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HUNGARIAN EXPERIENCES OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

INTRODUCTION

Borders are the ‘scars of History’.¹ The wide range of problems and opportunities on both sides of borders in wider Europe makes cross-border cooperation indispensable. The border areas of the countries of Western Europe took the first steps towards organised cooperation already in the 1950s where the state borders did not correspond to natural linguistic, ethnic, cultural or economic communities. At first it was done spontaneously, with bottom-up cooperation systems evolving that lacking any formality. Later, principles and legal regulations influenced already functioning practice, mainly supported by the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Association of European Border Regions, then slowly evolving into appropriate institutional structures. This tendency was enhanced by regional policies in the Union, the beginning of the INTERREG program via which cooperation along the internal and external borders of the European Union was aided.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the process happened differently. The countries of the region had exceptionally closed borders with the West which, until the 1990s, were nearly impenetrable, therefore such cooperation was ruled out. With the opening of the borders, not only the chance of cooperation, but also effectively operating EU-schemata, as well as current legal norms and financial support became available. As a result, by the end of the 1990s, with the prospect of joining the EU, more and more systems of cross-border cooperation came about that really lacked any organised form or internal content. Beyond the drafting of noble purposes, they are only superficially similar to spontaneously evolving European structures; in terms of content they are empty, often inoperable, and their only purpose is to obtain financial support from the Union.

Cooperation across borders is a means of cohesion and regional policy of the European Union. The importance of cooperation systems across EU internal and external borders increased after the eastern enlargements in 2004 and 2007. In Europe, more than 40% of regions border other member states, being inhabited by more than one third of the popu-

lation, which raises the importance of these areas in increasing the economic influence of the Union. The goal of the EU is to improve cooperation between communities across borders throughout Europe. In Hungary, by now cross-border cooperation systems have evolved everywhere, both as institutional and non-institutional forms of cooperation. Apart from the institutional forms (Euroregion, working communities, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation — EGTC), in the case of cross-border cooperation systems, there are also short-term, temporary cooperation systems leading to the completion of isolated, separate projects. Among the non-institutional forms of cooperation, cultural and town-twinning relations and the cooperation of micro-regions and counties often draw on a common past that predates institutional Euroregional cooperation systems.

The institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation systems is evidently becoming necessary for the sake of more effective representation of interests, common measures and the more effective arrangement of support programs. Among the institutional forms, Euroregions, the most developed are specific spatial structures that attempt to overcome the divisions created by borders through institutional frameworks.

As a result of regional development reforms in Hungary and the neighbouring countries, more and more Euroregional formations have appeared along the border.. Attention is currently centred around Euroregions because they are the most effective forms of cross-border cooperation for areas that are geographically, historically, ecologically, ethnically and economically separated. They make it possible to reunite regions earlier belonging together, create areas of natural attraction, integrate border regions in a peripheral situation, and strengthen development and cooperation contacts in areas inhabited by Hungarian populations in varying ways and to varying extents. Nevertheless, the degree of institutionalisation of the Hungarian Euroregions is very low and they have widely varying forms. Therefore, the primary task of the present research is to identify the roles Euroregions play in the creation of economic, social and regional cohesion of border areas.

From the point of view of cross-border cooperation systems, regarding the territorial structure of Hungary and its neighbours, the basic problem is becoming clear: the cooperating organizations must build their relations within an extremely heterogeneous public administration environment. The different rule of law and public administration system of the cooperating countries, and their attitude towards the EU are the source of many difficulties.

This study will analyze how the *institutionalisation* of Euroregional strategic partnerships has been realised, based on questionnaire surveys and interviews with the leaders of Euroregions operating in Hungary. It aims to identify the roles played by the different economic, socio-cultural and political actors in the forms of cooperation that have evolved in the border regions of Hungary in the last two decades.

In our research,² we were looking for the answer to the question whether or not institutional conditions are available for the role of the Euroregions in the formation of Hungarian neighbourhood policy, and which of the levels of the Hungarian public administration is suitable for realising national political purposes within the changed frameworks of borders.

1. THE BASES OF PUBLIC LAW OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION SYSTEMS

The creation and development of cross-border cooperation systems started concurrently with the process of European Integration and the evolution of the regions. The successful decentralisation and regionalisation processes were necessarily followed by the growth of related institutions. This process in itself posed no threat to the currently operating system of central state administration, since the aim was not to create a new, independent level of administration, but to connect already existing levels of administration for the sake of social and economic cohesion.³ At the same time, cross-border cooperation systems have a natural effect on state sovereignty, since certain state spheres of authority are the responsibility of regional levels. This challenge is solved in different ways by the legal and administrative systems of unitary and federal states, offering different chances to sign international contracts and set up and maintain common bodies and institutions.⁴

Hungary is a unitary state in whose administrative system there is no regional level having real power. Up to now no unitary social legal means existed that would be valid and appropriate for the whole

of Europe and for defining the organizational structure of cross-border cooperation systems. Therefore, cooperation is influenced by bilateral agreements signed between states during the preparation of certain projects, depending on the political intention of the parties. The contribution of the regional levels in cross-border relations is determined by how much the central government broadens their competence in public law. In addition, it is not enough to base cooperation systems on private law when they concern public institutions and services for which the provision of a public legal entity is necessary.

As regards their legal status, the cooperation systems in which Hungary participates have no legal entity either within or across borders, therefore they do not constitute a separate, independent unit of public administration and cannot sign regional agreements of international public legal content. During their operation, the participating partners act according to the legal system of their own country. Consequently, the building-up and institutionalisation of cooperation systems are largely influenced by the differences of legal and administrative systems, bilateral or multilateral agreements signed by central governments, and the fact that the eastern and southern border areas of Hungary are presently the external borders of the EU.

1.1 *International Regulations of Cooperation System*

To understand cross-border cooperation it is necessary to be familiar with the *multilateral agreements* that came into force with the participation of several states, under the aegis of international organizations, within the frameworks of regional integration. These agreements drafted general principles that the signing states subsequently built into their legal systems. They contain conditions for interstate contracts and agreements signed between local authorities, but in themselves they do not constitute concrete contracts about cross-border cooperation.

Concrete cooperation demands further bilateral and trilateral agreements. Due to the different laws and degree of centralisation of the different states, and the presence or absence, or the character of framework conventions between them, the legal background of cooperation systems and the circle of competences and right of the participants to sign contracts vary considerably. This variation makes cooperation more difficult, especially for Hungary, which is situated in the centre of the Carpathian basin and borders seven countries (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia).

In the activities of the Council of Europe, inter-governmental work in the field of local democracies and cooperation across borders plays an important role. The Council of Europe has played a significant part in dismantling barriers to regional and international cooperation as well as in strengthening cooperation across borders, with the aim of decentralisation. At European level, there is only one document that makes an attempt to create comprehensive regulation on cross-border cooperation systems, namely the Madrid Convention,⁵ passed by the Council of Europe in 1980. The Convention must meet specific expectations, since it can be applied to the local and territorial⁶ relations of the ratifying member states. Apart from respecting the sovereignty of member states having variable legal and political systems, it must also create frameworks of bilateral and multilateral agreements. The importance of the Convention is accentuated by the fact that the monetary program and other activities of the international community can be built on it. The Convention plays a compensatory role, in that it defines the concept of cooperation across borders and offers patterns and proposals for the member states to make the cooperation of regions and settlements across borders easier. The concrete forms of cooperation are derived from the internal legal regulation of each member state, therefore it only provides a legal framework that must be filled with specific content by the internal legislations of the ratifying member states.

Firstly, the Convention offers forms of cross-border cooperation that are adjusted to the needs of local and regional communities and are able to create an accessory legal basis for any agreement signed between them. Secondly, means of surveillance and checking that make permanent respect for the principle of state sovereignty possible are provided for the member states. The Convention sets out a range of model agreements to enable both local and regional authorities as well as States⁷ to place cross-

border cooperation in the context best suited to their needs.

The Convention increases the role of local self-governments and regions in creating relations across borders. Therefore, in the member states of the Convention, it is necessary to draft regulations compatible to the Convention that guarantee political power to regional communities and self-governments and provide suitable financial sources to create cross-border cooperation systems. For this reason, the Committee of Ministers pressures the central governments of the member states to transfer the necessary public legal power not only to local, but also to territorial units in order that they can actively contribute to the definition of political, social and economical units of Europe, to the creation of the 'Europe of border regions'.

Hungary signed the Convention on 6th April 1992, and it was announced together with the Act XXV of 1997. Nevertheless, the actual creation and operation of cooperation systems largely depends on the political attitude and legal system of the neighbouring countries. (see *Chart 1*)

Among the neighbouring countries, Serbia is an exception, where local governments and territorial autonomies are extremely undeveloped, and the absence of European norms can aggravate this situation. This can seriously reduce the chances of cross-border cooperation systems. Usually, there is a chance to sign agreements at local level in countries where the lower levels have a large degree of autonomy. Local and regional treaties make it possible for regional authorities to play a role in the cooperation of nationwide authorities. On the other hand, they authorise regional and local bodies to sign international treaties only under the surveillance of the national level. Consequently, here the state preserves its right of veto, as the exclusive possessor of competence on foreign affairs. There are two ways of overcoming veto: via working protocols, and by means of formal treaties where agreements at nationwide

Chart 1: Madrid Convention in Hungary and in the Neighbouring Countries

<i>Hungary and its Neighbours</i>	<i>Date of Signature</i>	<i>Ratification</i>	<i>Coming into Force</i>
<i>Austria</i>	21/5/1980	18/10/1982	19/1/1983
<i>Croatia</i>	7/5/1999	17/9/2003	18/12/2003
<i>Hungary</i>	6/4/1992	21/3/1994	22/6/1994
<i>Romania</i>	27/2/1996	16/7/2003	17/10/2003
<i>Serbia</i>	-	-	-
<i>Slovakia</i>	7/9/1998	1/2/2000	2/5/2000
<i>Slovenia</i>	28/1/1998	17/7/2003	18/10/2003
<i>Ukraine</i>	-	21/9/1993	22/12/1993

Source: Treaty Office on <http://conventions.coe.int>

level have created the chance for closer cooperation between the regional and local institutes. These cooperation systems are provided via agreements and treaties.⁸

The Convention only encourages the signing countries to aid, facilitate and support the cooperation initiatives of settlements and regions across borders, but does not yet acknowledge the right of self governments to sign agreements. To this end, the Convention has been modified several times, and two Additional Protocols⁹ drafted. *The first Additional Protocol (1995)*, which came into force in December 1998, deals with the institutions and bodies operating along common borders and acknowledges the right of territorial communities and authorities to establish cross-border cooperation organizations having legal authority, with the stipulation that they must respect the international commitments of the other parties.

