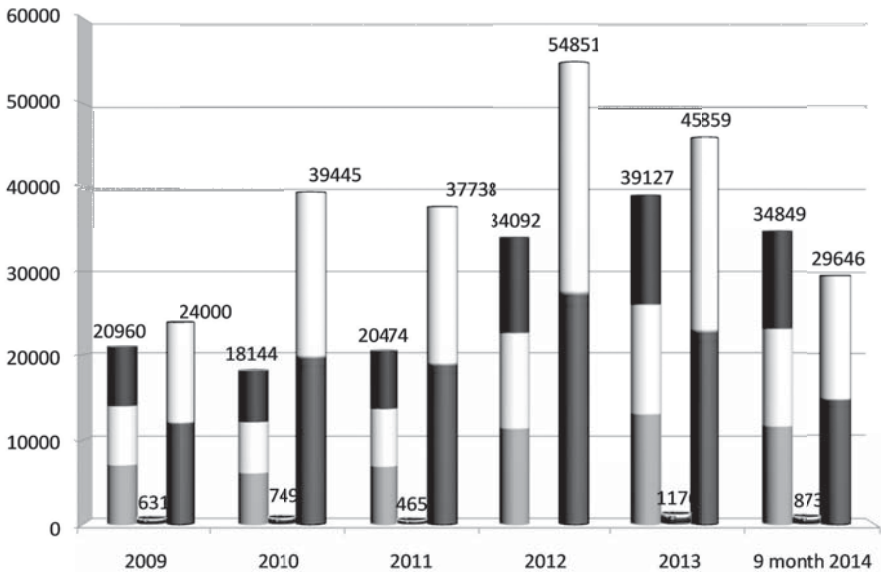
Year	2005		2007		2008		2010		
Number of persons in total	1 876 421		2 540 180		3 374 989		2 481 943		
	2011		2012		2013				
	from SK	to SK	from SK	to SK	from SK	to SK			
Number of persons by the direction of crossing in total	936 074	984 748	921 422	1 022 341	899 692	969 733			
There of:	Nationals of EU (including nationals of SK)	553 947	556 265	524 335	582 539	480 173	498 242		
	Third country nationals (mostly including nationals of UA)	382 127	428 483	397 087	439 802	419 519	471 491		
Number of persons in total	1 920 822		1 943 763		1 869 425				

Source: UHCP, Presidium of the Police Force of SR, 2014.

The problem that limits cross-border cooperation is also poor local border traffic (LBT). In fact, both states liberalised the mutual agreement on LBT to a maximum extent with supplement dated 17 June 2011. However, it did not help to significantly increase numbers of permits issued for LBT. In comparison with Hungary and Poland the number of permits issued is very low (See Graf 3). It seems that the area limited to 50 km for LBT, as stipulated by the Brussels, is in case of Slovakia and Ukraine insufficient. The only larger town within 50 km on the Slovak side is Michalovce with a population of about 40 thousand. Therefore, it is apparent that the citizens of Ukraine are hardly interested in LBT in case of a similar procedure for issuing visa and permits for LBT, and apart from visiting their families they can do nothing in such a narrowly defined border area.

¹⁰⁰ Wagner, V., Benč, V., Klaižner, A.: *Treatment of Third Country Nationals at the EU's External Borders – Phase II. Vyšné Nemecké BCP (Slovakia): Case study report.* International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Vienna, 2012.

Chart 3: Comparison of permits issued for LBT between Slovakia, Hungary and Poland for the Ukrainians



Source: Consulates General of Poland, Hungary and Slovakia in Ukraine, 2014.

From the perspective of the regional level there is a problem caused by an absence of tools (especially financial ones) for supporting cross-border cooperation. Despite the large bilateral agreement base between regions, cities and villages the implementation of joint activities is often based only on ad hoc decisions and subordinated to other priorities. As an example there were crisis years of 2009 and 2010 when local governments as first budget expenditure with the aim to save sources cut down expenditure for cross-border and international cooperation. Until now strategic planning and programming of the joint development of the cross-border region towards long-term, systematic and coordinated cross-border cooperation has been a significant problem. The currently prepared *Development Strategy of Slovak-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation until 2020*¹⁰¹ is partially trying to solve it. Despite that it is necessary to passportize the cross-border area and prepare other related documents, whether in spatial planning, investment strategic documents etc.

¹⁰¹ Benč, V., Duleba, A., Lukša, O., Nosa-Pilipenko, N. (et all): *Stratégia rozvoja slovensko-ukrajinskej cezhraničnej spolupráce do roku 2020 (so zameraním na rozvoj spolupráce medzi Prešovským a Košickým samosprávnym krajom SR a Zakarpatskou oblasťou Ukrajiny)*. Agentúra regionálneho rozvoja Prešovského samosprávneho kraja, Prešov, 2014.

