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Borders and Cross-border Co-operation in the Countries of Central and South-eastern Europe

Borders

Borders are scars on the face of the Earth. If this statement is true than Central and South-eastern Europe is an especially scar-faced part of our Planet. Most part of the area is covered by small countries with long continental borders. While 86 % of all borders in the European Union are coastlines and only 14 % land borders, the respective figures for Central and Southeast Europe are 41 and 59 %. Out of the almost 30000 km European land borders more than 16100 km, which is more than 50 %, can be found in the Central and Southeast European region. The length of borders per 1 million inhabitants is 36 km in the present European Union. The same figure for Central and Southeast Europe is 136 km per 1 million inhabitants.

However, not only are borders long, they also changed a lot during the 20th century. There is only one border in length of 420 km where neither the border line nor the name of the neighbouring countries did change during the 20th century: this is a part of the Danube border between Romania and Bulgaria, which is 2,6 % (!) of the total length of borders.

Borders can be classified from the points of view of:

- geography;
- ethnic and social features;
- economics;
- political characteristics;
- their status in the EU accession process
- permeability, i.e. the physical objects and administrative arrangements which facilitate to cross these borders.

From geographic point of view: 3900 km, about 27 % of the continental borders are constituted by rivers, which are dividing and simultaneously connecting neighbouring regions, depending on the number and type of bridges and ferry connections. 2700 km, 18 % of the continental borders are constituted by mountain ridges. These borders, however, can be further differentiated between more passable mountain ranges of older geologic origin and geologically younger, sparsely populated, only at few places passable mountain ranges, like the Alps, Dinarics and Carpathians. Finally, 55 % of the borders do not constitute any substantial obstacle of cross-border transportation and contacts. These are the open

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so-called "green" borders.

Paradoxically, open borders with no natural barriers can be found mostly along the future external borders of the European Union, along the Eastern borders of the Baltic states and Poland and along the Eastern and Southern borders of Hungary. At the same time, substantial natural barriers are to be found mostly along the future internal borders. Both represent some difficulties and require serious efforts. On the one hand, costly projects of constructing new roads, motorways, tunnels, bridges, viaducts on the future internal borders are to be implemented in order to overcome the natural barriers. On the other hand, expensive investments are also required to protect the new open external borders from undesired cross-border movements.

Three types of borders can be distinguished from ethnic and historical point of view. First, there are borders where the people on the two sides of the border belong to different ethnic communities, speak different languages, but they live beside each other since centuries and they developed traditional linkages and relation with each other. Second, there are borders where the people in neighbouring border areas belong to the same ethnic group and divisions – due to the changing borders – are of relatively recent origin. In many cases, close family links connect the two groups of people, relatives live on both sides of the border, borders constitute only political, but neither ethnic, nor linguistic nor social dividing lines. Finally, there are several long border sectors in this part of Europe where, due to historic events, the composition of the population changed radically on one or both sides of the border during the 20th century. The present inhabitants came to this area through organised or spontaneous migration movements, they did not have traditional contacts, personal or family linkages with their new neighbours before. Not only do the speak different languages, moreover they have – what is sometimes even more important – different cultural backgrounds.

From economic point of view, the decisive criterion is the size of the gap in economic welfare and development level between the two sides of the border. Previously, the largest gap existed on the external EU border. The income gap between the respective countries is 2:1 as an average: in the case of Poland, Hungary and Slovakia it is larger, in the case of Slovenia and the Czech Republic smaller. In the case of Hungary, however, the gap at regional level is substantially smaller, because the most developed regions of Hungary and Slovakia and the least developed region of Austria, Burgenland meet at the border.[1] Undoubtedly, the large development and income gap along these borders gives rise to various semi-legal or illegal activities, which might be a cause of some tensions. At the same time, the gap is also a source of quite legal extra entrepreneurial income on both sides of the border.

In recent years, as a consequence of diverging developments, a new gap has emerged along the eastern borders of the accession countries. Today, the former Iron Curtain is no longer the largest relative income gap in Europe. The largest gap is to be found between Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania on the one

[1] Based on regional GDP data of EUROSTAT.

side and the Ukraine and Moldova on the other. This gap is even larger than what could be expected on the basis of the respective national GDP figures, being the Western regions the poorest ones in the Ukraine, in contrast to the spatial pattern of development level in the other countries. Along these borders, one can observe the emergence of the same phenomena, as along the former Iron Curtain and their further intensification is to be expected. (Table 1.)