„Each Contracting Party shall recognise and respect the right of territorial communities or authorities to conclude transfrontier cooperation agreements with territorial communities or authorities of other States in equivalent fields of responsibility, in accordance with the procedures laid down in their statutes, in conformity with national law” (Art. 2).

The states signing the Protocols undertake to acknowledge agreements at regional level as binding for the cooperating parties. Decisions taken jointly under a cross-border cooperation agreement must be implemented by territorial communities or authorities within their national legal system, in conformity with their national law. Decisions thus implemented will be regarded as having the same legal force and effects as measures taken by those communities or authorities under their national legal system.

From the following summary (see *Chart 2*) it can be seen that this causes problems to several neighbouring countries in meeting their agreements.

The *second Additional Protocol (1998)*¹¹ assists the interregional cooperation of territorial communities

and authorities that have no common borders. Protocol No. 2 will act as a legal text to cover these new arrangements. It recognises the right of the authorities to make such agreements and sets out a legal framework for them to do so. It recognises the right of territorial communities or authorities within its jurisdiction to draw up, within common fields of responsibility, inter-territorial cooperation agreements in accordance with the procedures laid down in their statutes, in conformity with national law. These agreements have to take into account the international commitments of the signing parties.

For the sake of the functioning of local and regional democracy via international relations, the Professional Committee on Cross-border Cooperation of the Convention, at its session in September 2004, drafted a European convention proposal containing unitary regulations on the grouping of territorial cooperation (GTC)¹² across borders. It was to come into force as the third Additional Protocol of the Convention. According to the proposal, cross border grouping between regional self-governments (Euroregion) constitutes a legal entity,¹³ and under certain conditions a grouping without a legal entity can also be established.¹⁴ It depends on the resolution of the members whether they establish their grouping on a public or private law basis,¹⁵ an option that may be favourable for Hungary. At the session of the Steering Committee of Local and Regional Democracy of the Council of Europe on 7-8th March 2006, the proposal was modified separately from the Madrid Convention, developing it further, turning it into a European convention proposal containing unitary regulations, with the nomination grouping of territorial cooperation (GTC).

Hungary did not join either of the Additional Protocols; the reason for this may be that there are no economically strong bodies in the country with appropriate public legal authorisation that could establish and maintain cooperation systems having a legal entity. The county as a territorial unit is only

Chart 2: Additional Protocol (1995)¹⁰ in Hungary and Neighbouring Countries

<i>Hungary and its Neighbours</i>	<i>Date of Signature</i>	<i>Ratification</i>	<i>Coming into Force</i>
<i>Austria</i>	28/2/2001	17/3/2004	18/6/2004
<i>Croatia</i>	-	-	-
<i>Hungary</i>	-	-	-
<i>Romania</i>	5/5/1998	-	-
<i>Serbia</i>	-	-	-
<i>Slovakia</i>	7/9/1998	1/2/2000	2/5/2000
<i>Slovenia</i>	28/1/1998	17/9/2003	18/12/2003
<i>Ukraine</i>	1/7/2003	4/11/2004	5/2/2005

Source: Treaty Office on <http://conventons.coe.int>

Chart 3: *European Charter of Self-government*¹⁹ in Hungary and Neighbouring Countries

<i>Hungary and its Neighbours</i>	<i>Date of Signature</i>	<i>Ratification</i>	<i>Coming into Force</i>
<i>Austria</i>	15/10/1985	23/9/1987	1/9/1988
<i>Croatia</i>	11/10/1997	11/10/1997	1/2/1998
<i>Hungary</i>	15/10/1989	6/9/1989	1/1/1990
<i>Romania</i>	4/10/1994	28/1/1998	1/5/1998
<i>Serbia</i>	24/6/2005	-	-
<i>Slovakia</i>	23/2/1999	1/2/2000	1/6/2000
<i>Slovenia</i>	11/10/1994	15/11/1996	1/3/1997
<i>Ukraine</i>	06/11/1996	11/9/1997	1/1/1998

Source: Treaty Office on <http://conventions.coe.int>

the political supporter of cross-border cooperation systems, but the real assignments are usually accomplished by labour organizations of a common legal character, associations and companies of public utility. The Hungarian ratification of the Additional Protocols would require the realisation of a regional reform under which regional self-governments having real political power would be established, self-governments that are capable of establishing cooperation systems functioning according to the necessary legal bases and European rules.

In the interests of cross-border cooperation systems, it is important to create a multi-level government in which local and regional (self-) governance plays a significant part in the arrangement of public affairs. The principle of subsidiarity¹⁶ plays a specific role—due to the decentralisation of central assignments—in the division of power of states at local and regional level. The initiatives of the Council of Europe preceded those of the European Union in the field of regional policy and decentralisation. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities¹⁷ drafted the basic expectations towards the self-governments in two documents, the self-governmental minimum for the development of local and regional democracies. These two documents are the European Charter of Local Self-government (1985) and the European Charter of Regional Self-government.

The *European Charter of Local Self-government*,¹⁸ connecting to the already existing text of the Madrid Convention, defines the constitutional and legal bases for the principles of government and arrangement of financial affairs that all democratically operating local governments have to abide by. The document defends the right of local communities to self-governance by acknowledging it, thus creating the bases of self-governance and local democracy.

The strengthening of local governments greatly contributes to the realisation of a decentralised Europe. Local authorities are the basic institutions for democratic governance, and the principle of partic-

ipation is an important contribution to the sub-national government system of a bottom-up-built Europe, based on the principles of democracy and decentralisation of power. From the point of view of cooperation across borders, it is a very important article that defines the right of local governments to unite. Local authorities shall be entitled, in exercising their powers, to co-operate and, within the framework of the law, to form consortia with other local authorities in order to carry out tasks of common interest within the frameworks of the current legal regulations (Art.10). The right to unite is also extended to the international level. The article announces that „all states acknowledge the fact that the local governments have the right to become the member of international associations for the protection of their common interests. Local authorities shall be entitled, under such conditions as may be provided for by the law, to co-operate with their counterparts in other States.” (Art. 10. (3.)

The process of drafting the European Charter of Regional Self-government, based on the pattern of the European Charter of Local Self-government, began in 1991. It belongs to the democratic principles of integration to acknowledge that regional self-governments having political power have the right to participate in the international activities of the state at any time, in the manner defined by the relevant national legislation, where their own legislating power and interests are concerned. In 1997, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities passed the proposal of the European Charter of Regional Self-government, which may create a new situation for self-governance at territorial level throughout Europe. It drafts a system of criteria for establishing a regional self-government, and provides constitutional and legal frameworks for the rights of regional self-governments that are necessary to apply in the process of European development.

The Charter proposes basic regulation guaranteeing the political, administrative and financial inde-

pendence of self-governments. It mirrors the decentralisation process taking place in the second half of the 20th century, and it is as part of this decentralisation process that the delegation of political power to local governments, together with the transfer of power to regional self-governments, has been taking place since the 1970s. For the member states, it contains the democratic requirements that are indispensable to establish a legal regulation of sub-national level. It has a significance similar to that of the Charter of Local Self-government. This document also defines a regional minimum standard of self-governance and records it as a requirement for the member state, taking a further step towards the deepening integration of public administration. An article referring to cross-border cooperation appears, connected to the international relations of the regions, according to which the Charter announces that „...within their own areas of competence, the regions are enabled to pursue interregional or borderline cooperation activities, in accordance with the proceedings defined in the national legal regulations. These activities must be pursued with respect to the national rule of law and the international obligations of the state.” (Article 8). The international role of the regions supposes that they should be able to sign cross-border agreements and establish common advisory and executive bodies. All of this assumes the demand on the part of the member states that they regulate the cooperation between regional bodies, and that the spheres of authorities necessary for this should be provided by the state.

The proposal announces that all states have the right to establish regional self-governments, and the member states have the right of free choice in the definition of the specific character of their own self-governmental system. Nevertheless, positions differ about the necessity of creating another decentralised level of government in the member states of the Council of Europe. There are countries that object, others draft the establishment of regional self-governments as a long-term aim, while in others again the reforms necessary to establish regional self-governments have already been begun.

The Charter has not yet been passed by the Committee of Ministers. The European Ministers Responsible for Self-governments in the Member States agree that legal means concerning regional self-governments need to be established, and that regional autonomy and decentralisation are important elements of democracy that must be supported by the Charter. Nevertheless, there is wide disagreement regarding decentralisation of central power to regional levels, and how the Charter should guaran-

tee this, whether with a convention, meaning a legal obligation, or with the acceptance of a proposal, meaning a looser obligation. The most recent conference, on 25th February 2005 in Budapest, examined how the factors hindering the acceptance of legal means concerning regional self-governments could be eliminated in the member states.²⁰ According to the *Declaration on Regional Self-government*, drafted at the conference, ‘regions are territorial self-governments between the central government and the local governments’. The acceptance of this principle would undoubtedly constitute an interference in state sovereignty, since certain external rights of the state would be conveyed to the local levels of government. The creation of a second, decentralised level means different challenges for the legal systems of unitary and federal states, therefore it would provide completely different legal means for signing international treaties and establishing common bodies and institutions.

1.2 Internal Regulations

According to internal regulations, the community of local citizens elects the autonomous governing body and mayor at town, municipal level, in the capitol and in the county (territorial level.) There are, however, no governing bodies elected on regional level in Hungary, only statistical-planning regions, based on the NUTS system.

Free association and cooperation with local authorities of other countries is, in the case of Hungary, the constitutional right of local governments. Hungary has embedded the Charter of Local Self-Government into its internal rule of law;²¹ consequently, local authorities have the right to cooperate with local authorities of other countries. Permission from the central government is not necessary for local governments to take part in cross-border cooperation treaties and agreements with neighbouring countries.

