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# Territorial cohesion in the European Union and its financing on the Polish-Czech border – A perspective for 2014-2020

**Abstract.** *The issue of spatial cooperation, and spatial problems and disparities has become more important in cohesion policy. The most important document concerning European space is the European Spatial Development Perspective. It contributed to a series of practical initiatives and building a platform responsible for collecting and ordering information on spatial dimension in Europe. In the time period of 2014-2020, the third objective European Territorial Cooperation will be maintained in its present form in the amount of 11 billion EUR.*

**Keywords:** *territorial cohesion, cross-border cooperation, financing cross-border cooperation*

## Introduction

Nowadays, in the era of globalisation, the relationship and cooperation between countries is gaining in importance and strength. Countries share common interests, goals and policies in various sectors and spheres not only in the area of economy but also social system or defence. Countries and regions face the same problems and obstacles – especially in the term of environment. All this encourages and forced entities to undertake common actions. In the era of globalization and liberalization, borders have no longer only static character. They do not stick anymore only to territories but start to recognise cultural or economical similarities, thus, they are determined by their contents.<sup>1</sup> Due to the fact that this “ingre-

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<sup>1</sup> V. Ganeva-Raycheva, M. Zlatkova, *Migration, Memory, Heritage: Socio-cultural Approaches to the Bulgarian-Turkish Border*, IEFSEM – BAS, Sofia 2012, p. 13.



dients” (political, economic, and ideological) do not have static character, borders may be considered also as changeable. The way the border are understood has changed and this fresh approach enables to create new types of regions that are not necessary limited by the borders of the state. Thus, transnational and cross-border regions start to be created.

The aim of this paper is to present retrospective view on territorial cohesion creation in European Union and financing Polish-Czech cooperation during perspective of EU 2014-2020.

## 1. Spatial problems in European Union<sup>2</sup>

Spatial issues in the policy of the European Union have been noticed in the 90's of the twentieth century, that is, when the regional policy took longer defined framework and it was possible to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving economic and social cohesion. The first action was related to a series of activity aimed at identifying the spatial development of Europe and in the term 1994-1999 actions were directed toward the cities.

All actions that have been taken during 1994-1999 perspective have lead to sign the first document dedicated to spatial problems throughout the Community. Adopted in 1999 in Potsdam, European Spatial Development Perspective defined the three strategic areas where the member states should focus, namely polycentric settlement network development, development of transport and communication networks as well as natural and cultural heritage. ESDP was indicative, and it was target to initiate a series of actions that contribute to a balanced and sustainable development of the European territory. This document despite its character contributed to a number of initiatives, and as a result created a basis for further support and identified the problems of spatial development in Europe. One of the initiatives started in the financial perspective 2000-2006 and continued in 2007-2013 was to create European Spatial Planning Observation Network ESPON<sup>3</sup>. ESPON aim was to create a platform for the analysis and research of 27 European Union member states and countries that are not a formal member of the Community, such as Norway and Switzerland. ESPON success is therefore to improve the knowledge of the territorial aspects of regional development and the creation of

<sup>2</sup> M. Rogowska, *Kwestie przestrzenne w polityce spójności Unii Europejskiej*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Bankowej w Poznaniu” 2012, no. 42: *Przestrzeń w nowych realiach gospodarczych*, ed. B. Filipiak, pp. 223-232.

<sup>3</sup> ESDP, *Perspektywy przestrzennego rozwoju Europy. Kierunki zrównoważonego i trwałego rozwoju terytorialnego w Unii Europejskiej, uzgodnione na nieformalnej Radzie Ministrów odpowiedzialnej za planowanie przestrzenne*, Potsdam, maj 1999, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Warszawa 2000.

an integrated and innovative platform for the exchange of information about the spatial diversity of the social and economic structure in Europe.