Different types of borders can be identified also from the point of view of access to EU funding. The first type is the border between EU member states and accession countries (2594 km). In principle, INTERREG instruments are available for common development programmes on the EU side and PHARE-CBC instruments in the candidate countries. Here, the basic problem is not even the unequal amount of resources on the two sides, rather the different procedures, programming methods and time schedules in respect to INTERREG and PHARE-CBC. Another problem is that borders to EU countries enjoy a privileged position in PHARE-CBC financing, while this privileged and priority treatment does not always coincide with the priorities of national regional policies in the accession countries.

2984 km of all borders in the region are borders between accession countries. Since 1995, in principle it is possible to utilise PHARE-CBC resources not only on the borders to the EU, but also on borders between accession countries. This facility, however, has been utilised differently, depending on the political relations between the respective countries. Slovak-Hungarian PHARE-CBC programmes, for example, started substantially later than other programmes, due to the unfriendly relations in the period of the Mečiar government. Common programmes and EU financing is sometimes facilitated, if an EU member state is also taking part in the framework of trilateral arrangements.

Unfortunately, the largest part, 7404 km of the borders in the region are borders between accession countries and other countries or between third countries not yet taking part in the accession process. On these borders, there is no EU support to cross-border co-operation available. Though some EU support exists now to all countries of the region (TACIS or CARDS), cross-border co-operation doesn't belong to the priority areas of their utilisation. Notwithstanding, there are several cross-border co-operation initiatives also along these borders, having no financial means, or financed from other resources. But there are other border sectors where even elementary communication is missing between the two sides of the borders (like the Croatian-Serb, the Albanian–Montenegrin border, the Croatian–Republika Srbska border in Bosnia-Hercegovina, or the Dnestr border between Moldova and the Ukraine).

Finally, borders can be classified according to their permeability, according to the frequency of border crossings and the administrative arrangements which facilitate the crossing of these borders. Borders within the European Union do not represent any obstacles of movements, border-crossing points, in the traditional meaning, do not exist any more. The borders of France, for example, can be crossed on more than 40000 roads, streets, bridges, paths, and passages. In contrast, Bulgaria's borders can be crossed altogether in 16, Yugoslavia's borders

in18 places. As an average, there is an international road border-crossing on each 60 km of the border. However, this density is much differentiated: There are 3 crossing points per 100 km border between EU member states and accession states, 1,5 crossing points per 100 km border among accession countries, 0,75 crossing points per 100 km border on borders to and between third countries. Furthermore, there are extreme cases. On the borders between Greece and Bulgaria, between Romania and the Ukraine the density is only 0,4 crossing per 100 km. This situation is rather strange, considering the fact that a large part of the present borders did not exist before World War I, World War II, or even before 1990. In 1992-94 the length of international borders within the region increased by 50 %, due to the dismembering of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. In the past, a relatively dense network of roads and railways connected the areas, which are now on the two sides of the borders. According to estimates, only 40 % of built roads, and 50 % of built railway lines crossing the borders are used presently as international border crossings.[2] Some other roads can be used only by citizens of the two neighbouring countries or regions, some are open only for a couple of hours daily, some only on holidays or during some extraordinary events, others can never be crossed, even the rails have been removed. (Table 2)

Border regions

The subjects and actors of regional cross-border co-operations are regions. Therefore, the political and legal status of these regions is a key factor in the development of cross-border co-operation.

Long land borders and small country areas imply that a very large part of the area can be regarded as border region. According to a former definition of the European Commission, border regions are NUTS3 level territorial units situated directly at the state's land border.[3] According to this definition, 21,5 % of the area of the European Union can be regarded as border region and15 % of the EU population is living in these regions. The figures for the Central and Southeast European countries are 61,7 % and 56 % respectively. Several small states, such as Slovakia, Slovenia and Macedonia can be regarded wholly as border region.