The legal background of the international relations of local governments—considering the principles of the Charter of Local Self Government—is guaranteed by the Constitution and the Act on Local Governments.²² Under these terms, the local government can associate with other local governments to represent and advocate its interests and form representative associations and, within its scope of duty and jurisdiction, co-operate with foreign local autonomies. Since local governments are decision-making bodies of political authority, decisions about cooperation with the local governments

of other countries should be made with a qualified majority within the governing body. Although local governments do not have the power to make public legal international treaties, they are entitled to make private contracts.

The European trend also encourages Hungary—and its neighbours—to establish regions with strong political and legal competence as soon as possible, which are to be entitled to make international agreements with the regions of other countries.

As a matter of formal fact, the regional division of Hungary has been established by the Act on local Governments,²³ the Act XXI of 1996 on Regional Development and Land-Use Planning (hereafter referred to as the Regional Development Act) and Resolution No. 35/1998 (III. OGY) on the National Regional Development Concept that shaped territorial partitions fitting and compatible with the NUTS-system²⁴ in respect of the following:

- country, macroregion (NUTS 1)
- planing/statistical region, based on the counties (NUTS 2)
- county and capitol (NUTS 3)
- micro-region (NUTS 4)
- municipality (NUTS 5)

Starting from regional level, seven statistical-planning regions have been created, after which the amendment of the Regional Development Act set up the EU-compatibility minimum.

With the creation of the statistical-planning regions in Hungary, beginning in 1998, a new, institutionalised, multilevel development system has been established. With the approval of the Act XXI of 1998 and Resolution No. 35/1998 (III. OGY) on the National Regional Development Concept, based on the strengthening of the territorial approach to development policies, the reform of administrative system and the development of territorial development strategies have begun. Both Act XXI and Resolution No. 35/1998 (III. OGY) use the micro-regional level as a partition category: Act XXI mentions the micro-region as a partition category based on the existing functional correlations between its subcommunities, and Resolution No. 35/1998 (III. OGY) defines the smallest partition of territorial development.

One of the significant documents for the adjudication of the Euroregions' integrational role is the National Development Plan (NDP 2004-2006) which is based on Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. The NDP acts upon the European Commission's programming guidelines for 2000-2006. The development of economic competitive power, raising the employment ratio and unfolding the cohe-

sional forces of the nation and economy are an integral part of the National Development strategy approved in 2004. However, cross-border cooperation systems are not mentioned in the NDP, although these could nourish the creation and improvement of regional competitive power, the life standards and the realisation of coordinated development programs for the cessation of the peripheral status, thus providing a foundation for the stable and dynamic development of the regions.

In the National Spatial Development Concept (NSDC), approved in 2005, development does not stop at the country's borders. In order to realise an open territorial policy, the cooperation of border areas is included in the NSDC's main priorities.

Cross-border cooperation systems enable formerly connected regions and counties to create areas of attraction, close the gaps and fortify the different forms and levels of cooperative and development relations with the territories inhabited by Hungarian populations along and across borders.

The NSDC, by facilitating the cooperation of the participant concerned of territorial development, framing the social-economic cohesion of the border region, and developing cross-border communication at local and regional level, contributed to creating the loose-framed institutionalisation of Euroregions. Mapping and integrating the cross-border development models into the national development can be achieved on various levels according multi-level territorial disposition:

- town-twinning (township self-governments, multifunctional micro-regional associations, self-governmental associations of territorial development, etc.)
- territorial conjunctions (between counties and regional development agencies) in the form of Euroregions and partnerships.
- the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (a transnational legal character)

1.3 EU-frameworks

Cross-border cooperation systems take different forms in practice. In some cases, territorial contact is not a criterion; multilateral interlocking can be set up between or non-bordering regions. The Association of European Border Regions²⁵ (AEBR) for example, was the first EU-level umbrella organization and pool to support the cooperations formed in border regions and convey their needs to the various forums of the EU. Another type of cooperation can be when the border regions of two or more coun-

tries collaborate. The first such cooperation began in the 1960's along the German-Danish and French-Belgian borders, with the aim of drawing the government's attention to the specific status of these regions. The Association of European Border Regions, which was created especially to promote cross-border cooperation, is now an organization pooling 185 Euroregional cooperation systems. Apart from its strong lobbying activity, the AEBR's goal is to make its voice heard on the European scene, to support cooperation in obtaining the EU funding (INTERREG, Phare CBC, CARDS) and to mediate between cooperation systems and the institutes of the EU. In 1981, the 'Charter of the European Border and Cross-Border Regions' was approved, which was more a statement of political guidelines than a legal document that determined the principles in respect of the existing cooperation practice. Since then other principles and priorities have been integrated, which are now basic requirements of the development program of the EU.²⁶

The basic feature of the institutionalisation of cooperation systems, which is applicable in every case, is *time*, by which they can be divided into *short-term* and *long-term strategic* systems. Significant differences in the structures involved in cross-border cooperation systems can cause inconvenience. With this in mind, the European Commission wrote out a practical guide with an elementary classification containing generic viewpoints to help orientation between different types of cooperation. In the process of creating different levels of development, the Commission considered the shaping of partnerships, namely the nature of the organization of cooperation systems, their capacity, functions and competences, as well as correspondence with the INTERREG and Phare CBC (Cross Border Cooperation) program, by which certain organization types can be compiled and classified. On the strategic level, there are two main types of cooperation: Euroregions and working communities.

Euroregions are territories where interregional or cross-border cooperations of social, economic and cultural or different characters between two or more countries and their self-governments already exist.²⁷ The Euroregion is a formalised structure of cooperation that includes the representatives of local and regional authorities as well as occasional social and economic partners. Euroregions have a specific hierarchy, with an elected council at the top, followed by a commission and thematic working groups and a permanent secretariat.²⁸ In addition, Euroregions have a collective bank account for external monetary sources, and national, regional and local financ-

ing. There are four key features distinguishing them from the other types of cooperation:

- they have the competence for decision making
- they evolve in border regions as a result of a process of many decades
- they entail the coordination and handling of several cross-border projects and initiatives
- they have the specific structures necessary for supra-national programs

Like the Euroregion, the working community is also an organised long-term association of common interest, although with a simplified structure, less integrity and lower levels of competence. Its structure is based on working groups and occasional commissions periodically sitting to make recommendations on solving important problems, making studies, and working as an informational forum.²⁹

The harmonious development of the entire Community territory and greater economic, social and territorial cohesion implied the strengthening of cross-border cooperation. In order to overcome the obstacles hindering cross-border cooperation, it was necessary to institute a new legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border cooperations across the EU. The members of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)³⁰ can be member states, regional and local authorities, as well as certain public legal institutions, or associations with one or more member organizations qualified for EGTC membership, if located on the territory of at least two member countries. (Article 3 (1)-(2)). If it is necessary for community or civil law to choose rights, the association must be dealt with as the subject of the member state in which the seat of the association is found, according to the foundation document. (Article 2 (1)) The function of the association is determined by its constitution, and its structure is the following:

- general assembly with members' representatives
- a director, representative of the association

It should be noted that the constitution could regulate other bodies with a clearly predefined competence (Article 10). The association is responsible for the actions of its associates towards a third person; even if these actions do not fall under the association's competence. Furthermore, the association must compile an annual budget that, most importantly, contains the running costs and, if necessary, the operating costs and the associations debts of any kind, which is to be approved by the general assembly. (Article 11-12)

Cooperative structures at project level are established for the sake of the most effective completion

of certain projects and programs. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to establish a specialised cross-border structure. Many such projects can be supervised through existing institutions on both sides of the border, although connection with at least one strategic level international institution is usually beneficial. If it is essential to establish a project-level structure, relatively few official methods are available that are based on the proper legal form. The solution is often a practical agreement without a legal basis.

Up to now the only generally available legal instrument was the EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping). This instrument is primarily used for economic-marketing cooperation initiatives, and permits the association of separate corporations or other legal entities on both sides of the border for joint economic activity. Its advantage is that it nurtures the enhancement of competitive power. One of its disadvantages is that it is only available for economic collaboration. The other is that associations using EEIG can only operate within the limits of public law, they cannot rely on the legal functions of local authorities. Experience shows that it is not usable for regional and local institutions.

Other options, such as cross-border structures based on the national legal regulation,³¹ eg. Mixed Economy Company (MEC), and Public Interest Grouping (PIG)³² only exist in a few countries, notably in France. The third option is to find an organizational solution based on specific agreements without a legal basis.

2. INSTITUTIONALIZATION ALONG HUNGARIAN BORDERS

In the Hungarian system, there are three organizational models: *local* (micro-region NUTS 4, municipality NUTS 5) Euroregional cooperations,³³ that have well functioning municipal relations, inter-town and micro-regional cooperation systems; *great-regional*, rather collective-like structures, operating with the participation of a whole country; and *regional* (county NUTS 3, region NUTS 2) *co-operation systems*.

In terms of cross-border cooperation, the structure of territorial levels in Hungary and its neighbouring countries has the basic problem that the cooperating organizations have to establish their proper contacts in a particularly heterogeneous administrative environment. The different legal and administrative systems of the connected countries are the root of many difficulties. It is essential for the development of the institutions' operative relations that

all participants have the same jurisdiction and legitimacy. However, due to their construction, competence and possibilities the levels in some neighbouring countries are not compatible with their Hungarian counterparts. Most of Hungary's neighbours have no territorial level, or if there is one, it has few competences and is rather administrative. It is very important to establish a self-governmental system, and many countries have the chance to do so, but this development will probably happen only in those countries that aspire to EU-membership in the near future.

A considerable part of the Euroregional organizations came into being for political purposes. The territorial frames of organizations, the circle of partners, and the tasks to be realized in the scope of the cooperation are decided by agreements of county or town authority politicians. The basic document for the establishment of regional cooperation systems is the foundation charter. The signatories are generally town, county or regional authorities or other territorial, perhaps economic participants, or chambers. The foundation of the cooperation systems typically occurs from below, but their participation is heavily influenced by the possibilities of the given country.³⁴ The organizational system, the decision-making competence of the members and the authority of the numerous Euroregions created in the last few years are very backward in comparison to West-European Euroregional cooperation systems. In addition, the fact that cross-border regional agreements establish institutions related to NUTS 2 regions, which do not exist in Hungary as a public law administrative territorial unit, impedes the formation of a developed West-European-type Euroregional organization.