Examples of actions undertaken as a result of the ESDP is Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea 2010, that is a program of international cooperation in the field of spatial planning covering all the Baltic states and Belarus and Norway aimed at developing long-term spatial development strategy for Baltic Sea region. The consequence of the actions taken as a result of the ESDP was regular meetings of Ministers for Regional Development and as a result in the new Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 Cohesion category enter the third – territorial dimension (next to the social and economic)<sup>4</sup>. Territorial cohesion is defined as the state of the territory where the economic and social exchange and flow processes progressing well, guaranteeing socially and economically efficient allocation of resources. This category can also be identified with a process of shaping the EU, to ensure the best development of the unique potential of the individual EU territories for achieving the objectives of EU development, including economic and social cohesion through the development of integrated management. An expression of approval of the action taken after ESDP was the Territorial Agenda of Europe in 2007, which developed the objectives contained in the ESDP and is implemented through the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU. This document provided a framework for the cooperation of the Member States, EU institutions and partners and non-governmental organizations in the field of territorial cohesion at national and Community level.

In May 2011, the ministers responsible for spatial planning revised Territorial Agenda of Europe and adopted a new document Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this document was to provide strategic guidance for territorial development, support into various territorial dimension of EU policies and to ensure the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy in accordance with the principles of territorial cohesion. Objectives of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union are an extension of the ESDP three basic objectives and were formulated as follows:

1. Strengthening the polycentric development and innovation through networking urban and rural regions.
2. New forms of partnership and territorial governance between rural and urban areas.
3. Support regional clusters of competitiveness and innovation in Europe.
4. Strengthening and development of trans-European networks.
5. Trans-European risk management, taking into account the effects of climate change.

<sup>4</sup> Art. 2, 6, 16 i 158 Treaty WE, [http://europa.eu/lisbon\\_treaty/full\\_text/index\\_pl.htm](http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/full_text/index_pl.htm) [10.05.2014].

<sup>5</sup> [www.mrr.gov.pl/rozwoj\\_regionalny/Polityka\\_spojnosci/Polityka\\_spojnosci\\_po\\_2013/Debata/Documents/Agenda\\_Terytorialna\\_07092011.pdf](http://www.mrr.gov.pl/rozwoj_regionalny/Polityka_spojnosci/Polityka_spojnosci_po_2013/Debata/Documents/Agenda_Terytorialna_07092011.pdf) [10.05.2014].

6. Enhancement of the ecological and cultural values as an added value for development<sup>6</sup>.

In October 2008 the European Commission adopted a Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion,<sup>7</sup> aimed at establishing a common position with the representatives of local and regional authorities and other actors of territorial cohesion definition.

All this documents can be treated as a background for further creation of common EU spatial policy. All of objectives mentioned above was financed by funds from spatial policy. Very strong position in this financing is connected with cross-border cooperation within EU. According to European Commission, cross-border cooperation (called direct), is a form of collaboration of different countries, regions sharing the same border intended to reach common goals and benefits. Basing on the similarities in different spheres, two or more states cooperate on the regional level for their mutual gains, profits. These cross-border structure “are considerably diverse regarding their scope, their institutional design, their capacities and their empowerment to act in certain policy areas.”<sup>8</sup>

It is claimed that development of cross-border cooperation in Europe has started in the 50s of the last century, moreover such collaboration is a result of the end of second world war. The main aim was to protect society against armed conflict in the future and reducing animosity replacing it with cooperation. The next phase was the International Conference of Regional Planning in Basel in 1965, where were established first ideas of creating Association of European Border Regions. In 1971 the Association of European Border Regions was implemented. The motive of reunion was the exchange of experience and joint representing of common issues. Going further in the eighties the European Council framed the rules of European Regional Development Fund and community initiative called INTERREG. In the 1994 the new statutes of Association of European Border Regions was established. It defines the form of cooperation of border and cross-border regions belonged to Association of European Border Regions. Nowadays the Association is engaging with issues like: defining the problems, measuring the chances, responsibilities and activity programmes of European border and cross-border regions; representing the mutual issues at the national level; empowering and coordinating collaboration between border and transborder regions; exchange of experience and information; resolving the problems with which euroregions struggle. Association of European Border Regions helping the regions brings awareness to their specific problems, chances, competencies and activities.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> [www.mrr.gov.pl/aktualnosci/rozwoj\\_regionalny/Strony/ZielonaKsięga.aspx](http://www.mrr.gov.pl/aktualnosci/rozwoj_regionalny/Strony/ZielonaKsięga.aspx) [10.05.2014].