Cross-border co-operation schemes and co-operations existed already before the political change in 1989-90, overwhelmingly on the East-East borders. The most popular forms were city and region partnerships, i.e. the mutual visits of local leaders, the exchange of folkloric dance groups and similar events. The competencies of regions and cities concerning the conduct of foreign relations were very widely and vaguely defined, like in any other sphere of life. It is well known that communist countries were governed not by laws, rather by decrees and orders, but decisively by informal means and controls. Considering the monolithic

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[2] Based on the maps of T. Lijewski, Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In: Mihailović, Kosta: *Regional Development Experiences and Prospects in Eastern Europe*. The Hague: Mouton &Co, 1972.

[3] *Competitiveness and Cohesion: Trends in the Regions: Fifth Periodic Report*. European Commission, Brussels 1994, p.107.

structure of state and administration, the danger of local leaders acting differently from central policies did not exist. This was the reason why foreign policy competencies of regions under communism could be, seemingly, wide and liberal.

The situation substantially altered after the political change in 1989-90. The roots of these changes can be traced back to the past. Regional administrative units played a very important role in the one-party-state. They represented a much significant centre or focal point of the central planning system. Central planning determined and allocated resources and planning targets only down to regional level. Regional state and party organs, on the other hand, redistributed and allocated these resources and planning targets to the cities, municipalities. This allocation and redistribution power of the regional level was perceived – mostly justly – by municipalities and by their inhabitants as a means of arbitrariness, misuse and corruption. Consequently, one of the first acts of the new democratic legislators after the political change was to divest regional administrations of their former re-distributive and commanding power. Sometimes, this divestment went too far by depriving regions from all of their competencies or by abolishing them totally. All non-centralised competencies were allocated to the lowest level of government and administration: to the municipalities. Medium level, regional governments were abolished (in the case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia) or weakened substantially (in Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria).

This was the situation, when, after the opening of the borders, the regions of western EU member countries turned to the East and looked for partners in cross-border co-operation. They have found very weak regions, with hardly any competencies, or no regions at all. They regarded it as a legacy of communism and of the central planning system. This opinion was wrong, based on insufficient knowledge of the recent history and of the control mechanisms of the socialist party state. The weakening of the regions was a reaction to the former excessive redistributive and commanding power of medium level party and government organisations.

Because of the non-existence or of the lack of competencies at the regional level, the only competent level for co-operation was that of the municipalities. As a consequence, the first cross-border co-operation organisations on the German-Polish border were based on agreements on municipality level, and took strange spatial configurations. There are municipalities immediately at the border, which are not members of these new Euroregions, while others, far from the border, are members. Nevertheless, this arrangement was facilitated by the fact that Polish municipalities are relatively large, especially on the Western borders. This solution could not be followed at the Czech-German or at Hungarian borders, as the municipalities there were very small. On the Czech-German border they have experimented initially with the co-operation of districts (Kreise and Okresy). These agreements, however, were declared first null and void by the then Czech government, referring – otherwise correctly – to the fact that districts, being merely the locations of some central government branch offices, are not entitled to sign any binding document in the name of the municipalities. The same happened in the first Euroregion established exclusively by regions of Eastern countries, the so

called Carpathian Euroregion, which was formed in 1993 by neighbouring regions of 5 countries (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the Ukraine). Here, the central authorities of three countries (Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania) intervened simultaneously, with the same argumentation. Later, a *modus vivendi* had been found in both cases, so that the newly established Euroregions could, after all, survive.

The cases described above are witnessing the ambiguous, vague and undefined foreign policy competencies of Central and Eastern European regions. They were never defined clearly, not even after the political change. New laws on local governments were enacted in 1990 in all countries. At this time, foreign policy competencies of regions were not regarded as an important issue, therefore this problem was not included into the laws. Interventions by central governments, preventing the formation of cross-border agreements, were not based on any foreign policy competency arguments, but simply on the argument, that medium level organisations are not entitled to act and sign anything on behalf of local municipalities. It should be noted here, that this ambiguous legal situation enabled central governments, to act in specific cases rather arbitrarily, depending on their interests and political sympathies. They empowered regional authorities of certain political colour to sign such agreements, while prevented it in other cases.