Lack of information on opportunities for cross-border cooperation between involved institutions, poor media coverage of cross-border cooperation, poor coordination of activities in cross-border cooperation and an absence of data and information on the situation constitute a problem, and activities in the border areas rules out better managing of cross-border cooperation and goal-oriented measures. Also, insufficient development of cross-border competences is a problem as well, which requires especially a change in competences of local governments on the Ukrainian side of the border. Another important task for further development of cross-border cooperation must also include further networking and clustering of actors from both sides of the border.

Recommendations for enhancing and intensifying the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation

1. Slovakia and the EU should more significantly support Ukraine in its efforts to approximate the EU and solve the current crisis situation in Ukraine. The objective should be to develop a comprehensive plan for bilateral assistance of SR to Ukraine in implementing the association agreement, including DCFTA, following the model of the SR assistance plan for implementation of the Ukraine action plan with the EU from 2005. Further, to conclude an intergovernmental agreement on providing the assistance in coordinating the activities of ministries and other stakeholders. The assistance plan must be prepared according to consultations at intergovernmental level in order to identify “best practices” in Slovakia within the sectoral segments of the Ukrainian association agreement that Slovakia gained while harmonizing with the EU sectoral legislation during the implementation of its own association agreement, accession process to the EU, as well as during the transposition of sectoral legislation to the national legislation of the SR after its accession to the EU. The preparation of its draft should involve any Slovak entities that have experience in implementing development projects in Ukraine or are interested in joining the cooperation and provision of technical assistance to Ukraine, as well as their partners, including business entities, authorities of local and regional governments and non-governmental organizations.
2. Slovakia as a member state should within the EU efforts try to expand the number of sectoral policies that are part of AA/DCFTA with Ukraine, under the condition that 1) in their case Ukraine qualifies to achieve better progress in approximating the EU legislation and policies in comparison with other sectoral policies included in the AA/DCFTA; 2) on which the principle of sectoral agreement could be applied that can be concluded before the time necessary for the implementation of the entire community acquis included in the AA/DCFTA expires. Currently this principle is being only applied in case of the visa dialogue and energy sector. Slovakia should

endeavour to push Ukraine through to adopt the EU individual instrument package for provision of technical assistance tailored to meet its requirements for the implementation of the AA/DCFTA. The package should comprise the technical assistance in implementing the Association Agreement programme primarily focused on supporting political modernization, including building democratic institutions and sectoral tools designed for sectoral modernization of Ukraine and development of the cross-border cooperation on the borders of Ukraine and the EU.

3. To revise the communication strategy concerning the EU/Slovakia in Ukraine. Keep explaining the AA/DCFTA – why, what price and what it will mean for Ukraine etc. To share the Slovak experience gained from its accession process and membership in the EU, including its experience gained through the implementation of campaigns for improving access to public information concerning the EU. To encourage any joint information projects on the EU in Ukraine, at expert level as well as the level of informing citizens through different forms. Part of the SR bilateral assistance could involve a proposal for communication strategy presenting Slovak reforms and experience gained from the accession process and membership in the EU with respect to the specific conditions of southeastern regions of Ukraine. The communication strategy should not only include the content “what to communicate” but also the institutional form of encouraging a public discussion in Ukraine concerning the issues arising from the European integration process of Ukraine following the model of the National Convention on the EU in Ukraine conducted between 2010-2013.
4. Key thematic priorities for mutual cooperation:

Energy sector: to develop system partnerships and cooperation in the area of energy media transit; support activities in energy savings and in efficient use of renewable energy resources; technical assistance in a comprehensive system change in the energy sector system in Ukraine, from changing the legislation, introducing standards, to energy certification of buildings or monitoring energy consumption meters. To prepare joint bilateral projects with Ukraine in the area of enhancing energy efficiency and using alternative energy sources. To initiate negotiations with Ukrainian partners on bilateral cooperation in investing in reconstructions of municipal heating and hot water supply distribution systems, in reducing energy performance of buildings, modernization of waste management etc. The modernization of municipal infrastructure in cities and villages is one of the greatest development challenges that Ukraine is facing, including the Slovak neighbouring border regions.

Decentralization of public administration in Ukraine – the reform of state administration and building self-governing institutions at local and regional level through sharing Slovak experience in its public administration reform. To develop an action programme for cooperation between ministries of interior and finance, Prešov Self-Governing Region (PSK), Košice Self-Governing Region (KSK) and Zakarpattia Oblast of Ukraine (ZOU) with the aim to share experience in the area of public administration reform and regional development.

