

Dear Reader,

By favour of the Faculty of Economics, University of Miskolc, you are holding an issue in your hand that includes not only analyses and studies dealing with cross border cooperation, but also pays tribute to István Pálfi, the Hungarian deputy of the European Parliament, who died at a tragically young age (1966-2006).

Those who deal with cross border cooperation and development knew him well. He was tirelessly visiting border regions even when he was seriously ill in order to help the local actors of regional development with his European Union experience. He played a determining role in the elaboration of the EGTC regulation of the EU, which opened new horizon for such cooperation. In this way, along with other deputies, he created a widely and flexibly usable and used tool for regional and urban development.

In recognition of his work, the Hungarian government established a prize named after him, that is awarded for public actors yearly who did a lot for the success of cross border cooperation and therefore for the rapprochement of European peoples. For the first time in 2010, Ján Olbrycht, Polish European Parliament deputy, then in 2011, Michel Delebarre, the former French president of the Committee of the Regions were awarded.

The Pálfi István Foundation for Regional Development, organisation that maintains and carries on the intellectual bequest of the deputy, with the leadership of Pálfiné Pántya Anikó, the widow, along with the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI), invited applications of young researchers and university students to prepare studies dealing with some cross border problem at high quality making the practical utilization of the results possible besides the academic approach. The topics of the current issue indicate that this is a really colourful world. On the one hand, one can find theoretical studies like the one describing the spatial potential analysis of the “melting” of state borders by Tagai and Péntzes or the analysis of Sarah Svensson and Medve-Bálint Gergő about the willingness to cross-border cooperation by the municipalities.

The development possibilities of specific border areas are examined by Ferenc Szilágyi (Érmellék), András Ricz (Vajdaság) and Bali Lóránt (the region of Barcs). An example for the cross border development can be the study of Szabolcs Szanyi about the Subcarpathia landscape protection or that of Dóra Egervári in the field of culture.

Two colleagues of CESCI also contributed to the colourfulness of this special issue: Mátyás Jaschitz publishes his study about the analysis of the relations between the twin cities of Komárno–Komárom and Tímea Csetnek shares her study about the cross border capacity building.

We would like to thank Prof. György Kocziszky, the dean of the Faculty of Economics that undertook the publication of this issue and also the former chairman of CESCI for the encouragement and the professional and financial support for the publication. We would also like to thank you Éva dr. Gadócziné Fekete for the editorial and typographic preparation work.

In the hope that this issue provides many new and interesting pieces of information, I recommend these studies for the Reader!

Budapest, May 7, 2012

Gyula Ocskay
secretary
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Summary

Mátyás Jaschitz

Jointly or separately? Attempts to reveal the spatial structural weight of the twin cities of Komárno–Komárom after the millennium

The study makes an attempt to define the central potential of the twin city of Komárno–Komárom in the Slovakian-Hungarian border area after the new Millennium. The main method is the special gravitational model by Reilly. I compared two extreme assumptions: I analysed the totally isolated and the completely joint relations of the two cities. I tried to define the spatial planning impact of the results.

Dóra Egervári

Information flow without borders – Chance and possibility to access information and documents in Baranya and Slavonia

In my study, I make suggestions about how the basic rights of minorities can be enforced in this area. I also touch upon the possibilities of the internet and the digital and virtual libraries and the chances of the Bibliobus in Pécs in the future.

Bálint Gergő Medve - Sara Svensson

Participation of local municipalities in Euroregions in Central Europe

It has been extensively discussed whether Euroregions – here defined as formalized cooperation initiatives between sub-national authorities, often including private and non-profit actors, located close to a border in two or more countries – constitute an example of newly emerging governance structures at the local level. As the number of these initiatives has grown rapidly in the last decades, discussions around what may influence their chances for long-term viability have intensified. The paper addresses one dimension of institutionalization, the ability of Euroregions to attract local governments in the area where they are operating. Various factors that have been suggested in the literature are synthesized into one comprehensive theoretical framework and tested through a case-study of Komárom-Esztergom county in Hungary. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of virtually all the local governments there. The factors that are usually put forward to explain cross-border cooperation (financial incentives, socio-economic pressure to overcome obstacles for economic development or reduce costs for service provision, cultural proximity, externally induced ideational support for European integration, etc.) are assessed by local representatives and set against the local context of other conditions determining decisions. Our findings indicate that besides historical socio-cultural and ethnic proximity across the border, access to external funding, converging or conflicting project plans, cognitive perceptions of distance as well as current or previous administrative borders are important determinants for the formation of Euroregions.