Central governments could pursue this policy because for a long time they did not join any international convention which would hamper them to do so. The Council of Europe formulated as early as 1980 the Convention on cross-border co-operation of territorial authorities and communities in Madrid, but until 1991 no Central and Eastern European country became member of this organisation. Now, with the exception of Serbia and Montenegro, all countries of the region are members of the Council of Europe, but the ratification of the Madrid Convention proved to be a slow process. As late as 1996 only 3 countries (Hungary, Poland and the Ukraine) out of the 18 Central and Eastern European member states of the Council of Europe ratified the Convention. Since 1996 the ratification process accelerated but it has not been completed yet. For the regions of those countries, which ratified the convention, it became an extremely important point of reference, in many countries the only legal basis for the activities of the regions in international context.

Certainly, the political, legal and economic conditions for cross-border cooperation improved substantially since 1996 in the region. In several countries, an administrative-territorial reform was implemented (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Croatia). New regions were established; their competencies were substantially strengthened and enlarged. These developments are partly the results of the pressure of the European Commission to establish planning, programming and implementing capacities in the so called NUTS2 regions, which would be the beneficiaries of the Structural Funds, more specifically of the support for the less developed Objective 1 regions. Paradoxically, the newly established regions in the countries – with the exception of Poland – do not coincide with the defined NUTS2 regions.

Regrettably and quite independently from the above described administrative

reforms – in 2001, the European Commission decided in 2001, to entrust not the regions but one central agency with the management and control of structural funds in the new member countries until 2007. The argument for that decision was that the regional institutions and structures are not yet sufficiently prepared for the management of structural funds. This argument might even be true, the Commission made still a mistake. They pressed and urged the accession countries to establish regions, and regional institutions by implicitly suggesting that it was a precondition for the access to structural funds. The accession countries made serious efforts to comply with these requirements, facing sometimes internal political resistance and taking political risk. Now, this decision might be a technical one on the side of the Commission, but it has political consequences in the respective countries, causing disappointment and frustration in many places.

Cross-border co-operation structures and schemes

Basically, there are two types of cross-border co-operation structures: top-down structures, organised and controlled by central governments and bottom-up structures, initiated and organised by local organisations.

The main type of top-down structures is represented nowadays by INTERREG and PHARE-CBC programmes. INTERREG is a Community Initiative, where the programmes themselves are elaborated by central authorities and the decisions concerning the support of projects is made by the steering committee, composed of representatives of supranational, central, regional and local organisations. PHARE-CBC (cross-border co-operation) is an even more centralised financial facility, where decisions concerning projects are made in Brussels.

INTERREG and PHARE-CBNC programmes refer to the whole border sector between two countries, except special (e.g. trilateral) programmes aiming at the development of the border regions where the borders of three countries meet. INTERREG has been established at the beginning of the 90s, first aiming at the development of internal border regions within the EU, later extended to external borders. From 1994 on, it was possible to launch matching programmes in the associated countries financed from PHARE allocations. This possibility was open to Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. In 1995, with the accession of Austria, this opportunity has been opened to Slovakia and Hungary as well. From 1996 on it was made possible to initiate PHARE-CBC programmes also on borders between two candidate countries, subject to the condition that both countries initiate it and submit a common programme. Consequently, this option has not been realised at once, but gradually, depending on the relations between the two neighbouring countries. At present, however, there are PHARE-CBC programmes in place on all border sections between candidate countries (there are 7 INTERREG-PHARE-CBC and 10 PHARE-CBC-PHARE-CBC programmes).

Unfortunately, this is not the case on the border to non-accession countries. Theoretically, the support programmes to these countries – TACIS, CARDS, MEDA – can be utilised also for cross-border programmes. The small amount of support, the preference given to other objectives did not enable so far any signifi-

cant use of these assistance programmes for this purpose.

There are many reasons why these INTERREG–PHARE-CBC programmes cannot become really "common" programmes, one of which is certainly of organisational and procedural nature.

