

GEOGRAPHICAL MANAGEMENT OF A BORDERLESS AREA AT THE INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BORDER OF NATO AND EU-ROMANIAN CASE (I)¹

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Abstract: The evolution of the political European area, and especially that of the EU and NATO, have given birth in his turn to a variety of bordering territorial subsystems whose cross border functioning is conditioned by the category of the integrated interstate border field. The extension of NATO in 2004 and that of EU in 2007 has situated Romania in the “periphery” of these military-territorial and political-territorial super-state structures and at the same time it has changed the position of the border state’s role and functions. So, at the beginning it was a Romanian-Hungarian area of 444.7 kilometres included in the external border of EU (until 2007) and that of NATO (until 2004), then it has increased reaching 2170.9 kilometres of NATO and EU external border overlapped to the Romanian border state, with no less than 5 inter-state fields. Along this study we propose a concept of cross border geographical management with the purpose of identifying the elements and the mechanisms which may generate cross border systems of a high functioning degree through a coherent geographical management on the level of the integrated inferior systems and subsystems. This pattern, through its theoretical component, but also through the useful applicability, could become a current practice in solving some similar situations. The cyclical opening/closing of the passing points of the border generated by natural or political causes, the lack of some efficient communication systems, the restriction of the people’s circulation freedom, the illicit goods and people traffic, the deficient administration of the hydrographical systems and so on and in the last but not the least the functional rethink and reposition of the restrictive military areas within the cross border area of NATO type, through the transfer to new owners and duty, are just some of those situations which generate and are generated by the lack of an efficient cross border management.

Key words: Europe, NATO, border territorial system, geographical management

The structural evolution of the political European area at the end of the second millennium generates new borders, new challenges for the geographical

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research. The quick translation, between 2004-2007, towards East of the NATO type border (2004), followed by the external one of EU (2007), the change of the role's weight and that of the state border's functions of the new integrated countries, are challenges that determined internal and external border and cross border territorial structures, with the support of the border's track extremely complex from the morphological point of view, its tracks and directions being poles apart. These are just some elements which fill in important transformations regarding the functionality of a border or cross border territorial system. The relative position "inside" or "outside" the political system, the peripheral or central position, Oriental or Occidental one and so on, are aspects which may contribute at one time, more or less objectively, in generating the organisation and the administration of a functional territorial system.

