

OPPORTUNITIES IN TERRITORIAL CROSS BORDER COOPERATION AT THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS. CASE OF ROMANIA

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Abstract: Romania's accession to the EU in 2007 and the peripheral position within this super-state structure involve redefining the role and the functions of the border state, the functionality degree of the determined border systems and the cross-border interconnection potential. This situation is determined by the existence of two sectors of EU external land border (Balkan and Eastern), which summarizes 1877,1 km, representing 60% of the Romanian state border. This study analyzes Romania within the European Neighbourhood Policy Context, the changing and challenging context – as EU member state situated at the European eastern border and the Opportunities for Romania in terms of Territorial Cross Border Cooperation.

Key words: Romania, external border of EU, ENP, ENPI, territorial cooperation

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INTRODUCTION

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 with the aim to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union. It provides the framework for closer cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the newly enlarged European Union, namely Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. Until 31 December 2006, EU assistance to the countries of the ENP and to Russia was provided under various geographical programmes including TACIS and MEDA, as well as thematic programmes such as EIDHR (European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights).

From 1 January 2007 the European Neighbourhood Policy and Strategic Partnership with Russian Federation are financed through a single instrument - the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). It is designed to target sustainable development and approximation to EU policies and standards – supporting the agreed priorities in the ENP Action Plans. The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument assists the partner country in its reforms and needs.

Funds allocated to individual country programmes depend on their needs and absorption capacity as well as their implementation of agreed reforms. An important aspect of the ENP, and the strategic partnership with Russia, is to markedly improve cross-border cooperation with countries along the EU's external land and maritime borders, thus giving substance to the aim of avoiding new dividing lines.

The ENPI therefore supports cross-border contacts and co-operation between local and regional actors and civil society. The 15 ENPI cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes, identified on the external borders of the EU (9 land borders, 3 sea crossings and 3 sea basin programmes) are receiving financial support for the period 2007-2013 (CBC Strategy Paper 2007-2013 Indicative Programme 2007-2010).

Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) allows for the implementation of joint programmes covering regions from the Member States and regions from partner countries sharing a common border.

There are 2 main categories of programmes:

- programmes covering a common land border or short sea crossing
- programmes covering a sea basin

Cross –Border Cooperation has 4 main objectives:

- Promote economic and social development
- Address common challenges (such as in the field of environment)
- Ensure efficient and secure borders
- Promote people-to-people co-operation

By its nature, CBC is intended to benefit those regions which directly share a land or maritime border with the EU, and their counterparts on the EU side of the border. In line with Interreg practice, the regions eligible to participate in the programmes will be those departments or provinces directly sharing the border on both sides, defined at NUTS II/III¹ level on the EU side, and on the external side, in the absence of such a classification, in terms of the territorial units most closely corresponding to this definition. In special, duly justified cases, a NUTS II/III or equivalent region adjoining to a border region may also be included in the eligible programme area.

The emergence of cross-border regions (CBRs) provides a paradigmatic case for re-scaling processes. A CBR is a territorial unit that comprises contiguous sub-national units from two or more nation states (Perkmann and Sum, 2002). Regarding the emergence of the cross-border regions and Euroregions at the Romanian borders, an exhaustive study was carried out by Ilieş (Ilieş, 2003 and 2004).

2007 ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ROMANIA

Romania and Bulgaria integration in EU on 1 January 2007 caused profound changes of morphological-structural nature at the level of political EU space despite the fact that from a quantitative point of view this latest

¹ The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) is a common regional classification used in the European Union for statistical purposes. According to this system regions are classified in decreasing orders of magnitude from NUTS I to NUTS V. The size of units classified at the same level varies according to the Member States. However NUTS III regions are broadly equivalent to a French "département" (or a British county) while NUTS II regions are broadly equivalent to French "regions" (or Italian or Spanish "regions"). For Romania, the NUTS II level is identified with 8 Development Regions and the NUTS III level corresponds with 42 judeţ administrative units (41) and the municipality of Bucharest.

enlargement wave is a lot below that of 2004 which is considered the most ample in EU history - integration of 10 states. Thus, from geographical-political point of view, EU territory enlarged with 349.843 km² translating towards South-East part the European geographic space - Romania with 238.391 km² and Bulgaria with 110.912 km² - reaching 4.624.895 km². In terms of population European Union gained more than 30 million inhabitants.

In the context of the present study, the structural modifications are more obvious at external and internal EU border by the fragmentation of the Eastern line traced in 2004 that linked Baltic Sea to Mediterranean Sea and the redrawing of two new independent trajectories: a Balkan one and an East-European one. The old trajectory of external EU border - Baltic-Mediterranean, with a support of the sector dominantly traced in sectors of field and plane, was 4.278,54 km long and had 11 new terrestrial sectors. The EU/Russia neighbourhood remains constant after 2007 among the 2.689,2 km of terrestrial border and the three sector-Finnish (1.380,2 km), Baltic (737,2 km) and Kalinigrad exclave (571,8 km). The EU/ex-USSR space neighbourhood was in 2004 of 1.932,6 km among them with Belarus 1.162,2 km and with Ukraine 770,4 km.