The EU support programmes for cross-border co-operation in Central and Southeast Europe are managed by three different General Directorates of the European Commission. INTERREG is managed by DG Regio, PHARE-CBC by DG Enlargement, while TACIS, CARDS and MEDA are managed by DG International Relations. Each of these Directorates issued different guidelines, each has different procedures, accounting and control methods, timetables, and different monitoring and evaluation techniques. INTERREG programmes are adopted as a seven-year programme, PHARE-CBC in an annual procedure. INTERREG has a programming approach, while PHARE-CBC allocations are approved project by project. Most of the INTERREG project selection decisions are made locally, in case of PHARE-CBC most decisions are made in Brussels, or nowadays by the EU delegations in the respective capitals. Under these conditions INTERREG-PHARE-CBC programmes can be hardly recognised anything else than parallel programmes on the two sides of the border.

Nevertheless there are not only procedural difficulties, but substantial differences also in the contents of the programmes. Most of the EU regions on the EU external borders are Objective 1 or at least Objective 2 regions, where there are other, substantially larger financial sources of development support than INTERREG. Therefore, INTERREG resources are used not for investments serving the provision of basic needs and services, but for development projects of secondary needs, aiming at cultural, recreation, leisure time and tourist developments, like riding paths, so called "vine routes", cultural centres and so on. One could say: INTERREG is only the cream on the cake. On the other side of the border, PHARE-CBC is frequently the only source of external support, which would be used for the solution of basic infrastructure problems, like feeding roads, water supply and sewage and waste disposal facilities. Therefore, the possibilities for common projects are rather restricted.

Furthermore it is still the better case, when each side is developing and submitting projects, according to its specific needs. It is a worse case, when preferences and priorities of the EU are imposed on the Eastern partners. One can cite as an example for this case a project on the Greek-Bulgarian border: In 1997-98, the EU and Greece initiated a project, to enlarge the living space of brown bears in the mountains along the Greek-Bulgarian border. No doubt, it is an important issue of sustainable development to prevent the extinction of this endangered animal species. According to this plan, passages and bridges were to be built over the roads on both sides of the border. On the Bulgarian side, it would be financed out of the PHARE-CBC resources. However it was the time of the deepest recession in Bulgaria, when a large part of the population suffered from poverty and, literally, from hunger. In the Bulgarian press, there were sharp protests against this project. Many Bulgarian citizens wanted to be registered as brown bears, because brown bears were beneficiaries of much more generous EU support than

people[4], and additionally, their border crossing was not only allowed, but facilitated, while Bulgarian citizens needed in those times a hardly obtainable visa to cross the border.

After the first wave of enlargement, supposedly taking place in 2004, 24 new INTERREG programmes are to be established on the new internal and 14 on the new external border sections. It leads to the question to what extent are the EU directorates prepared to implement this task. Inter-directorate co-ordination should be certainly improved. The insufficient level of co-ordination is demonstrated by the fact that in the period 2000-2006 the amount of INTERREG appropriations is increasing substantially, while its counterpart in the PHARE appropriations remains constant during the whole seven-year period.

The main types of bottom-up structures are the Euregions or Euroregions. The prototype of these regions has been established as early as 1958 on the German-Dutch border. Its organisational structures served as a model for all later established similar regions, at least formally. They emerged first along the Western borders of Germany, after the political change in 1990 they appeared also along the Eastern borders of Germany and later there was a diffusion to other Eastern borders. In Western Europe, however, outside the borders of Germany, they remained a rarity. Now the German-Polish, the German-Czech, the Polish-Czech and Polish-Slovak borders are fully covered by Euroregions and slowly the coverage will be full also on the Slovak-Hungarian border. On other border sections there are very few Euroregions and they are also of quite recent origin.

Members of Euroregions are municipalities on the German-Polish border and regional authorities in most of the other cases. The similarity to the model of the Dutch-German Euregion is, however, only the appearance, being their competencies and powers radically different from the original model. Their common boards do not dispose over any decision-making competencies; they can adopt only recommendations. Even these recommendations are mostly of general and vague character. The partner regions pay a membership fee which is enough to pay one or two employees in a secretariat, and to host the rotating meetings of the board. The members can apply, as any other juristic or natural person for INTERREG and PHARE-CBC project in their respective countries, but not as a Euroregion, but as member regions or municipalities. Of course, some co-ordination of these project proposals and applications can be carried out in the board or in the sectoral committees, but real common projects are very rare.