Most of the Hungarian cooperation systems are called Euroregions, and establish a more or less organized structure, or working organization to assist its work. Euroregions function as framework institutions to realise common tasks, but they do not signify de facto separated structures with legal character. The individual institutions came into being parallelly in partnering countries, as mirror organizations, with the use and coordination of the institutions or organizations already existing on either side of the border. These working organizations are founded according to the given country's internal legal regulations in a company form; on the Hungarian side they are generally registered public benefit organizations, associations or foundations. Since Euroregional cooperation systems do not have an individual legal personality in order to take full advantage of close relations and EU support possibilities, all par-

ticipating countries in every single cooperation system should have a working organization with acknowledged legal personality.

Euroregions, despite having the same name, are very different in nature: the spatial extent, and the forms and aims of institutions of cooperation systems differ, despite the fact that the treaties determine regional and economic development purposes.³⁵

For the purpose of the present research, below we divide Euroregions into different national border areas. For the analysis of organization of cooperation systems, empirical means were used, including questionnaire surveys, in depth interviews and analysis of the foundation charters of the cooperation systems.

2.1 Hungarian–Austrian Borderline Area

The cooperation of the Alps-Adriatic region started on 20th November 1978, with the signing of the Common Declaration in Venice, resulting in the foundation of the *Alps-Adriatic Working Community*. The members of the working community are Bavaria, Slovenia, Croatia, five Hungarian counties (Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Zala, Somogy, Baranya) and Tessine, a canton of Switzerland. The working community does not have a legal personality, and as its expansion is wider than regional, it has been unable to develop a structural and working system as firm as that of the Euroregions. Its organizational construction entails decision-making by the Plenary Session for the premiers of provinces, which is a forum for top administrative experts. The Committee of Executives is the executive and coordinating body of the working community, to which every member province sends one delegate. Professional duties are carried out by five Permanent Committees that, according to demand, create ‘workteams’ with a permanent range of duties, and temporary ‘project teams’ to achieve short-term goals. The organizing of cross-border relations is the duty of the Alps-Adriatic Management Office, founded in every member province of the working community. The Management Office of the member province responsible for the current chairmanship of the working community coordinates its issues. The Alps-Adriatic Management Office as part of the Bureau of the Carinthian Provincial Government is the working community’s General Secretariat, nevertheless, it does not work as a public office in the original sense.

The advantageous feature of this institutionalisation is that real professionals work in the workteams

and, at the same time, there is guidance above them: on the one hand, from the Commissions and on the other from the Commission of Leading Executives, who coordinate the implementation. The institution also has a political legislative level called the Plenary Session of Provinces that strategically holds it together and leads it according to the common interest.

However, the requirement of unanimous decision-making often hinders rapid decisions. The search for a compromise is extremely tiring and hard, but it helps the principal of partner relationships and is advantageous in the long run. The harmony of this extensive organization representing numerous different interests has to be furthered; and the purpose of the cooperation adjusts to this, in that it is rather a lobby for enforcing interests, for common, informative and expert discussion and negotiation of questions concerning members’ interests. Realizing the principle of subsidiarity, supporting of the integration process, and ensuring efficient cooperation with the European regions’ collectives and the European institutes have been registered as the new tasks of the working community.³⁶

In spite of the dissimilar organizational structures and mechanisms of legislation of the individual provinces and their heterogeneous administrative construction, the form of the working community proved appropriate for this type of cooperation.

Another important cross-border cooperation in the form of a Euroregion, the *West/Nyugat Pannonia Euroregion*, was founded on 21st June 1999. This Euroregion is, as regards its institutions, the most highly developed among Hungary’s border areas, and has the longest traditions of all territorial formations. Its antecedent was the Alps-Adriatic Working Community, and the purpose was to create a body that influences its immediate environment where local and territorial interests across real borders are enforced. The institutionalisation process went through several stages: in 1985, the Hungarian–Austrian Regional Planning and Development Committee was founded to declare the need for cooperation and harmonising regional development arrangements. In 1992, the Hungarian–Austrian Border Regional Council was founded, the members of which, after long preparation, established the West/Nyugat Pannonia Euroregion in order to take the cooperation to a higher stage. Burgenland Province is the Austrian member of the cooperation, joined by Vas and Győr-Moson-Sopron counties, and later Zala county from Hungary.

A cooperation system is not a legal entity, but in view of its subject, a Euroregion is the free-will

community of the interests of cooperating partners. Its organizational construction complies with the classic Euroregional requirements. The Council of the Euroregion is the main strategic legislative body of the cooperation, consisting of 40 participants, where all four members delegate 10 persons. The four members of the Presidency of Euroregion are the presidents of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, and Zala county and the leader of Burgenland Province. The Euroregion's Workteams do the real work, where professional problems are solved in areas with specific function, and proposals and suggestions are elaborated for the Council. The Secretariat of the Euroregion is an administrative organ, consisting of the consultation of four named secretaries, who work in parallel without subordination, coordinating the Euroregion's activity. The residence of Euroregion is the same as the residence of the executive bodies; its coordinating town is Eisenstadt. There is therefore no individual Euroregional institution in this case; this institutional structure functions through organizations already existing on the two sides of the borderline.

2.2 Hungarian—Slovakian Borderline Area

Hungarian-Slovakian institutionalised relations were established later than those mentioned above. The westernmost is the *Triple Danube Area Euroregion* that is a territorial cooperation between Győr-Moson-Sopron county and Rye Island-Matusova zem Regional Association (Dunajská Streda, Galanta, Šal'a districts) founded in March 2001. As regards its structure, this Euroregion is similar to the West/Nyugat Pannonia Euroregion, but in reality, it does not function, hardly shows any practical results, and has not performed any real activities since its foundation.

From the cooperation of the municipalities of the towns Komárom and Komarno in the East, a new territorial cooperation came into being called the *Vág-Danube-Ípel' (VDI) Euroregion*. The members are Nitra county in Slovakia, and Komárom-Esztergom, Pest, Veszprém, and Fejér counties in Hungary. The Euroregion's organizational construction is the following: the Presidency is the main decisive and representative body, it consists of Presidential Teams with 3-3 members delegated from each side, and the decisions are results of a consensus. The President is the external representative of the Euroregion. Each Presidential Team has an Independent Commission with stater and proposer function, and the members are social, economic, and admin-

istrative experts. Particularly, for elaboration, development and coordination of projects, ad hoc committees and experts can be employed. The Secretariat of the Euroregion has a permanent working organization that works as a managing secretariat in Komárom-Esztergom county. VDI Euroregion Development Inc, based in Tatabánya, plays this role on the Hungarian side. This cooperation does not have an individual legal character, but the Euroregion's working associations function in both countries in a company form.

Later, two typically micro-regional, local cooperation systems were established in the VDI Euroregion area that have names identifying them as Euroregions: the Danube Euroregion and the Ister-Granum Euroregion.

Danube Euroregion was established on 20th February 2003. Basically, this cooperation is local, built on inter-town relationships, with the aim of raising already existing civil cooperation to a higher level. The centre of the Euroregion is Komárom-Esztergom county, and its members are the municipality of the town of Neszmély, the Micro-regional Association of Tata in Hungary, and the Civil Association from Slovakia.

Its organizational construction follows the classic Euroregional structure. This cooperation is built up from below, and according to its civilian nature, an Independent Committee—similar to the VDI Euroregion—helps the work of the presidency, consisting of invited representatives and experts of social economic and administrative organizations—especially chambers, regional development councils civil organizations, and has a proposing function. The Euroregion's working association is the Danube Euroregion Managing and Development Public Company, which functions as a legal entity, and carries out economic, managing and developmental activities.

The *Ister-Granum Euroregion* was founded on 1st December 2004, basically at micro-regional level. The members are the Association of South Regional Towns of Slovakia, which comprises the self-governments of 53 towns, and the Ister-Granum Euroregion Association from Hungary, which includes 47 self-governments. The organization of Euroregion corresponds to the Danube Euroregion's structure, the only difference is that an Independent Committee does not exist beside the presidency. The working association here also works as a public benefit organization and the long-term aim of the cooperation is to create an institutional form building up from below and independent of the administrative system of the two states, based on social relations.

The local authorities, civil organizations and micro-regional associations which have been cooperating for years now on the two sides of the Hungarian-Slovak border signed a declaration of intent in October 1999 in Putnok to establish the *Sajó-Rimava Euroregion*. The members are Rimavská Sobota, Rőce, and Roznava districts and the associations of the towns and villages of Gemer (279 settlements in the catchment area) on the Slovak side, and the Municipality of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county and the micro-regional associations of Ózd, Kazincbarcika, Miskolc and Tiszaújváros (on the catchment area: 153 settlements) on the Hungarian side. With the signing of this declaration, the Sajó-Rimava Euroregion Cross-border Cooperation was established on the Hungarian side with the members mentioned above and in an associational form, and is registered in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county as a specially prominent public benefit organization as of 7th July 2000. At the same time, on the Slovakian side, the Slané-Rimavské Euroregion was founded, following which the two organizations made a Cooperation Agreement and created the Sajó-Rimava Euroregion on 10th October 2000. The organizational structure of the Euroregion suits the classic organizational construction, with its centre in Rimavská.

The *Ipel' Euroregion* is based on a similar organizational background, its cross-border cooperation contract was signed on 20th September 1999 in Balassagyarmat. In the document, two organizations are mentioned: the Ipoly Euroregion, which was established as an association containing micro-regions in Hungary, and the Ipelsky Euroregion, also based on NUTS 2 territorial units in Slovakia. By this contract, another Euroregional organization, the Ipel' Euroregion, a cross-border alliance of two legal entities was founded on 2nd October 2002. Through this structure, the two member organizations remain operative working organizations with independent legal entities, but, at the same time, due to their cooperation, create a new union, a common Euroregional alliance. Its structure is similar to the traditional Euroregional organization; the only differences are that it has permanent Supervising and Ethical Committees, and a Nominating and Mandate Observer Committee that can be set up occasionally. The members of the Euroregion do not work together directly, but through the founding organizations, which have the headquarters in the Ipolyás area, as well as a branch office in Balassagyarmat.