Improving the migration management, including measures for improving the situation at border crossing points and also supporting educational projects among the public in the area of migration and its positive and negative impacts. To hold consultations at the level of the ministry of interior (border and alien police) and ministry of foreign affairs of Slovakia and Ukraine with the goal to identify opportunities for provision of assistance of the SR to Ukraine in harmonization of the Schengen acquis legislation. To prepare a common impact study of introducing visa free traffic for mutual travelling of citizens and recommendations (route map) for competent authorities of the public administration of the SR and Ukraine in order to get ready for the introduction of a visa free regime.

Preparation of gradual opening of the labour market to the EU for Ukrainian citizens. To hold consultations at the level of ministries of economy, social affairs and labour of the SR and Ukraine in order to evaluate adherence to the agreement on mutual employment of citizens, including coordination of attitudes in future negotiations between the EU and Ukraine on conditions of gradual opening of the labour markets in EU countries for the citizens of Ukraine, which forms part of the association agreement. The opening of the labour market of the EU/SR for the citizens of Ukraine, and vice versa, will be a crucial factor of regional development of border regions. Therefore, the representatives of border regions should also be involved in consultations.

The national support of the implementation of strategic development documents at regional and local level in the area of cross-border cooperation (Strategy for new forms of cooperation of NGOs and governmental institutions, PSK and KSK Development strategy of cross-border cooperation, Development strategy of Carpathian euroregion, etc. Development of national and regional instruments, including the financial ones for encouraging the implementation of cross-border programmes and strategies. National and regional entities should primarily try to fulfil the identified objectives and support of the implementation of proposed activities within the aforementioned *Development Strategy for the Slovak-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation until 2020* (See Tab 4).

Tab 4: Aims, activities and tools for supporting the SK-UA CBC at regional level

Aims	Activities
Intensifying socio-economic development of border region	Creating better conditions for common development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in border region Creating conditions for new investments in border region Improving the interaction of enterprises, know-how creators, middlemen and users, including CBC clusters formation
Improving both Slovak and Ukrainian border management – common procedures and transfer of good practices	Educational and networking activities of customs officers, border guards and involved representatives of public and private sectors on both the border sides Regular monitoring of border management and visa issuing Information activities towards passengers, migrants, visa and small border traffic permission applicants Improving civil defence and rescue services cooperation
Modernisation of the border infrastructure	Upgrading the infrastructure via improving functionality and increasing border crossings capacity Increasing the quantity of border crossing on the common border Modernisation of conveying corridors (road, railway) towards a common border
Multi-sector cross-border cooperation development for the purpose of sustainable border regions development	Intensifying a research-and-scientific and educational cooperation Improving cooperation in the field of tourism Improving cooperation in the field of culture Strengthening cooperation in the development and protection of natural heritage, including human activities negative impacts, and flood control Upgrading and intensifying social contacts Improving and strengthening self-government interaction
Support of Ukraine - to Europe integration process and reforms for its approximation to the EU integrated internal area standards	Development of Eastern Partnership strategic framework in CBC area “Technical assistance” and know-how transfer, esp. on DCFTA and SMEs trade and investment Cooperation focused on flagships of Ukraine’s EU integration process: Visa Dialogue and Energy interaction Public administration reform and regional development
Strengthening management of the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation	Creating instruments to support cross-border cooperation, primarily by establishing Cross-border Cooperation Fund, and regular dialogue at regional level Improving border area regional development management Intensifying and upgrading exchange of information between cross-border actors

Source: Benč, V., Duleba, A., Lukša, O., Nosa-Pilipenko, N. (et all): *Development strategy for the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation until 2020, 2014.*

Additional possible topics for mutual cross-border cooperation at the level of individual and minor projects:

- a. Fighting corruption – civic forms of promotion and watchdog activities – transparency and improvements in processes in all relevant areas and promotion of good governance at all levels of public administration in the border region.
- b. Development of mutual scientific and research cooperation, cooperation in educational programmes and science including adult education (lifelong learning and training programmes), including know-how transfer between universities, research institutes and enterprises.
- c. Support of business development, joint investments and mutual trade, including technology transfer and encouragement of job creation (also through community initiatives) in order to fight poverty (development programmes focused on assistance in job generation with the emphasis on young people, elderly, socially excluded groups etc.) especially in border areas. To encourage information and awareness concerning cross-border investment opportunities but also e.g. concerning social responsibility of businesses – work with companies and transfer of best practices that may work in the existing environment, cultivation of cross-border business environment.

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