The integration wave correspondent to 2007 substantially modifies a significant part of the political-geographical coordinates of the EU East-European space and especially regarding the border trajectory and the consequences of structural nature of its contiguous bordering space. Thus, the Eastern Baltic-Mediterranean external sector (4.278,54 km) is fragmented by including the Romanian/Hungarian sector (441,7 km) in the internal EU border category, resulted in two new external sectors: an oriental sector (6392,02 km) and a Balkan sector (2.846,4 km) that have in common only the fact that certain segments belong to the same state, as in the case of Hungary (Balkan sector with Croatia and Serbia; Eastern sector with Ukraine), Romania (Balkan sector with Serbia; Eastern sector with Ukraine and Republic of Moldova), Bulgaria (Balkan sector with Serbia and Macedonia; Eastern sector with Turkey) and Greece (Balkan sector with Macedonia and Albania; Eastern sector with Turkey).

The Eastern Sector, extended from the Arctic Ocean to Aegean Sea, is 6392,02 km long and it is formed of terrestrial (5780,32 km) and maritime sectors (678,3 km) correspondent to the external Black Sea maritime border (571,5 km) and interstate maritime sectors (105,6 km; 4 sectors). The complexity of the new trajectory of the external Eastern EU sector derives from the land trajectory of two segments whose junction is achieved through the maritime one in Black Sea. There is a number of 15 sectors of interstate border and two maritime (in Black Sea) determined by 10 EU member states (Finland, Estonia, Letonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) and 5 non-EU member states (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Turkey) to which the international maritime sector in Black Sea is added (Grama, 2009).

The Balkan Sector, with interstate maritime terminations - Slovenian/Croatian and Greek/Albanian at the level of Mediterranean Sea, sums up 2.846,4 km of terrestrial border extremely diversified due to relief morphological variety that provides the trajectory support and 44,2 km of interstate maritime border. Except for Albania, the external EU border delimitates its space from the ex-Yugoslavian (without Slovenia), marked at the moment by political convulsions caused by interethnic and interconfessional

disputes (Kosovo, Bosnia and Herțegovina case) (Ilieș et al. 2010). Structurally, the EU external Balkan border is formed of 8 interstate sectors that delimitates 5 EU member states (Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) and 4 non-UE member states (Croatia, Serbia, F.Y.R. of Macedonia and Albania) (Ilieș and Grama, 2010).

TERRITORIAL CROSS BORDER COOPERATION AT THE EU EXTERNAL BORDERS WITH ROMANIAN PARTICIPATION

The recent enlargement of the Union to 27 Member States, with Bulgaria and Romania joining in 2007, has dramatically increased disparity levels across the EU. As a EU member state, Romania is actively involved in 4 major CBC programmes concerning relationships with non-EU states (figure 1):

- Romania-Ukraine-Rep of Moldova (Managing Authority)
- Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine
- Black Sea Basin (multilateral CBC programme) (Managing Authority)
- Romania-Serbia (Managing Authority)



Figure 1. Territorial Cross Border Cooperation at the EU external borders with Romanian participation

Due to the relative position of Romania in Europe and European Union, we can consider it as one of the most important state in what regards the external border management. To support this thesis, we present the characteristics of Romania as a periferal member state of European Union:

- 1/4 of the EU Eastern border
- the longest national border in the Eastern side of the EU
- combined border – terrestrial, river, Black Sea

These characteristics determine also opportunities for Romania:

- Pillar of ENP and the EU Eastern cross-border cooperation
- Hub (terrestrial and maritime) for trans-national relationships, between West (EU) and East, access to the Black Sea basin
- potential of developing cross-border and trans-national cooperation due to the balanced localities network and polycentric development potential

In accordance with the ENPI regulation, regions along shared land borders, or on sea crossings of significant importance, may be involved in programmes involving two or more countries sharing a common border. While a number of these programmes will cover only two countries, others will involve several countries with a view to establishing programmes covering a coherent geographic area, facilitating efficient management and responding to requests from the partners. All programmes over a land border or a sea crossing of significant importance will necessarily have a strong local focus, with a local partnership involving the key actors from the local and regional level, including civil society, from both sides of the border. The local partners will be the key actors in the programme, and will be jointly responsible for establishing the priorities of the programme.

The ENPI CBC Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Programme

The programme area is located on the Hungarian-Slovak-Romanian-Ukrainian border, and includes the following territorial units: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (Hungary), Košický and Prešovský (Slovakia), Maramureş, Satu-Mare and Suceava (Romania), Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivska and Chernivetska (Ukraine). Suceava and Chernivetska are included on the basis of special rules. The programming area covers 32% of Slovak Republic, 14% of Hungary, 8% of Romania and 6% of Ukraine. The programme area includes approximately 598.9 km joint border with Ukraine which covers fully the Slovak-Ukrainian (97.9 km) the Hungarian-Ukrainian (134.6 km) and partially the Romanian-Ukrainian (366.4 km) border lines (Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine CBC Programme 2007-2013).