<sup>8</sup> A. Engl, *Territorial Cooperation in Europe: Coordinated Strategy or lost in Confusion?*, [www.europeanchallenge.eu/media/papers/ws4\\_paper1\\_engl\\_territorial\\_cooperation.pdf](http://www.europeanchallenge.eu/media/papers/ws4_paper1_engl_territorial_cooperation.pdf), p. 5 [20.06.2015].

Together with the widening European Community the number of cross-border cooperating regions has increased very dynamically. The interest of cross-border cooperation is constantly increasing and brings benefits such:

- political – direct collaboration of communities, who lives on both sides of the border impacts on improvement of international relations,
- social – contacts between regional, local administration organs and community impact on increase of activity and enhance sense of home rule,
- economic – the increase of contacts leads to better usage of resources, expanded employment and elimination of differences in life conditions.

Considering the cross-border cooperation in Europe it is necessary to indicate some obstacles of such activity. First are difficulties of organizational and legal nature. They arise from: differences of internal administration and local-government structures; differences in the division of the competences of the local and regional administration to take the action on the international scene and in the legal regulations concerning many fields of socio-economic life e.g. tax system, spatial planning, prevention of the environment; lack of the legal regulation about cross-border cooperation. Second problem cover financial and economic obstacles. Very often it is observed a financial asymmetry between collaborating regions and insufficient financial resources. What is more it may cause complications in opening programs concerning small and middle-sized entrepreneurship. The subsequent obstacles have social character. They arise from culture, language, religious differences and level of the life conditions of the both sides of the border. Sometimes the handicap in cross-border development is lack of understanding different cultures in many aspects caused by barriers in educational system of particular local community. Another crucial thing is way of conducting statistics in cross-border areas. Very often it happens that these differences inhibit the monitoring of the regions development progress and alignment of common strategic goals and directions.

Nowadays, there are approximately one hundred Euroregions in European Union.<sup>9</sup> In fact, it can be even impossible for regional or local authorities which operate in border areas not to be involved in cross-border cooperation. Moreover, great financial support comes from The European Commission for the trans-border cooperation equals nearly 700 million EUR annually. In addition, almost the same amount is provided by European nation states.<sup>10</sup> It can be easily seen, how crucial this type of collaboration has become by considering its scope. However,

<sup>9</sup> Euregio, List of Euroregions and similar bodies in the European Union, 25.07.2015, [www.euregio.nrw.de/links.html](http://www.euregio.nrw.de/links.html) [10.05.2014].

<sup>10</sup> M. Perkmann, *The rise of the Euroregion. A bird's eye perspective on European cross-border co-operation*, 15.05.2015, [www.lancaster.ac.uk/sociology/research/publications/papers/perkmann-rise-of-euroregion.pdf](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/sociology/research/publications/papers/perkmann-rise-of-euroregion.pdf), p. 2 [10.05.2014].

cross-border cooperation was not be always of such great importance. Regional collaboration and policies were not the main area of interest and as a result, were not fully developed until 1973.<sup>11</sup>

## **2. European Territorial Cooperation in Poland in 2014-2020 perspective**

The significance of spatial issues has been underlined in the financial perspective 2007-2013, where territorial issues have become one of the objectives of EU cohesion policy. The third objective European Territorial Cooperation can be identified as a success prospects taken in the earlier initiatives. In 2004-2006, there were two interregional cooperation programs INTERREG Poland divided into: INTERREG IIIC North (which was attended by five provinces of northern Poland) and INTERREG IIIC East (the other region). Initiatives aim was to improve the effectiveness of regional development and cohesion through the exchange of information and sharing of experience in the field of administration.