Similarly, another micro-regional cooperation formation, the *Neogradiensis Euroregion* came into being by the letter of intent signed by Region

Neogradiensis registered in the Slovakian Republic and Neogradiensis Region Association in the Republic of Hungary, in respect of the constitution and current legal regulation of the countries, in September, 1999. These two associations, as civil organizations with legal entity, founded the Euroregion on 25th March 2000. The partners of Nógrád county are Vel'ky Krtís, Lucenec, and Poltár districts, thus the Euroregion encompasses the territory of the historical county Nógrád/Novohrad.

The *Kosice-Miskolc Euroregion* was founded by Kosice county (including four districts), the town of Kosice, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county and the town of Miskolc, in May 2000. This cooperation, based on town-twinning relationships contains mostly political and cultural elements. Its organization follows the classic Euroregional construction, with the difference that it has distinct orders on permanent (Financial Supervising Committee) and temporary committees. In order to help efficient operation, in 2001 the Miskolc-Kosice Regional P.C. was established as a working organization with an individual legal character that realises services of public interest.

At the easternmost end of the Hungarian-Slovakian border, the *Zemplén Euroregion* was established on 23rd April 2004, on the territory of the historical Zemplén County. The participants of the cooperation are Slovakian micro-regions and Hungarian micro-regions, towns, regional and economic development organizations in the border area. This Euroregion, like the Ipoly Euroregion, functions in an association form, and created two mirror working organizations to fulfil operative tasks: the Regional Foundation for the Development of Private Enterprise of Zemplén in Hungary, and the Regional Development Agency of Kráľovský Chlmec in Slovakia. The organizational structure otherwise follows that of other Euroregions.

Lack of common interests greatly influences the development of real institutionalised forms of cooperation that actually function. Those cooperation systems that are based on common historical traditions and long standing inter-town relations are advantageous, and are able to fill the institutional frames with real content. However, the Euroregional frame requires common financial resources. The financial resources of the organizations along the border are small, nowadays; at best they consist of the members' payments, which cannot fund joint developments. Such programs require separate development plans on both sides of the border, often adjusting to the development projects of the partners' own country, using its resources. Thus

the border area cannot take unified steps with common aims and concerns.³⁷ Joint developments indicate common interests, but the participation of politicians in the cooperation is not enough; the initiation of the economic sphere, the chambers and civil society are also needed. These participants coming from below can be the motivation for future cooperation systems, new characters that can fill the cooperation with real aims and content, and thus further their long-term strategic view.

2.3 Hungarian—Slovakian-Romanian-Ukrainian Borderline Area

One of the oldest Euroregions to include Hungary is the *Carpathian Euroregion*, which was established by the bordering areas of Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine on 14th February 1993, in Debrecen. The cooperation comprises extremely large, country-sized areas therefore it can hardly be called a Euroregion; in view of its purpose and functioning mechanism is more like a working community.

The construction of Carpathian Euroregion, due to the current organizational and operative regulations, is as follows: the Region Council is the highest decisive body, and determines the strategic aims of the Carpathian Euroregion. The Council consists of Councillors representing the National Parties of the region, and the councillors of the given National Parties together compose the delegation of the given National Party. The members of the Hungarian National Party are Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Hajdú-Bihar, Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, together with the cities of county rank: Debrecen, Eger, Miskolc and Nyíregyháza. The head of the regional council is the President. The International Secretariat is the executive and administrative organ of the Alliance, it consists of the Permanent National Contacts, who are set up in all member countries of the Carpathian Euroregion (in Hungary: in Nyíregyháza), assigned by the National Parties. Working Committees are established by decision of the Regional Council; at present the working committee for Regional development is based in Hungary.

The main merit of the Carpathian Euroregion is that it is the first clearly Eastern Central European initiative, however, several foreign and internal political, economic, ethnic and cultural conflicts hinder its development. In the activity of the Carpathian Euroregion the characteristics, duties and purposes of working community and Euroregions are mixed. In the initial stage, the main purpose of cooperation

was to create a large territorial area, however, this impedes work in two ways: firstly, the members have no shared interest, and secondly, the collective operation of the organization puts unequal burden on the members due to the distances.³⁸ The interregional relationship between the regions of the five member countries is above the NUTS 2 level. The cooperation is not a phenomenon above countries; it is a structure that may help border regions' development both within narrow and wide bounds.³⁹ The partition of Euroregions has begun along several border sections, and many particular cooperations and Euroregion-like structure is developing.

As a reaction to the enormous organization of the Carpathian Euroregion, a territorial cooperation called *Interregio* came into being with the participation of Zakarpattia county (Ukraine), Satu Mare county (Romania), and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (Hungary). Since Interregio is part of the Carpathian Euroregion, this provides a background for Interregio to develop its cooperation, and contains two- or three-sided cooperation as an umbrella organization. Interregio is based on the principle of partnership, and is only active when necessary; it is not determined by a program from above, but by the problems coming from below.

The establishment of *Bihar-Bihor Euroregion* started in April 2001 with the letter of intent of Hungarian and Romanian government and civil organizations, municipalities and micro-regional associations, and finished in 2002. According to the charter, the organization is open: any municipality, municipality association, civil organization, or other legal person can become a member, but the cooperation does not reach the level of institutionalised Euroregional status. The details of the charter confirm that this micro-regional model based on cooperation across borders supports direct bilateral relations; it communicates the region's territorial connections through a smaller area and more privately. This is, in every respect, a more mobile, operative, reciprocal model that can be an efficient institutional and organizational framework for Hungarian-Romanian relations.⁴⁰

There are more significant historical antecedents of another organization, the *Hajdú-Bihar-Bihor Euroregion*, in that relation between the two counties go back several decades. The Cooperation Agreement was signed between the Hungarian Hajdú-Bihar county (and Debrecen, which joined it later, having founder rights), and the Romanian Bihor county (and Oradea, which joined later and has founder rights), and the Euroregion was established in 2003. As regards its legal status, it is an open, cross-border

organization based on voluntary cooperation, not an individual legal person.

2.4 Hungarian—Romanian—Serbian Triple-border Region

The main organization of the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triple borderline area is the *Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT) Euroregion*, founded in November 1997, consisting of three Hungarian and four Romanian counties, and the autonomous Vojvodina province of Serbia. The process of institutionalisation was preceded by cooperational agreements.

The cooperation went through a structural reform in 2003, and a Coordination Committee, which is a body caring for the efficiency of the preparations of the decision and the functioning of DKMT, became part of the organizational system. Furthermore, a working association with a legal entity, the DKMT Euroregion Development Agency P.C. came into being, as an instrument of the preparation and management of common development tasks. The essence of the structure is to separate the economic partnership with legal character from the political organization of the regional cooperation. As a result of the reforms, the Euroregion took on a new two-part structure: one part is an open consultative political forum, the other is an operative working association with a registered legal-economic status. The public benefit organization is a private company, founded by the common-rule organizations that established the Euroregion in 1997; therefore, in the members' assembly, the founders assert their rights and make their decisions on the development plans that the working association deems suitable to execute.

2.5 Hungarian—Croatian—Slovenian Borderline Area

The most politically charged of Hungary's border areas is this triple-border area, and its most extended cross-border cooperation is the *Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion*; which, according to its legal status, is an international voluntary organization of regional authority units. This Euroregion was established on 28th November 1998, in Pécs, by Hungarian, Croatian and Bosnia-Herzegovinan counties, cantons, districts, self-governments and chamber organizations.

Since 24th January 2005, the organization has a new charter in keeping with the construction of

Euroregions, with the exception that this organization does not have a common office. The secretariat is a common administrative, technical and professional bureau that is set up in three national offices: the headquarters are in Eszék, Pécs and Tuzla, and its leader is the secretary of the country in charge of the current chairmanship. The lack of a common office, the large territorial area, and the diversity of the participants all testify to the fact that it is not a real Euroregional organization but rather a great-regional cooperation similar to a working communities of some countries. However, in the scope of the cooperation there is an opportunity for realizing large, cross-border, transnational cooperation systems and also interregional cooperation systems along the borders.⁴¹

The Hungarian-Croatian-Slovenian triple border area historically operated as an uniform economic area with lively commercial relationship, centred around Nagykanizsa. On the basis of this, in September 2000, a declaration of intent came into force in Nagykanizsa to establish the Drava-Mura Euroregion, and on 14th September 2004, the General Treaty of the Drava-Mura Euroregion was signed, laying down the rules of the cross-border cooperation. Once the cooperation was granted legal status, its working organization, the Drava-Mura Euroregion Public Benefit Organization was established on 2nd May 2002. Nevertheless, the future of this cooperation is insecure, and it is not able to function well at the moment.

The third Euroregion in the region is *Mura-Drava Euroregion*, founded on 2nd October 2002, by Zala and Somogy counties in Hungary, and by Međimurje county of Croatia, on the territory of the historical Zala county. Its legal status is that of a cross-border cooperation of counties and regions in Hungarian and Croatian areas; its fundamental principle is voluntary cooperation. Its organizational construction is less institutionalised; it is a loose formation that does not suit the Euroregional structure. The presidency is the decisive body of the cooperation, each member of the Euroregion delegates one person: this body coordinates the activity of the operative Workteams, and there is a Euroregional Office in every participating country.

Cooperation systems on the Hungarian-Slovenian border area are generally underdeveloped, at an elementary stage, and do not fulfil the criteria of Euroregional cooperation systems. Along this border section, the future prospects are of a great-regional, working community type of cooperation (Alps-Adriatic Working Community, DDSZ Euroregion). The cohesion of the border area is very

weak, since the two Southern Slav states' interests and attitude are closer to Austria than to Hungary (see *Chart 4*).

Chart 4: Percentage of Hungarian borderline area cooperation systems

<i>Borderline area</i>	<i>%</i>
Hungarian-Slovakian	47
Hungarian-Slovakian-Ukrainian-Romanian	21
Hungarian-Croatian-Slovenian	16
Hungarian Austrian	11
Hungarian-Serbian-Romanian	5
	100

At the moment, there are basically three organizational models along the Hungarian borders: great-regional, regional and local types of organization:

- great-regional cooperation systems are the Alps-Adriatic Working Community in the west, the Carpathian Euroregion in the east, and the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregional Cooperation in the south—in spite of their names these are working community-like great-regional cooperation forms;

- relations with regional (county NUTS 3 or region NUTS 2) participation that are the closest to the status and organizational construction of real Euroregions, are the West/Nyugat Pannonia Euroregion, DKMT, Vág-Danube-Ípel' Euroregion, and other especially regional formations like Interregio in the territory of Carpathian Euroregion or Bihar-Bihar Euroregion, which are also based on inter-county cooperation, but do not work in a proper institutionalised way;

- Euroregional cooperation systems at local level (town NUTS 5, micro-region NUTS 4), that have well-functioning municipal and town-twinning relations, supported by inter-town and micro-regional cooperation systems. These are typically found on the Hungarian-Slovakian, Hungarian-Croatian and Hungarian-Ukrainian-Romanian borders.