Nevertheless, the establishing of a Euroregion is of political significance, signalising the intention to co-operate. The lack of a Euroregion, especially on the densely covered border sections is a sign of reluctance and reserve, such as in the case of the Austrian-Slovak border. As early as 1994, the two governments proposed to build a bridge on the border river March-Morava between the two countries. The reaction to this proposal was an initiative for a local referendum in the Austrian border city of Dürnkrut, where the bridge was to be built. The local referendum voted against the construction of the bridge, which has not been built up

[4] Published on Internet homepages of different Bulgarian newspapers in1999.

to the present time. This case illustrates that co-operation is a bilateral issue and not always the accession countries are to be blamed for its failure.

The other forms of bottom up cross-border co-operation initiative are the so-called working communities.

Working communities have usually a much larger spatial dimension than Euroregions. They cover parts of several countries and many regions. Consequently, their function is also different from that of Euroregions. Working communities are engaged in more general problems of regional co-operation. Some really large projects might become the subjects of their activities, but they are more interested in topics like co-operation in the field of the press and mass communication, research & development, spatial planning, a common language of development planning, culture, environmental policy, preservation of the natural and cultural heritage, small- and medium enterprises and so on. It is rather a forum of collection, systematisation, dissemination and exchange of information. Shortly, working communities are rather specialised in the "software" aspects of cross-border co-operation.

There are three major co-operation structures of working community type in Central and Southeast Europe. The oldest one is the Alps-Adriatic Working Community. Founded as early as the seventies, initially it has been the framework of Italian, Austrian and South German regions (Bavaria). During the late eighties it was enlarged by Eastern (Yugoslav and Hungarian) and Swiss regions. The Alps-Adriatic Working Community played a really pioneering role in the establishment of East-West co-operation structures on regional level. It comprised regions from NATO (Italy, Germany), neutral (Austria, Switzerland), non-aligned (Yugoslavia) and Warsaw Pact (Hungary) countries at a time, when this type of co-operation at higher, government levels was totally missing. Regions – not burdened by problems like national security, debt, exchange rate – were able to establish relations in the fields, which they were more interested in, like environment, culture and spatial planning. In the nineties, through the emergence of national level co-operation structures in the same space, like Quadragonale, Pentagonale, Central European Initiative, the importance of the regional level co-operation faded out to a certain extent, but, nevertheless, it survived.

The second Working Community to be mentioned in the region is the Working Community of Danubian Regions (ARGE Donauländer). It is comprising all regions along the Danube. At the same time, it is exposing all the weaknesses of this type of regional – especially of East-West - co-operation structures:

The first problem is the dramatic difference, i.e. 'gap', between the political, economic and legal power and competencies of the Western and Eastern participating regions. Members of this Working Community are Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg with a population of 10-11 million and with a total GDP of 250-300 billion euro each. And members with the same rights are the Slovak, Hungarian and Romanian counties with an average population of half a million, and with a GDP of 1,5-2 billion euro each. The gap in the population size is 1 to 20, the gap in the GDP size is 1 to 150. Alone Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg have a higher GDP than all the other Danubian regions together. How can be decisions taken in

such a diverse community? Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg are sometimes frustrated by the impotence of such co-operation schemes.

Finally, the third organisation of Working Community size and functions is the so-called Carpathian Euroregion, comprising several regions of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and of the Ukraine. Its name is Euroregion but just because its founders did not know, by the time of the foundation, what an Euroregion meant and how it looked like. Its area is larger than that of Slovakia and Hungary and its population is more than 12 million.

By the time of its establishment in 1993, the Carpathian Euroregion was the first institutionalised cross-border co-operation comprising exclusively non-EU-member countries. At the foundation ceremony, the then General Secretary of the Council of Europe, Mme Catherine Lalumière held the opening speech followed by the Polish, Ukrainian and Hungarian foreign minister. It turned out, however, soon, that no organisation is ready and willing to finance any activities of this organisation. The European Union was not interested in it at all. In the reports of the Council of Europe it had a place every year as one of the outstanding achievements of the Council, but out of the context of the report it was clear, that they have no genuine information about it, at all. Finally extra-European organisations, a New York institute and a Japanese foundation took over the responsibility of partial financing. Ukrainian, Slovak and Romanian regions were not in a position to pay any membership fee, so the rest of the financing had to be taken over by the participating Polish and Hungarian regions. Thus, it was a substantial burden, and regions which regarded the balance of costs and benefits as not favourable, gradually left the organisation, so a vicious circle began to have an effect. The Americans and the Japanese became also disappointed with the activities of the organisation, so they refused to support supported not the Euroregion any longer, but a Foundation of the same name and same spatial coverage, further dividing the efforts. It is a sad story[5], but it might still turn to be useful, if it draws the attention of Europe to these poor and critical spots of the continent.