In the 2007-2013 perspective interregional cooperation was implemented under INTERREG IVC, which includes the European Union states, Norway and Switzerland. Support focuses on the promotion of innovation and the knowledge economy and to protect the environment and prevent risks.<sup>12</sup> The program has received 321 million EUR from the European Regional Development Fund to support two priorities. It also supports two types of intervention, such as regional initiatives, where the initiative comes from regional and local authorities and is aimed at exchange of experience. The second type includes projects related to capitalization, which means the use of the results of already completed projects. In 2007-2013, under the cohesion policy third objective transnational cooperation, international and interregional cooperation is carried out within the framework of the Operational Programme European Territorial Cooperation. For the implementation of this programme, Poland received 557.8 million EUR, and within all EU's member states the budget allocation was approximately 7,75 billion EUR. This program and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument replaced the initiatives undertaken in 2004-2006 in the framework of INTERREG III. European Neighbourhood and Partnership is an initiative of the European Commission focussed on the development of cooperation between the European Union and the partner countries outside the EU. Poland participates in the framework of this instrument in cross-border cooperation programs Poland-Belarus-Ukraine

<sup>11</sup> S. Dall'Erba, *European Regional Development Policies: History and Current Issues*, [www.euc.illinois.edu/\\_includes/docs/dallerba2.pdf](http://www.euc.illinois.edu/_includes/docs/dallerba2.pdf), ps. 1-4 [16.07.2015].

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

and Lithuania-Poland-Russia. Cross-border cooperation projects under Operational Programme ETC concerned in the 2007-2013 perspective NUTS-3 sub-regions located along the internal and certain external land borders of the EU, and in coastal areas located within a distance of 150 km. Joint actions might concern:

- support the establishment and development of small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, culture and cross-border trade,
- protection of natural and cultural heritage, the prevention of natural and technological risks,
- supporting links between urban and rural areas,
- improved access to transport, information and communication,
- water management, waste management and energy systems,
- the development and use of social infrastructure,
- cooperation between the administration and the integration of local communities through the implementation of joint activities in the framework of the labour market, the promotion of gender equality, human resource development and the promotion of research and development sector.<sup>13</sup>

The third area of support is transnational cooperation projects that involve cooperation between countries in the Baltic Sea (Baltic Sea Region Programme) and Central Europe (Central Europe Programme).

In the context of cross-border European Territorial Cooperation support include the development of regional cooperation on Polish and Czech borderline. The Polish part of the programme area is composed of four NUTS-3: jeleniogórsko-wałbrzyski, opolski, rybnicko-jastrzębski, bielsko-bialski and pszczyński district area. This area of the Czech border regions of Liberec, Královéhradecký kraj, Pardubice, Olomouc and Moravskoslezský:

- Polish-Czech cooperation has so far been supported by the EU within the programmes:
  - PHARE Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Czech Republic (1999),
  - PHARE CBC Czech Republic-Poland 2000-2003 (2000-2006),
  - Community Initiative INTERREG IIIA Czech Republic-Poland (2004-2006),
  - Operational Programme European Territorial Cooperation Czech Republic-Republic of Poland (2007-2013).<sup>14</sup>

In 2007-2013, in relation to the previous programming period highlights a number of significant changes:

<sup>13</sup> [www.ewt.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Strony/Wspolpracatransgraniczna.aspx](http://www.ewt.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Strony/Wspolpracatransgraniczna.aspx) [10.05.2014].

<sup>14</sup> [www.ewt.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Strony/Polska-Czechy.aspx](http://www.ewt.gov.pl/WstepDoFunduszyEuropejskich/Strony/Polska-Czechy.aspx) [10.05.2014].