3. CONCLUSIONS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 On Institutionalisation

The 18 Euroregions along the borders of Hungary vary widely in terms of participants. Euroregions can make cross-border relations closer by bringing together border areas with similar qualities, using the advantages of natural resources and the cross-border situation through the regions' development

centres and subcentres. These include Szeged and Pécs on the Serbian-Hungarian and the Croatian-Hungarian border, Debrecen on the Romanian-Hungarian border section, Győr on the Austrian-Hungarian border, Nyíregyháza on the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, and Miskolc along the East-Slovakian border. However, on Slovakian-Hungarian border sections there is a large number of subcentres, with Sátoraljaújhely, Esztergom, Neszmély and Putnok all playing the same role. Subcentres can be micro-regional centers (like Zemplén Euroregion, Bihar-Bihar Euroregion, Neogradiensis Euroregion), municipal regional development associations (like the Danube Euroregion, Sajó-Rimava Euroregion, Drava-Mura Euroregion and the Ister-Granum Euroregion, a municipal association of 53 towns) or a group of city municipalities (e.g. Kosice-Miskolc Euroregion).

One of the possible roles of Euroregions is to contribute to cooperation of self-governments and micro-regions for regional development purposes, and ensure the harmonic development of regions. The organization encourages forms of cooperation and pioneering experiments that support regional development in border regions where, the socially and economically undeveloped settlements include both towns and villages. To preserve partner relations, there both inter-town relations and town associations were established. Among the towns the cities of county rank are the most important, since their sphere of attraction is larger than that of other towns, and this manifests itself in the region-organising role of cities of county rank, such as Szeged (Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion), Debrecen (Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion), Pécs (Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregional Cooperation) Miskolc (Kosice-Miskolc Euroregion), Nagykanizsa (Drava-Mura Euroregion) and the town of Sátoraljaújhely, which is 'the capital of the Zemplén region' (Zemplén Euroregion). The cities of county rank, with the parallel reinforcement of the micro-regional level, supported the aims of regional level, in this dimension, contributing to the future of the town and the region.

The coexistence of two or more forms of cooperation also occurs in great-regional cooperation systems, which, as diaphragm organizations, embrace several cooperation systems of local or regional coverage. These include the Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion among the regional type operation within the area of the Carpathian Euroregion, and the Interregio and Bihar-Bihar Euroregion among the local type. The Drava-Mura and Mura-Drava Euroregions are similar formations within the area of

the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregional Cooperation. Furthermore, the area and the participants of these cooperation systems, together with the Euroregion of West/Nyugat Pannonia, also belong to the Alps-Adriatic Working Community. The most complete cooperating structures can be found along the Hungarian-Austrian and the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian borders, where intensive relations have evolved at all local levels, fostered by common traditions and the large number of ethnic and national majority residing in areas that earlier belonged together. The European integration aims of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina can fill the cooperation with content, and can reinforce and make it effective. The Hungarian-Slovenian border does not play a serious role in the Hungarian Euroregional development, since it is very short and joins peripheral areas of both countries. In addition, both parties are more interested in cooperation with their Austrian neighbour. Along other borders, mainly the Hungarian-Austrian, Hungarian-Ukrainian and Hungarian-Croatian, relations are incomplete, various partnerships have evolved, and their character is mainly defined by the administrative system of the neighbouring countries.

In terms of organization, according to the European Commission's definition, a Euroregion is a spatial extension which has a specific organizational structure; its highest level is the elected council or assembly, the thematic workteams and the permanent secretariat,⁴² and which, in Hungary, takes the legal form of an incorporation or public benefit organization.

To what extent do the Hungarian Euroregions meet the criteria of the European Commission? During the survey, we asked the leaders of the Hungarian Euroregions about the institutionalisation. The answers given to the question 'Does the cooperation have an institutionalised structure?' reveal that virtually all cross-border cooperation systems created along Hungary's borders do have an institutional structure. In fact only one case, the Interregio, which evolved within the former Carpathian Euroregion, does not have an institutionalised decision-making, executive and administrative organization, but only working groups organised for tem-

porary projects. In practice, it only uses the name *Euroregion*, without being an organization, just an agreement at project level. The individual participants create workteams for preparing the common projects and programs, and the parties name their own deputies to coordinate the activities. The projects prepared by the workteams are discussed and passed at meetings of the participant municipalities' leaders.

Great-regional cooperation systems are working community cooperation systems similar to Euroregions that are communities of interest organised for long-term cooperation; however, their constitutional structure is simpler, they are less integrated and their levels of competence are lower. Legislative, executive and administrative organizations with different names and proposed by the European Commission and numerous workteams and commissions are the characteristic features of these cooperation systems. During the specified sessions, they elaborate proposals for the solution of significant problems, make studies and work as an information forum.

Of all Hungarian border regions, perhaps the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregional Cooperation is the most complicated. Its organization follows that of Euroregions, except that the organization does not have a common office. The lack of a common office, the large territorial coverage, and the varied nature of the participants all suggest that it is also not a real Euroregional organization; it is much more like a great-regional cooperation similar to a working community of some countries. However, in the scope of the cooperation, there is an opportunity for realizing large, cross-border, trans-national cooperation systems and also interregional cooperation across borders.

In the *regional organizations*, except the Interregio mentioned above, most of the cooperation systems (80%) have a common legislative and administrative body, while a unified executive body exists only in 60% of cooperation systems. In these cases, the working groups responsible for the operation, which consists of officials and experts and can be found in every cooperation, has the duty of execution.

The decision-making body, which is usually called

Chart 5: Are there different units inside the structures of cooperation?

<i>Level of structure</i>	<i>Decision making unit</i>	<i>Executive unit</i>	<i>Secretariat</i>	<i>Working groups</i>	<i>Other units</i>
Great regional	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Regional	80%	60%	80%	100%	40%
Local	100%	80%	70%	70%	60%

the presidency or council, is composed of the leaders and principals of the cooperative partners; therefore, its membership contains equal delegates of all participants. In most cases, the common secretariat is a working organization that is founded in a company form, in conformity with the internal legal regulations of the given country; in Hungary these are registered as public benefit organizations, incorporations or foundations. Almost half of the cooperation systems (40%) have other organizational units that help the organizations to be more integrated and work more efficiently and extensively.

Euregio West/Nyugat Pannonia is a good example of a regional cooperation system. It was established in 1999, on the Hungarian-Austrian border, which is the most highly developed of Hungary's border areas in terms of institutions, and has the longest traditions of all territorial formations. The process of institutionalisation has many stages, and its organizational construction complies with the classic Euroregional requirements. Another good example of regional cooperation systems is the main establishment of the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian border area, the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT) Euroregion, founded in November 1997, consisting of three Hungarian and four Romanian counties, and the autonomous Vojvodina province of Serbia. The process of institutionalisation also took a long time in this case, and was preceded by bilateral cooperative agreements. The cooperation went through a structural reform in 2003, and a Coordination Committee, which is a body of three caring for the efficiency of the preparations of the decision and the functioning of DKMT, became part of the organizational system. Furthermore, a working association with legal entity, DKMT Euroregion Development Agency P.C. has come into being to help with the preparation and management of common development tasks. The essence of the structure is to divide the economic partnership with legal character and the political organization of the regional cooperation. Due to the reforms and the new structure, the Euroregion took on a new two part structure: one part is an open consultative political forum while the other is operative working association with a registered legal-economic status. The public benefit organization is a private company, founded by the common-rule organizations that established the Euroregion in 1997, therefore, in the member assembly, the founders assert their rights and make their decisions on the development plans that the working association seems suitable to execute.

Institutionalised forms at NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 level are aiming at Euroregional status. The problem

is that the cross-border, regional agreements of the West-European Euroregional structures establish institutions referring to NUTS 2 regions, which do not exist in Hungary as a constitutional and administrative territorial unit. Hungarian regional cross-border formations have neither political power nor self-governmental level, and the members at territorial level are just political participants of the cross-border cooperation, while the real operative duties are carried out by private law working organizations, mostly associations, foundations and public benefit organizations. However, the relationships at the level of Euroregion are highly dependent on the level of decentralization in the given country. The level of competence of the cooperating sides differs, in that the partners do not rule the same type of administrative unit on the two sides of the border.

Local cooperation systems are based on micro-regional, inter-town or town-twinning relations on both sides of the border, and civil organizations and chambers also frequently take part in the bilateral relationships. Numerous similar formations appeared in the Hungarian-Slovak border area in the early 2000s. As for the institutionalisation of the Euroregions of the area, they are built up following a well-defined model: mirror organizations functioning separately in the two countries come into being and are registered according to the legal regulation of their own state, but the members also maintain common institutions. Through these common organizations, they create a framework institution and name it Euroregion or interregional alliance similar to the West-European formations.

In spite of their Euroregional name, these organizations do not always suit the criteria of the European Commission. One fifth (20%) lack a common executive body, and there are no common secretariat and organised work teams in almost one third (30%) of local Euroregions. However, 40% have other local organizations, referring to the integrated character of the cooperation.

The most advantageous and efficient model proved to be those cooperation systems where several territorial levels work together, and where, due to the coordination of the county authorities, there is an independent internal organizational unit for managing the international relations, through which they provide a firmer foundation of professionalism and organization for cross-border cooperation than the local authorities could.