Summarising the developments, cross-border co-operation is not a success story so far in Central and Eastern Europe. Its institutional structures are weak and of ad hoc character. They do not dispose over the competencies of decision making and over finances. Their establishment is, however of symbolic, political importance, signifying the intention and will to work together. It can be taken for granted that this intention will bring also tangible results in the years to come.

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[5] See in more details: Illés, Iván: *The Carpathian (Euro) Region.* Occasional Papers, Nr. 6, Europäisches Zentrum für Föderalismus-Forschung, Tübingen 1996.

Table 1:.
Development disparities on the borders of Central and Southeast Europe

Border sections				Development level as a percentage of EU15 average		Quotient
Východné Slovensko	SK	Zakarpatie	UK	38	11,6	3,28
Kentriki Makedonia	GR	Yugozapaden	BG	68,1	23,4	2,91
Észak Alföld	HU	Zakarpatie	UK	33,1	11,6	2,85
Anatoliki Makedonia	GR	Yuzhe Centralen	BG	55,6	22,3	2,49
Nord-Vest	RO	Zakarpatie	UK	28,4	11,6	2,45
Brandenburg	DE	Lubuskie	PL	72,3	32	2,26
Dolnoslaskie	PO	Dresden	DE	35,1	75,9	2,16
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	DE	Zachodniopomorskie	PL	71,9	34,3	2,10
Nord-Est	RO	Moldova	MD	24,1	11,7	2,06
Niederösterreich	AT	Západné Slovensko	SK	89,7	44	2,04
Slovenia	SI	Adriatic Croatia	CR	67,7	33,7	2,01
Podkarpackie	PL	L'viv	UK	26,7	13,7	1,95
Slovenia	SI	Central Croatia	CR	67,7	35	1,93
Ostravsko	CZ	Opolskie	PL	59,8	31	1,93
Sud-Est	RO	Odesa obl.	UK	31	16,4	1,89
Nord-Est	RO	Černivci	UK	24,1	13,2	1,83
Lubelskie	PL	Volin	UK	25,5	14,7	1,73
Oberösterreich	DE	Jihozápad	CZ	104,1	60,1	1,73
Střední Morava	CZ	Opolskie	PL	53,6	31	1,73
Friuli-Venezia-Giulia	IT	Slovenia	SI	115,9	67,7	1,71
Niederbayern	DE	Jihozápad	CZ	99,1	60,1	1,65
Közép Magyarország	HU	Západné Slovensko	SK	70,9	44	1,61
Niederösterreich	AT	Jihovýchod	CZ	89,7	56,1	1,60
Oberpfalz	DE	Jihozápad	CZ	94,7	60,1	1,58
Severovýchod	CZ	Dolnoslaskie	PL	54,7	35,1	1,56
Ostravsko	CZ	Slaskie	PL	59,8	39,3	1,52
Nyugat Dunántúl	HU	Central Croatia	CR	51,3	35	1,47
Ostravsko	CZ	Stredné Slovensko	SK	59,8	41,3	1,45
Sud-Vest	RO	East Serbia	YU	28,5	19,9	1,43
Východné Slovensko	SK	Podkarpackie	PL	38	26,7	1,42
St. Petersburg obl.	RU	Estonia	EE	49	35,6	1,38