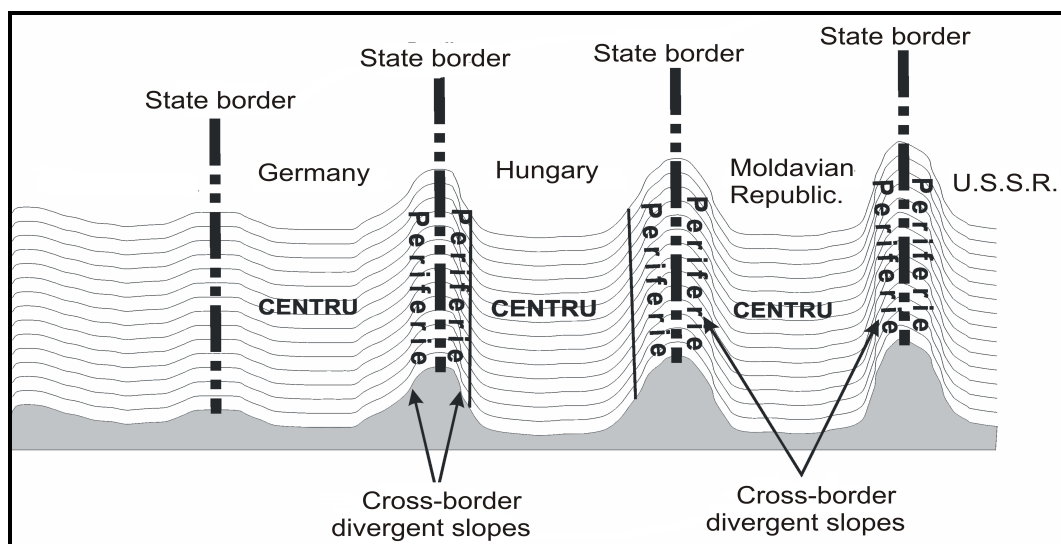


Fig. 1a. Geomorphopolitical systems of European space before 1990 years

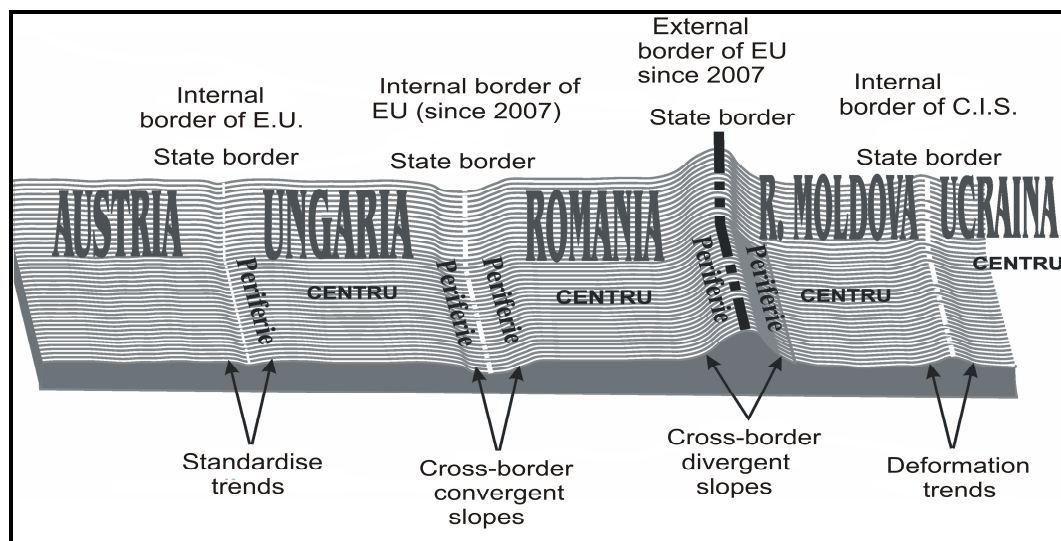


Fig. 1b. Geomorphopolitical systems of European space after 1990 years

Starting from the multitude of the situations changes generated by the new borders of the European area, the figure 1a and 1b are suggestive for what ment and how it is percieved an area politically delimited in the East and the Center of the European geographical area. Inspired from a geomorphological system with synclinals and anticlines, the pattern from the figure 1a is relevant for what have ment the barrier type borders in delimiting some political areas, the lack of “cross border” cooperation and interconnection between the contiguous border systems “back to back” with dominantly military function within the socialist system, while the figure 1b suggests the necessity of reconsidering the contiguous border areas devoid of the military support and placed in the position of (re)discovering new opportunities, new action fields opened towards forbidden directions not until years ago, and which had become attracting areas regarding the financial resources for the interconnection of the contiguous border systems in cross border systems with a high functioning degree.