In sum, we can claim that today, everywhere along Hungary's borders there are more or less institutionalised and ad hoc cooperation forms. The range is very diverse and mixed: from the occasion-

Table 1: EGTC

<i>Name</i>	<i>GENERAL European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation</i>
Legal basis	Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006/EK of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)
Objective	The objective of an EGTC shall be to facilitate and promote crossborder, transnational and/or interregional cooperation, hereinafter referred to as „territorial cooperation”, between its members, with the exclusive aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion. Article 1 (2)
Legal status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An EGTC shall have legal personality. – An EGTC shall have in each Member State the most extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons under that Member State's national law. It may, in particular, acquire or dispose of movable and immovable property and employ staff and may be a party to legal proceedings. Article 1. (3)-(4)
Applicable law	In the case of matters not, or only partly, regulated by this Regulation, the laws of the Member State where the EGTC has its registered office. Article 2 (1)c
Bodies of the grouping	<p>An EGTC shall have at least the following organs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an assembly, which is made up of representatives of its members; – a director, who represents the EGTC and acts on its behalf. <p>The statutes may provide for additional organs with clearly defined powers. Article 10 (1)-(2)</p>

Source: Own edition, based on Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006/EK of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), Ister-Granum European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation Ltd Statutes, and Convention regarding the establishment of the Ister-Granum European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Ltd.

HUNGARIAN-SLOVAKIAN BORDERLINES Ister Granum European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation Limited

- Act XCIX of 2007 on the European grouping of territorial cooperation of the Hungarian Parliament of 25 June 2007
- Ister-Granum European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation Ltd Statutes
- Convention regarding the establishment of the Ister-Granum European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Ltd

- Its general objective is the establishment and maintaining of cooperation extending to the full range of regional development activities between its members, within in boundaries of the delineated area specified in the Annex of the Grouping,
- and with regards to further areas affected by the cooperation, for promoting and strengthening economic and social cohesion.

The Grouping is an independently managed non-profit organisation which shall acquire legal personality on the day of registration, and as such has full legal capability. It may, in particular, have rights and obligations of any kind, acquire or dispose of movable or immovable property, and be a party of legal proceeding.

The law applicable to the interpretation and enforcement of the Convention shall be the law of the Republic of Hungary, where according to the statutes of the Grouping it has its registered office.

The General Assembly

- The highest decision-making authority of the Grouping is the General Assembly.
- The permanent membership of the grouping is made up of the representatives of the members of the Grouping,, the number of which at that time of formation is members. In case of the participation of several legal entities of one single member state, the legal entities shall still appoint their own representatives.
- The General Assembly elects two joint chairs for the period of two years, from which it elects the executive chair and the deputy chair.

Senate

- The Senate is the managing body of the General Assembly, and it represents the General Assembly between two meetings. The chair of the Senate is the current executive chair of the General Assembly.
- The Senate is made up of 8 members: the current joint chair of the General Assembly, three delegated Hungarian and three delegated Slovakian General Assembly representatives who are delegated by the General Assembly. The term of office for the members shall be two years.

Director

- The term of office for the director shall be two years from the day of accepting the Statutes.
- Following the termination of the duties the director may be re-elected for the post.
- The director shall perform their duty in the management of the Grouping with due diligence, with having primary regard to interest of the grouping. The Director shall be held responsible for any damage caused to grouping by their criminal breach of the relevant legislation, of the Statutes or their obligation of management, in accordance with relevant legislation.
- The duty of the Director shall only be performed in person, representation shall not take place.
- The tasks not referred to the competence of the General Assembly, or the Senate shall fall under the competence of the Director.

Permanent Professional Committees:

- External Relations Committee
- Human Resource Policy Committee
- Economic and Asset Management Committee
- Environment Protection Committee
- Industrial and Transport Committee
- Cultural and Tourism Committee
- The professional work of the committees is managed by their chair of committees.
- The professional committees operate to a working plan, the design of which is the duty of the chair of the committees. The working plan contains the schedule for the meetings of the professional committee, its main tasks and the schedule of their implementation. The meetings of the professional committee are convened by the chair based on the working plan at least twice a year and when necessary.
- Between the meetings of the professional committee the chair shall carry out the management of periodical matters, who shall inform the members of the committees regarding their activities.

Work Organisation

- The administrative tasks of the grouping, the preparation and implementation of decisions shall be carried out by a work organisation of its own or by contractual appointment.
- In case of an own working organisation, the Director shall provide tasks for the work organisation, manage the operational functions and exercise the Employer's rights over the employees.
- In case of a contractual working organisation (not from the bodies of the grouping), the Director shall provide tasks for the work organisation, however the Director does not directly influence its operational functioning and does not exercise the employer's rights over the employees of the work organisation either. The details of the cooperation of the grouping and the working organisation are covered by a contract, which approved by the Senate and the Director.

Regional Advisory Body

- The Regional Advisory Body is the consultative and advisory body of the Grouping.
 - The Regional Advisory Body is an organisation consisting of 15 members. Its members: the chair of the professional committees, 3 representatives of the Ister-Granum Regional Civilian Parliament, 3 representatives of the largest employers of the region, and a representative of each of the 3 chambers involved.
 - The general duties of the Regional Advisory Body attached with right of proposal and reporting rights are; supporting the professional work of the grouping, and assisting the representation of interest of the sides of the employer and of the employee and of professional organisations.
-

al cooperation systems, cooperation systems with great cultural traditions and with town-twinning relations have the largest importance, and can become more serious, and establish long-lasting cooperation, while institutionalised forms aim at the Euroregional status. All have the same organizational structure (Presidency, Assembly/Council, Secretariat, Working Committees), but their extent and participants are varied. These formations do not have any political power or elected self-government; the local and regional participants are only supporters of the cross-border cooperation, but the operative duties are held by private law working organizations like associations, foundations, or public benefit organizations.

Cross-border cooperation is more intensive in the case of decentralized political systems and multilevel government, and this phenomenon prompts Hungary to accomplish a territorial reform process. Cooperation in the system of regional autonomies is a possible solution, but it involves very hazardous elements, therefore the states can only take steps very cautiously and through many political conflicts.

3.2. On Legal Conditions

Behind partly regional (region NUTS 2, county NUTS 3), partly local (micro-region NUTS 4, municipality NUTS 5) cooperation systems there are effectively functioning self-government relationships, and cooperation between settlements and micro-regions. We have to emphasise here that these structures do not have political power, autonomy and self-government; their activity falls within the competence of the NUTS units that form them, thus for them to function, some preconditions are required:

- signing agreements with other municipalities in the same state has to be the competence of local and regional municipalities,
- a competence for signing agreements beyond the borders, and
- establishing common consultative and executive bodies.

Although a Euroregion as an institution and organization gives the frame of cooperation, due to the large territorial extension, the different interests of the neighbouring countries and the diverse political and administrative levels, it is often impossible to link regions and to hold together the existing and potential interests. According to some opinions, it is also practical to operate smaller organizational systems, micro-regional or inter-town type of relation-

ships or town alliances in order to cultivate partnership. These two or more types of cooperation should and have to be operating next to each other, because they may complement and be built on each other.⁴³

Hungary was the first to pass its national act (Act XCIX of 2007) necessary for the establishment of the EGTC. Based on this act, the EGTC seated in Hungary, as a legal entity has limited responsibility (at least one member has limited responsibility), but basically the members have unlimited responsibility. A potential Hungarian EGTC member can only cooperate with a member that operates on a non-profit basis. At the same time, for the establishment of the EGTC, institutions are necessary from at least two EU member states that are members of the cooperation system.

At present, there are two working EGTCs in the area of the EU 27: one from the Belgian-French side, one on the Hungarian-Slovakian border. The EGTC founded between France and Belgium is the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropol.⁴⁴ The other is the Ister-Granum EGTC between Hungary and Slovakia. (see *Table 1*).

It is an important question how third countries such as Ukraine or Serbia can be involved in a cooperation system of EGTC-character initiated by EU member states. For third country partners interested in EGTC to be involved, it is essential for their country to pass a national legal regulation that allows such a form of cooperation, that is, the appropriate legal means must be created. It is also important for the third country that is not the member of the Union to sign a cooperation agreement with the EU member state with which the EGTC-cooperation is to be established. Cooperation with third countries within the framework of the EGTC is possible if allowed by the national legal regulation of the given EU member state. The EGTC left the question open, the decision is left to the member states.

In the case of Croatia, the situation is easier, given that during negotiations Croatia has begun to apply the legal material of the community. (This progress is evaluated by the EU every year). In this way it is easier to create a Croatian national regulation necessary for the application of the EGTC. This progress is also encouraged by the fact that Hungary, Slovenia, Austria and Italy, in the field of common cooperation, should have to chance to participate in EU applications as soon as possible.

Examining the practice of member states mainly means examining reactions (or lack thereof) to the border cooperation activities of the local or regional authorities of a given state. In a Hungarian con-

text, we cannot speak about such mature and effective legal practice yet; cooperation systems are very rudimentary. There is no strong regional territorial unit, and the representation of interests of cooperation systems does not always reach the central level.

The authorities of the *central government* earlier were convinced that each type of international relations is the monopoly of the bodies of the central government (mainly of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and no cross-border cooperation on the part of local or regional authorities should be allowed. In consequence, some governments took steps against the cooperation initiatives of their own local and regional authorities. The executive bodies of the state could do this directly via the public administration due to the fact that they had written out declarations severely limiting the cooperation possibilities of their own local or regional authorities.

To sum up, for the creation and effective operation of cross-border cooperation systems, it has also been necessary to create the legal frameworks within which these cooperation systems could realise their aims. Counterbalancing the dominance of central government, in cooperation systems along the borders, the local and regional authorities come to the fore. Deriving from the variety of national political systems, cooperation systems across borders can be very variable even within the EU. The unitary, decentralised and federal states provide different forms of institutionalisation for cross-border cooperation systems.

For institutes to develop operative relations, it is indispensable that the parties should have similar authorities and legitimacy. However, the different levels in the neighbouring countries in terms of structure, competence and possibilities are not compatible with their Hungarian counterparts. In most neighbouring countries there is no intermediate level, or if it even exists, it has an administrative rather than a self-government character.

The governments of nation states often do not treat the Euroregional organizations of sub-national level as partners. The lack of Euroregional cooperation, the different authorities and organised feature of the cooperating parties also cause serious problems. Due to the voluntary character of the EGTC, even applying the grouping of territorial cooperation across the internal borders of the unifying Europe, there is no guarantee that the Europe of border regions will evolve. The limits of the EGTC manifest themselves in the fact that it means a form having a legal personality for cooperation systems only along internal borders. At the same time, it is one of the merits of EGTC that it assists the coopera-

tion of decentralised partnerships; that is, regional, local, cross-border cooperation systems evolve. It also adds to the democratic character that the sphere of authority of cross-border cooperation system must be the same as competences of national level, thus providing a way to create 'new forms of government' in border regions.