Burgenland	AT	Nyugat Dunántúl	HU	69,5	51,3	1,35
Dresden	DE	Severozápad	CZ	75,9	56,2	1,35
Sud-Est	RO	Severoiztochen	BG	31	23	1,35
Kärnten	AT	Slovenia	SI	91,2	67,7	1,35
Steiermark	AT	Slovenia	SI	90,1	67,7	1,33
Slovenia	SI	Nyugat Dunántúl	HU	67,7	51,3	1,32
Estonia	EE	Pskov obl.	RU	35,6	27	1,32
Střední Morava	CZ	Stredné Slovensko	SK	53,6	41,3	1,30
Stredné Slovensko	SK	Malopolskie	PL	41,3	32	1,29
Lithuania	LV	Belarus	BL	30,1	23,6	1,28
Jihovýchod	CZ	Západné Slovensko	SK	56,1	44	1,28
Dél Dunántúl	HU	Danubian Croatia	CR	37,5	29,6	1,27
Stredné Slovensko	SK	Észak Magyarország	HU	41,3	32,7	1,26
Sud-Vest	RO	Severozapaden	BG	28,5	22,9	1,24
Dél Alföld	HU	Vojvodina	YU	37,6	30,5	1,23
Yugozapaden	BG	South Serbia	YU	23,4	19	1,23
Střední Morava	CZ	Západné Slovensko	SK	53,6	44	1,22
Sud	RO	Severen Centralen	BG	27,8	23,2	1,20
Nyugat-Dunántúl	HU	Západné Slovensko	SK	51,3	44	1,17
Észak Alföld	HU	Nord-Vest	RO	33,1	28,4	1,17
Východné Slovensko	SK	Észak Magyarország	HU	38	32,7	1,16
Severozapaden	BG	East Serbia	YU	22,9	19,9	1,15
Chemnitz	DE	Severozápad	CZ	64,6	56,2	1,15
Turkey Europe	TR	Yugoiztochen	BG	29,8	26	1,15
Dél Alföld	HU	Vest	RO	37,6	33,1	1,14
Podlaskie	PL	Belarus	BL	26,8	23,6	1,14
Latvia	LT	Belarus	BL	26,7	23,6	1,13
Lithuania	LV	Podlaskie	PL	30,1	26,8	1,12
Lithuania	LV	Kaliningrad obl.	RU	30,1	27	1,11
Yugozapaden	BG	FYR Macedonia	MK	23,4	21,3	1,10
Bratislavský kraj	SK	Niederösterreich	AT	97,5	89,7	1,09
Vest	RO	Vojvodina	YU	33,1	30,5	1,09
Közép Dunántúl	HU	Západné Slovensko	SK	45,7	44	1,04
Pskov obl.	RU	Latvia	LT	27	26,7	1,01
Warminsko-Mazurskie	PL	Kaliningrad obl.	RU	27,1	27	1,00

Table 2:
Density of international road border crossings in Central and Southeast Europe

Border sectors	Length of border km	Number of international road border-crossings	Border length in km per crossing-point
Slovenia - Italy	232	12	19,3
Czech Republic - Slovakia	252	13	19,4
Slovenia - Austria	330	12	27,5
Germany - Poland	442	12	36,8
Germany - Czech Republic	810	21	38,6
Slovenia - Croatia	670	16	41,9
Macedonia - Albania	151	3	50,3
Hungary - Slovenia	102	2	51,0
Czech Republic - Austria	466	9	51,8
Austria - Hungary	366	7	52,3
Macedonia - Bulgaria	165	3	55,0
Yugoslavia - Macedonia	221	4	55,3
Macedonia - Greece	228	4	57,0
Slovakia - Hungary	515	9	57,2
Poland - Czech Republic	762	13	58,6
Poland - Slovakia	444	7	63,4
Hungary - Croatia	329	5	65,8
Yugoslavia - Bulgaria	341	5	68,2
Hungary - Romania	442	6	73,7
Hungary - Yugoslavia	151	2	75,5
Slovakia - Ukraine	90	1	90,0
Romania - Moldova	450	5	90,0
Slovakia - Austria	91	1	91,0
Yugoslavia - Albania	287	3	95,7
Romania - Bulgaria	609	6	101,5
Hungary - Ukraine	103	1	103,0
Yugoslavia - Romania	476	4	119,0
Bulgaria - Turkey	259	2	129,5
Albania - Greece	282	2	141,0
Poland - Ukraine	428	3	142,7
Bulgaria - Greece	493	2	246,5
Romania - Ukraine	531	2	265,5
Moldova - Ukraine	939	3	313,0