- increase the resources available to 219.46 million EUR,
- increasing the maximum amount of the grant up to 85%,
- the minimum amount of ERDF funding more than 30 000 EUR,
- increasing importance of cross-border cooperation,
- bilingual common application,
- budgets and payments in EUR,
- possible investment activities in all priority axes.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of cross-border cooperation can be supported projects in which partners work together. Projects should meet two of the four criteria, for instance: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing, joint financing.

One of the most important and difficult to prove right in the joint project is a cross-border effect, which should:

- contribute to the development of stable structure of cooperation,
- have an impact on the target groups on the other side of the border,
- contribute to the development of cross-border contacts,
- benefit on both sides of the border,
- contribute to the improvement of living conditions in the border area,
- produce lasting results of cross-border activities.

In frames of European Territorial Cooperation some programmes of cross-border programmes will be implemented in years 2014-2020 in Poland. The biggest amount of money has received the Polish-Czech Programme (Interreg V-A Polish-Czech Republic). The budget from European Regional Development Fund equals 226 million EUR. This programme includes a part of Low Silesian, Silesian, Opole Voivodship in Poland and five regions from Czech Republic – Liberec, Hradec Králové, Olomouc, Pardubice and Moravian-Silesian Region. Such programme has received the highest support from European Funds and allocates its budget to the protection, use and increasing the accessibility of cultural and natural attractions of the Czech-Polish border. These activities will be complemented by a joint promotion assets. All initiatives will serve to increase the importance of tourism around the border and the creation of new jobs. Lead to a reduction in unemployment are also activities in the field of education and recognition of qualifications and diplomas. Another important area supported by the programme, is security. The aim will be to strengthen the compatibility and connection of emergency response systems in Poland and the Czech Republic, among others, through cross-training of emergency services and law and order and the purchase of equipment necessary for joint intervention. The beneficiaries of this programme are: public authorities, their unions and associations; organizations established by the public authorities; chamber, association, associations and organizations representing the interests of entrepreneurs and workers and economic and professional self;

<sup>15</sup> [www.cz-pl.eu/pl/](http://www.cz-pl.eu/pl/) [10.05.2014].



NGOs; schools and institutions of higher education; European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation; churches and religious associations; societies and associations working in the field of tourism.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

The issue of spatial cooperation in the spatial dimension is becoming increasingly important in the cohesion policy of the European Union. Turn in the direction of development of the European space and its sustainable development took place in the late years of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The most important document is European Spatial Development Perspective adopted in 1999. It contributed to a series of initiatives and build an information platform, collecting and ordering information about the spatial dimension of socio-economic development in Europe. Over the years, the regional collaboration and financial help has become, on the one hand, goals oriented but on the other hand more flexible because of the great volume of possibilities and ways of cooperation providing by different sources of financing. Member states gained knowledge with years of experience and have developed many forms of cooperation not only at national but also at regional and local level. However, the cooperation and initiatives will not have great impact if not accompanied with financial help. Of course, not every member states are at the same economic level, some countries or regions are considered as developed while some as still developing. Because of this diversification there are available various funds and financial support.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

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[www.cz-pl.eu/pl/](http://www.cz-pl.eu/pl/) [10.05.2014].

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## Spójność terytorialna Unii Europejskiej i jej finansowanie na pograniczu polsko-czeskim w perspektywie 2014-2020

**Streszczenie.** *Współpraca terytorialna i problemy przestrzenne stają się coraz bardziej istotne, co znajduje wyraz w ilości podejmowanych wspólnych inicjatyw oraz w środkach finansowych przeznaczanych na wspólne przedsięwzięcia o charakterze transgranicznym. W latach 2014-2020 cel, jakim jest europejska współpraca terytorialna, zostanie utrzymany. W ramach polityki spójności zakłada się bardziej zintegrowane podejście do rozwiązywania problemów miejskich, zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne, wielofunduszowe programy operacyjne oraz krzyżowe finansowanie, a także bardziej funkcjonalne podejście umożliwiające interwencję w odpowiedniej skali terytorialnej.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** *spójność terytorialna, współpraca transgraniczna, finansowanie współpracy transgranicznej*