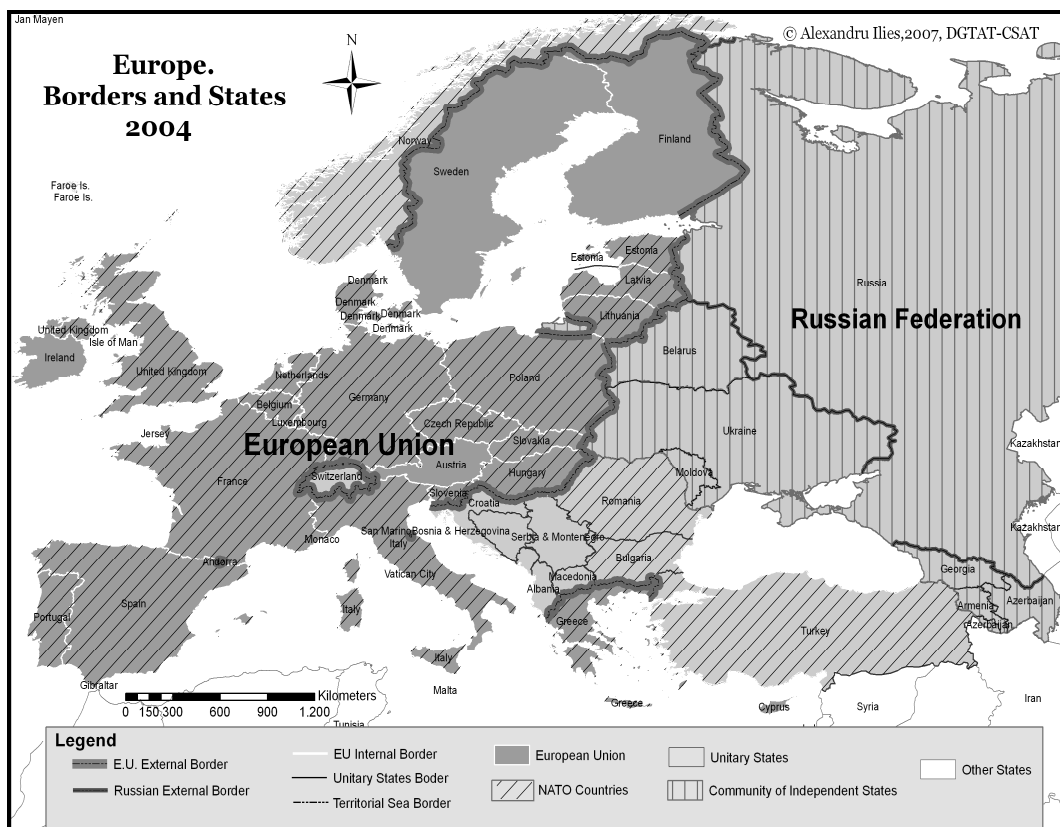


Fig. 2. The dynamics of the borders and territorial-political structural space of EU and Non-EU area after 2004.

The evolution of the European political area of EU, after the rising tide of Scandinavian and Austrian integration (1995), had pushed its Oriental external border towards East and North, with important consequences within the structural plan: the EU area becomes contiguous to that of the Russian Federation in the Fin-Russian border area; over 50 % from the Baltic shore becomes “an internal problem” of EU; Switzerland and Liechtenstein become

“enclave” inside the EU area, being entirely surrounded by the German-Austrian-Italian-French political area; it is outlined the first sector of external border EU “inside the EU”; the continental Oriental border of EU becomes unitary and continuous through the connection assured by the Austrian sector, and the correspondent periphery of EU is a German-Austrian-Italian one; the fact that Norway remained outside the EU didn’t allow the inclusion of an Arctic shore sector in its political area, the EU area being in this way limited by the Norwegian and Russian political border.

In the same context, NATO has as limits the borders of Norway, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Greece, overlapping the integration wave of EU in 1995, then the 3 new members states of EU will continue to remain outside the military alliance.

If from the geographical point of view the European area is characterized as constant, no less than 24 continental states and two insular states define the non-EU Europe, but whose wish, except those integrated in CIS, is to contribute with their territory to the extension of the EU an NATO area. We are practically witnesses to a throwback regarding Europe dominated by the socialist political system and to Europe’s extension with a market economy and with a democratic political system.