Szabolcs Szanyi

“Natural values of Szatmár-Bereg plain” – Plan to establish an international Biosphere Programme

The Szatmár-Bereg plain includes neighbouring territories of three countries, representing a transitional belt between the biogeographical regions of the Carpathians and Pannonian lowland. According to recent floristic and faunistic surveys, it exhibits an outstanding level of biotic and landscape diversity. Its scientifically valuable nature-like core areas should be protected together with the conservation of the surrounding traditional mosaic landscape matrix. The planned habitat conservation network can be optimally implemented in frames of a Biosphere Reserve. The potential core areas together with their buffer zones are listed in both Hungarian and Ukrainian sides of the Szatmár-Bereg plain.

Loránd Bali

Main cooperation aspects of Croatian-Hungarian cross-border cooperation – case studies of Barcs és Zala counties

Until the dictates of the Treaty of Trianon, our country and our neighbour to the south was only separated by an administrative border. Between the two World Wars, the transit and the economic co-operation was unimpeded. It was common that the citizens of the neighbouring country owned a significant amount of land across the border. This has changed significantly during state socialism. The hostile relationship in the fifties was followed by the resumption of cooperation in the sixties, which manifested primarily in agriculture and trade. The civil war after the system change stopped the preferred tendencies for a short period of time, and it happened only after the turn of the Millennium, with our approximation to the EU, then with the Hungarian accession that the cooperation gained new momentum. In the paper, two case studies are presented; one about Barcs and one about the Croatian-Hungarian-Slovenian triple border in order to introduce the features of the borderlines and their future development opportunities, which will require the accession of Croatia to the EU and to the Schengen zone.

Dr. Ferenc Szilágyi

Strategic re-evaluation and potential future status of Érmellék, a border small region

Érmellék is one of the most characteristic Hungarian regions beyond the Hungarian border. From a geostrategical point of view, it has become a border region since the Peace of Trianon, and its geographical position was disadvantageous for the people living here. Due to the integration processes in the future, it will be possible to reduce the isolation of this region and to reorganize the relationship with the neighbouring Hungarian regions and with the former centre of gravitation: Debrecen. Specific processes like this can help the integration of the states of the European Union.

András Ricz

The effects of cross-border programmes on the regional development of Vojvodina – further development potential of spatial cooperation based on them

The opportunities for allocating EU resources as development funds in Serbia, and especially in Vojvodina have become available since about 2005. So far these have been opportunities that enabled realisation of programs and projects with cross-border effects in neighbouring countries.

The term of border is defined and the effects of previous cross-border programs are examined in the study. Based on them, it can be ascertained that Serbia and especially Vojvodina are still not properly prepared for utilising development funds from the European Union.

From the analysis of the projects, it is highlighted that realised cross-border programs are mostly from the soft fields – human resources, contacts and projects of economic character – while the development of infrastructure is played down. Certain realised projects mainly support the progress of local micro communities, especially emphasising the development of human resources in rural areas.

Tímea Tünde Csetnek

Capacity and institutional development in the Romanian – Hungarian cross-border area

In my research proposal, I recommend to analyze the effect of cross-border projects on institutional capacity building. The target is the creation of a new instrument “the cross border indicator” that can measure the level of institutional capacity building in organizations that participate in cross-border projects. The topic of the research is the impact of PHARE CBC/INTERREG IIIA Programme and the effect of these projects for the institutional development. The role of cross-border cooperation and capacity building is analysed through a study realized in Satu Mare (Romania) and Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg (Hungary) and finally with the elaboration of a cross-border index with their components.

The study is structured as follows: in the first part, I provide information about the institutional capacity building. In the second part of the study, the results of the research based on questionnaires and interviews in the two border counties are presented.

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