The programme area is inhabited by 8,012,259 people. More than 44% of the total population is Ukrainian citizens, 16% is Hungarian, 19% Slovak and almost 20% Romanian. The average population density varies from 82 per/sq km (Maramureş), to 114 person/q km (Košice region). This means 94 person/sq km in an average which does not differ significantly from the European average. The average data shows only insignificant majority of the rural population (51.4%) in the whole region. Looking at the statistics more in details, it can be stated that the population structure of the area is balanced. The majority of the population lives in rural areas in the Ukrainian regions (average amounting till 60%) and in Suceava (56.7%), and lives in cities in Maramureş (58.8%), Košice region and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County (56.2% each).

Table 1. Territorial Cross Border Cooperation at the EU external borders with Romanian participation

(Data source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Central Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Regional State Administrations of Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivska and Chernivetska, JTS NP Romania-Ukraine, Romanian Statistical Yearbook, National Institute of Statistics Romania, Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing Romania, JTS NP Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine, National Institute for Statistics Romania, Ministry of Economy Ukraine, Ministry of Economy and Trade the Republic of Moldova, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia)

Territorial units	Area	Population	Density
ENPI CBC Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine			
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	5,937	578,573	97.0
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	7,247	725,779	100.0
Prešov	8,981	798,596	89.0
Košice	6,752	771,947	114.0
Maramureş	6,304	515,610	81.8
Satu Mare	4,418	368,702	83.5
Suceava	8,554	705,752	82.5
Zakarpatska	12,800	1,245,500	97.3
Chernivetska	8,100	908,200	112.0
Ivano-Frankivska	13,900	1,393,600	100.0
Total Romania	19,276	1,590,064	82.4
Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova			
Suceava	8,554	705,752	82.5
Botosani	4,985	459,195	92.1
Iasi	5,475	821,621	150.0
Vaslui	5,318	459,255	86.4
Galati	4,466	621,161	139.0
Braila	4,766	400,000	83.9
Tulcea	8,498	253,419	29.8
Chernivetska	8,100	908,200	112.0
Ivano-Frankivska	13,900	1,393,600	100.0
Ternopilska	8,519	654,000	76.8
Khmelnyska	10,468	827,900	79.1
Vinnitska	26,400	1,720,100	65.2
Odessa	33,310	2,430,030	73.0
Rep. of Moldova	33,845	3,383,332	100.0
Total Romania	42,062	3,720,403	88.4
Romania – Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme			
Timiş	8,697	677,926	77.9
Caraş-Severin	8,514	333,219	39.1
Mehedinţi	4,933	306,732	62.1
Severno-Banatski	2,329	165,881	71.2
Srednje-Banatski	3,256	208,456	60.0
Južno-Banatski	4,245	313,937	73.6
Braničevski	3,865	180,480	46.7
Borski	3,507	123,848	35.3
Total Romania	22,144	1,317,877	59.5
Romania - Total area of cooperation	75,378	5,922,592	78.6
ROMANIA	238,392	21,623,849	90.7
	31.6 %	27.4 %	

The **Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova**

The area of the programme is formed: in Romania - the counties of Suceava, Botosani, Iasi, Vaslui, Galati, Braila and Tulcea; in Ukraine - the oblasts of Ivano-Frankivska, Chernivetska, Ternopilska, Khmelnytska, Vinnitska and Odessa; in Republic of Moldova – the whole country.

The length of the combined border of Romania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova is 1099.4 km. The border of Romania and the Republic of Moldova is entirely a river border (450 km) but the Romanian-Ukrainian border is complex and is part land border (273.8 km.), part fluvial (343.9 km) and part marine (31.7 km) (J.O.P. Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013). Enlargement of the European Union including Romania as a Member State has created a new situation for the relations between Romania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The border between the three countries became in 2007 an external EU border, creating both challenges and opportunities for the border area, in terms of economic development, environmental matters, or people to people contacts.

The **Romania-Republic of Serbia IPA CBC Programme**

The Romania-Republic of Serbia border is 546 km long, with the River Danube forming a natural frontier for approximately 230 km of this length. The eligible programme area is defined at NUTS 3 level for the Romanian side and, as there is no NUTS classification in Republic of Serbia, as defined by the Serbian Government.

The eligible border regions within the Romania-Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme cover an area of 39,351 Km², of which 22,144 Km² is in Romania and 17,202 Km² is in Republic of Serbia. Thus 56% of the eligible border area is in Romania whilst 44% is in Republic of Serbia. The total population of the border area is 2.335 million, which constitutes 8.27% of the total combined national populations of Romania and Republic of Serbia. Of the 2.335 million people who live in the border area, 1.36 million live in Romania, and 1.035 million live in Republic of Serbia (Romania – Republic of Serbia IPA CBC Programme).

As a conclusion, we can state that Romania plays one of the most important role in what regards the management of the external borders of the European Union, due to the fact that 1877,1 km of the national borders represents the external border of the EU and almost a third of its territory is involved in territorial cross border cooperation with the non-EU contiguous territory.

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- *** Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013;
- *** Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013;
- *** Romania – Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme.

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