The European area between 2004-2007 was known as the largest extending wave of EU and NATO towards the East of Europe, materialized by including in its political area no more than 100 states (8 continental states and 2 insular states). The line of the new external Oriental border of EU and NATO becomes a sinuous one, longer and continuous, from the Baltic shore (Finnic Bay) to the Adriatic shore, including no less than 13 interstate sectors and a peripheral area of EU and NATO composed from the political territory of 7 states (figure 2). It was a track limit with a base formed dominantly from a low altitude (of plain), with land sectors in alternation with hydrographical arteries of different sizes, and which realizes the connection for the first time in the properly continental area between the political territorial system of EU and NATO with that of the ex URSS through common border with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. If the system NUTS proposed and applied at the level of the member states of EU has as purpose to make compatible the regional territorial structures at the external periphery of EU, this problem becomes extremely complex due to “the stagnation” of the non-EU political area in this direction and due to the diversity of the territorial-administrative structures situated on either of the EU external border’s sides. The non-EU area restrains between the borders of 14 continental states, and in what regards the EU the political Greek area remains a Balkan “exclave” without direct links with the continental area (except the maritime sector, but this is also crossed by the international waters). The Russian exclave Kaliningrad is a breach within the territorial unit of the EU politic-territorial system and an extremely important strategic point in the functional management of the Baltic maritime system.

Two new countries have become EU members since 2007, with major structural-political consequences (figure 3). The last wave in extending the EU area overlaps over that of the NATO in the East-Southern part of the European area. The integration of Bulgaria and Romania in EU have generated in the functioning mechanism within the geographical Europe important mutations of a structural-functional nature such as: the division of the non-EU area into a

Balkan one and an ex-Sovietic one; the diminution of the non-EU states to 14; the reorientation of the EU and NATO external Oriental border's trajectory on a new trajectory from a Baltic-Adriatic sector to a Baltic-Black Sea one and the outlining of a Balkan sector; as a result of the integration of the Bulgarian and Romanian areas into the EU, this structure have become riverside to the Black Sea and included at the same time inside itself more than 90 % of the trajectory of the most important European fluvial axis which links the Black Sea to the North Sea (Danube-Main-Rhine); for the first time the "Greek exclave" connects directly the EU continental "structure" after the NATO "junction" in 2004; Romania and Bulgaria are the only EU and NATO member states each of them having two external sectors, towards the ex-Yugoslavian area (646.7 km for Romania) and the ex-Soviet one (1,330.7 km for Romania).



Fig. 3. The dynamics of the borders and territorial-political structural space of EU and Non-EU area after 2007

Bouth the Balkan and the EU external Oriental area through the support of the border's trajectory, but mostly through the barriers generated by its new roles and functions, may be characterized as the most complex from the point the view of the mechanisms that determine the functionality of the contiguous border systems, but mostly from the point the view of the mechanisms that determine their interconnection as a functional cross border territorial systems.

Among the particularities specific to the political geography of the new configuration we can mention:

- The integration of the two states increases the EU surface by 349,362 square km reaching to 3,334,585 square km;
- The external border's length would increase by 2,480.1 km: 1,877.1 km for the continental area and 3,414.1 km for the maritime area of the Black Sea. The increasing of the external border by brand-new sectors would be of 3,414.1 km, but the outgoing Romanian-Hungarian and Greek-Bulgarian external sectors turn into internal sectors on approximately 934 km, increasing the internal borders' length to 13,795.8 km. - through the integration of Romania and Bulgaria, the EU area becomes continuous in the continental area directly linked to Greece. Strategically, EU assures itself the terrestrial access from the Black Sea towards the Aegean Sea, by an alternative variant to that of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits situated under the Turkey's influences;
- The trajectory of the EU Oriental border considerably changes towards the South-Eastern part of the continent until the Black Sea. In parallel it is created a system which borders EU with the ex-Yugoslavian and Albanian area along a Balkan sector of 2,789.4 km length of terrestrial border and of 44 km length of maritime border in the Slovenian-Croat and Greek-Albanian sectors;
- The Oriental border's length from the Finnic Bay to the Black Sea is of 3,597.4 km which means a decreasing in comparison with the sector in 2004 which was ending in the Adriatic Sea;
- The EU border-Turkey is composed from the isthmus terrestrial sector of 462 km and the Aegean maritime and partial Mediterranean;
- By occupying the North Cyprus, Turkey have become unofficially contiguous to the EU area on the Cyprus territory.

Romania and the EU via NATO. For Romania, the period 2004-2007, in terms of the dynamics of the role and functions of the state border can be considered as the most consistent and influential in terms of organization/reorganization of territorial systems of all ranks, rethinking the concept of cross-border cooperation and especially with the result state of equilibrium of such a territorial system (figures 2 and 3). Specifically, about 441 km from the external border of NATO in the year of 2004 and the external border of EU in 2007, the Romanian political space had reached today by the peripheral position in EU and NATO to be delimited with 2170.9 kilometres from the external border of NATO and EU with major changes in terms of the role and functions in an "normal" area almost half a century only to the concept of "frontier state" type barrier.

Under quantitative aspect, including Romania and Bulgaria in the military alliance in 2004, the Romanian space located in "NATO's periphery and the transformation of state external border in 4 sectors of NATO type and the internal sectors of Romanian-Hungarian and Romanian-Bulgarian border "Internal NATO". So, from the 3146.9 kilometres representing the state border of Romania, 2170.9 kilometres (69.0 %) is the length of the eastern external border of NATO, and 976 (31 %) internal border of NATO (with Hungary and Bulgaria). Thus, the relative position of Romania in 2004-2007 periods witnessed a major structural dynamic shift in position contiguous with the space inside the NATO with a peripheral position and longest-state sector in Eastern Europe with NATO with 1524.2 kilometres according to Ukraine, Moldova and Black Sea maritime sector.

This quantitative analysis has profound implications with structural and organizational nature at the level of territorial border systems. To highlight the structural and political complexity of the Romanian political space, generated by position “inside” and “outside” of regional supranational structures recall that the former external sector of the NATO border between Romania and Hungary, with the translation of military duties to east in 2004 became the EU external border of substantial changes in terms of border state functions weight (military, judicial, customs, human flow control etc).

Thus, the Romanian space features, resulting from the change of the state border role and functions after 2004 reflected the major structural issue in the way of (re) organization and function of territorial border systems. Since 2004, Romania became a NATO member, and the Romanian-Hungarian border with NATO and the foreign function becomes the “*internal*” border of the military alliance with major implications in restructuring and functional modelling of the frontier space of the two countries through: the elimination of military units within a radius of 60 km away from the Romanian-Hungarian border, finding new destinations for abandoned military infrastructure, the transition from a former military area status to one of the most restrictive available and profitable real estate market, implications for re-structuring workforce through retirement first and second the retirement from military service and their family members, their management priorities transfer from the central government (Ministry of National Defense) to the local or other non-military ministries, transforming restrictive military zone in a cultural, residential and business area etc, a major transfer of military assets in the education.

Study case – Oradea. Like other major cities in western Romania (Satu Mare, Arad, Salonta etc.) and Eastern Hungary (Niregyhaza, Debrecen, Békés and Bekescsaba etc.), the inclusion of Romania in the North Atlantic Alliance in 2004 with all the consequences resulting from compliance agreements of association, a major problem was the territory reorganization of former military restrictive areas (by 2004) and their inclusion by usage category in functional zoning of Oradea. Thus, if by 2004, about 10 % of the city could be considered a restricted area for civil work (figure 4), which is under the direct jurisdiction of the State (Ministry of National Defense), after this date has appear a problem generated from deployment and eradication of the military area and its transfer to new destinations. Such a territorial subsystem closed with a central government at national level, assist in resizing a currently functioning of this area in terms of ownership system, and destination. Thus, from a national managed structure currently witnessing an ownership transfer in two directions: the local government shifting to residential (figure 5a and b), cultural (figure 6a and b), business areas (figure 8a and b), to the other structures of the national ranking as the Education and Culture Ministry (by taking a imoniliar heritage from the Ministry of Defense) in the administration of the second set or in private unspecified destinations.

All these (re)structuring forces have generated new fields locally, new spheres of influence in politics, and especially a mental aspect by making a major modification through the Romanian Army street transformation (Red Army was once) the street from the University and its transfer from military area to the dominant culture.

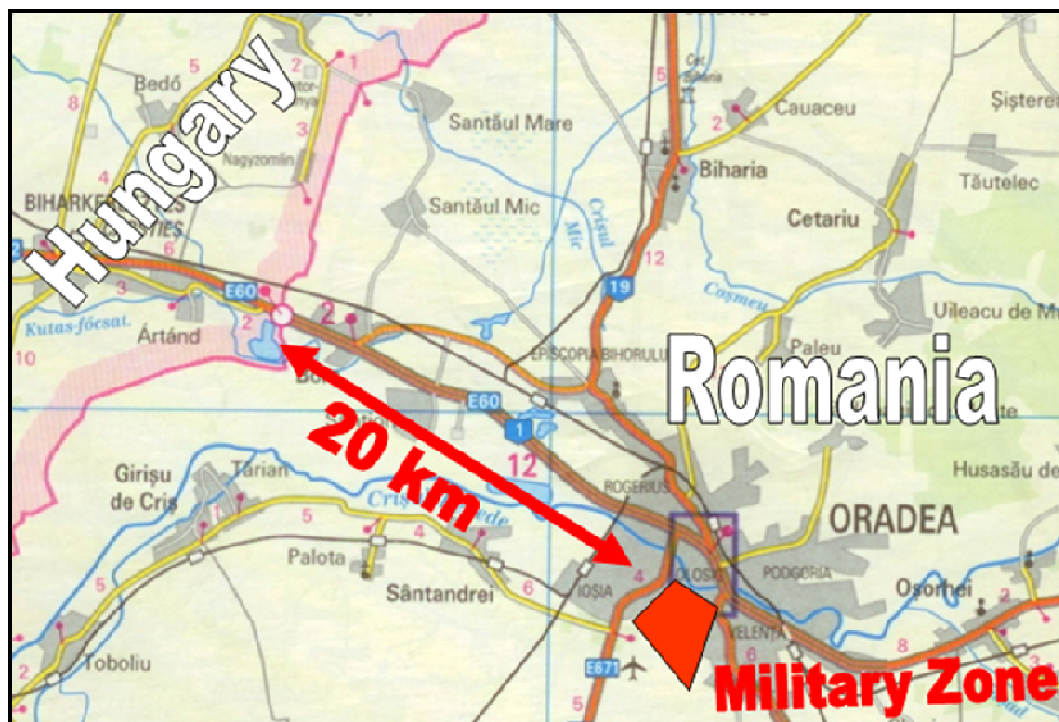


Fig. 4. Military zone in Oradea area (restricted area) before NATO integration



Fig. 5a. and b. Oradea. Residential area on the place of former militar area



Fig. 6a and b. Oradea. Cultural area on the place of former militar area



Fig. 7a. and b. Oradea. Without (temporary) destinations area on the place of former militar area



Fig. 8a. and b. Oradea. Buissnes area on the place of former militar area

Conclusions. The dynamics of EU and NATO political space in the range 2004-2007 for the establishment of supranational territorial functional system led to regional and deep local structural mutations. Change continues in the role and with associated border states functions, considerable quantitative adjustment of the external border of NATO and the EU in 2004-2007, when the length represented 14 % from the external border of NATO (Romania outside it) in just 4 years has reached almost 70 % of NATO's external border (the total length of the entry of Romania and a position "inside his structure") have generated substantial structural changes especially in the case of frontier contiguous territorial systems.

Thus each integrated state into a supranational structure which changes its relative position is characterized by border areas which have become complex functions of the human flow control by the military translating a starting position of each Member to a foreign national or external association. Each repositioning of under-integrated systems need to generate new relationships and new subsystems interconnection with major implications in economic, social and politically of those. EU and NATO enlargement in the ex-socialist space represent a victory of the market economy system in duality with the centralized-socialist and overlapping territorial perspective of Europe over the physical and geographical-territorial EU policy seems to be a complete objective in perspective close materialized and the wave of enlargement in 2007 led the EU's direct access to the Black Sea and control over 90 % of the most important European river movement axis (Rhine-Main-Danube), preceded action in 2004 by NATO.

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