In Hungary, local self-governments have the authority to initiate international, cross-border cooperation, but regions are not authorised to do so. That is why regional cooperation systems can evolve only under the authority of central governments, since cross-border developments belong to the competence of interstate cooperation.

Similar to the practice of decentralised countries, for successful cooperation, it has also become necessary to build up a regional structure in Hungary compatible with European norms. The Regional Charter proposal provides important assistance in defining the exact accomplishment and authorities of the regions. If the reform of public administration delegated suitable authorities to the regions, it would become possible, within the framework of decentralised partnerships and without interstate agreements, for cooperation programs to be initiated. This in turn entails that local and regional authorities should be granted increasing scope of authority in the internal rule of law.

4. THE ACTORS AND AIMS OF COOPERATION

Through the survey and the interviews made with the leaders of Euroregions (2006) we were searching for the answer to the question what roles the different cooperation-systems play in the creation of Euroregions serving as a basis for the political, economic, social and territorial cohesion of Hungary across borders. *Table 2* summarises the actors of Euroregional formations.

The actors in border cooperation systems are mainly political, having relatively limited political authorisation. Along the border settlements, 14 Hungarian counties are bordered by neighbouring countries. In the multilevel system of regional development, new political and social actors have appeared in regional, county and micro-regional committees of development. In Hungary, regions or counties cannot be considered as having a real political power. The regional level is in the process of transformation at the moment, but not yet completed. By political actors, however, we mean the representatives of county or settlement self-governments

Table 2: The Euroregional cooperation systems in Hungary

Name of the cooperation	Cooperating partners		Character of the cooperation			Borderline area	
	Hungary	neighbour	local	regional	great-regional	external	internal
Alps-Adriatic Working Community	county	province (A) (I) (D); canton (CH); country (SLO); (HR)			X	X	
EUREGIO West/ Nyugat Pannonia	county	province (A)		X			X
Triple Danube Area Euroregion*	county	regional association civil organization, county (SK)		X			X
Vág-Danube-Ipel' Euroregion	county	county** (SK)		X			X
Ipoly Euroregion	civil organization	civil organization (SK)	X				X
Danube Euroregion	municipality, micro-regional association	civil organization (SK)					X
Ister-Granum Euroregion	micro-regional association	Self-governmental association (SK)	X				X
Sajó-Rimava Euroregion	county, micro-regional association	county, associations of towns and municipalities (SK)	X				X
Neogradensis Euroregion	civil organization	civil organization (SK)					X
Kosice-Miskolc Euroregion	county, town	county,** town (SK)	X				X
Zemplén Euroregion	micro-region, county, regional committee of development, civil organization	micro-region region, county, regional development agency, civil organization (SK)	X				X
Carpathian Euroregion	county, town	county,** county, town, civil organization (SK); county, region, civil organization (PL); county (RO) (UA)			X	X	
Interregio	county	county (RO) (UA)		X		X	
Bihar-Bihar Euroregion	micro-region	micro-region (RO)	X				X
Hajdú Bihar-Bihar Euroregion	county, town	county, province (RO)		X			X
Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion	county	county (RO); province (SB)		X		X	
Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregional Cooperation	county, town, chamber	county, town, chamber (HR); canton, town, chamber (BH)			X	X	
Drava-Mura Euroregion*	county	municipality(SLO); county (HR)					X
Mura-Drava Euroregion	county	county (HR)		X		X	

* This Euroregion is not operating at the moment

** District in the earlier Slovakian public administration

Source: own research

and micro-regional associations who, exploiting the present political and socio-cultural circumstances, for the sake of gaining EU-supports, establish relations first informally, then later in an official, institutionalised form. In town relations, twinning relationships, in which civil organizations are often involved, are dominant. However, they do not operate within Euroregional organizational frameworks: by and large, the cross-border cooperation systems in this field remain at local level, and are usually effective only within one project.

An example of cooperation between towns is the Kosice-Miskolc Euroregion, which was established in 2000 with the participation of Kosice county (including four municipalities), Kosice town, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county and Miskolc town. The cooperation, which is mainly based on a town-twinning relationship, consists of political and cultural elements. In October 1999, in Putnok, those self-governments, civil organizations and micro-regional associations that had cooperated over the years signed a declaration of intention establishing the Sa-

jó-Rimava Euroregion. The Ipoly Euroregion is also based on civil cooperation and similar organizational bases; its cross-border cooperation treaty was signed on 20th September 1990 in Balassagyarmat. The document names two organizations: in Hungary, the Ipoly Euroregion, established as an association covering two micro-regions; in Slovakia, the civil organization named Ipelsky. The Neogradiens Euroregion is a similar form of cooperation, whose members are the Region Neogradiens registered in Slovakia, and the Neogradiens Region Association registered in Hungary. The Bihar-Bihar Euroregion evolved from similar micro-regional cooperation systems in 2002.

Among the great-regional cooperation systems, the Carpathian Euroregion is based on the cooperation of political actors (county, town) and also the Alps-Adriatic Working Community (county, province, canton, country).

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, Euroregional relations started building up from below, but after initial enthusiasm, they often could not renew or draft new cooperation aims.

The results of the survey show that along the borders of Hungary, cooperation systems of political purpose come first, and while in the case of internal borders the proportion of cooperation is 30%, in the case of external borders it is only 12.5%. In the case of great-regional cooperation-systems this proportion is 30%, while at local and regional levels it is 20%. This shows the gradual increase in the role of cooperation systems after Hungary joined the EU, the importance of cross-border relations seriously increasing in the establishment of neighbourhood relations. The Euroregional framework contribute the fact that relations between regions, areas of attraction and border areas earlier constituting natural units are becoming closer.

Deriving from the peripheral situation of border areas, common developments presuppose common interests. The participation of political actors is not enough to this; a horizontal partnership is also necessary: e.g., with labour centres, Regional Agencies of Developments that harmonise governmental and regional interests, apart from the assignments of regional economical development, and provide coordination between the regional actors. The Zemplén Euroregion, established in 2004 involving chambers with the aim of development of enterprises, is a cooperation system based on economic and social cooperation. The Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion (DDSZ) was established in a similar way, by the initiation of chambers (county, town, canton) in 1998.

The economic cooperation of borderline areas

and territorial units earlier belonging together, having a similar degree of economic development often makes slower headway—due to financial, custom, social legal regulations and other obstacles—and cooperation systems between certain institutions, self-governments and cultural cooperation systems are often more successful. Furthermore, the present Euroregions offer possibilities of contact for areas with common historical traditions, and peoples cut off from their native country, preserving the language and culture of native minorities.

Economic aims show a much higher value than the other cooperation aims, particularly along external borders (75%) and within the frameworks of regional cooperation systems. (80%). At the same time, along internal borders (40%) and in the local organizational gradation (50%) it is also the economic aims that are primary, pushing political and social aims into second place. This shows the importance of economic developments in which units of NUTS 2 level play a salient role, since these are the basic territorial units of the European development policy. Euroregional cooperation systems can also be the most effective at this level; however, the basic aim of the cooperation, the definitive element of the long-term strategy, can be economic and territorial development, since it would provide stability of cooperation.

In order for regional or local communities to participate in the formation of their own environment and influence the processes that affect local society, it is indispensable for civilian initiatives across borders, civil society actors and civil partners, to be involved. Both member states and sub-national levels should more seriously accentuate the conversation with the civil society. Effective cooperation, with the creation of broad partnerships between settlement self-governments, enterprises and civil organizations, and with closer cooperation with citizens, must include every aspect of everyday life along borders.

The centres of local cooperation systems are usually the cities of county rank: Szeged and Pécs in the Hungarian-Serbian border area, Debrecen on the Hungarian-Romanian border, Győr on the western Hungarian-Slovakian border, Miskolc on the eastern Hungarian-Slovakian border, and Nyíregyháza on the Hungarian-Ukrainian border. On the Hungarian-Slovakian border, there are a large number of sub-centres: including Esztergom, Neszmeley and Putnok.

Euroregions can assist cooperation of regional development between self-governments and micro-regions, and the harmonic development of the region.

Characteristically, the proportion of cooperations with the aim of regional development is the lowest. Despite the fact that the founding treaties define general purposes of regional and economic development, according to the interviews the purposes are very different.

Cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as economic chambers and enterprise areas and industrial parks connected to them, can be a positive direction from the point of view of development, due to their effect of job creation. The creation of common business interests encourages economic cooperation. The cooperation of border regions is built upon several types of purpose, since the degree of inequality and the necessity of development is the largest in this area, both on the external and internal borders of the European Union. All of this confirms the importance of economic and regional developments. Of the three organizational models—local, regional and great-regional—however, it is not the local model, but cooperation systems involving regional levels that prove most effective, since at this level, due to the coordination activities of the county self-governments, an independent organizational unit is established for the administration of international relations. It is regional cooperation systems that are the most suitable for purposes of regional development. Within the possibilities granted by INTERREG programs, applications for infrastructural and economic developments constitute the majority of applications. Among the purposes of INTERREG III A, the most effective utilisation of community sources within the frameworks of active partnership relations with neighbouring countries, as well as the conveyance and acceptance of experience deriving from the developmental and planning practice of the EU, gained prominent priority in the preparation of countries to later join the Union (Romania, Serbia).

It is not accidental that priorities along all external borders of the EU, are related to the improvement of public transport contacts (e.g. bicycle paths, the extension of border roads), the establishment of border crossings for tourists and commuters, the decrease of waiting time, and the speeding up of traffic, for the sake of the reinforcement of infrastructural integration. Investments connected to the development of common conservationist areas and national parks (buildings and equipment), and the development of technological infrastructure, via obtaining and creating equipment. The applications include rehabilitation and establishment of infrastructural institutions connected to the handling of solid garbage and waste water, the extension of energy

networks, and the provision of sustainable protection of nature and the environment in border areas (investments connected to the establishment of common conservation areas and natural parks). Tourism concepts and projects, and the establishment of a conservation centre for the border region (e.g., green community houses or forest schools) contribute to the development of eco-touristic infrastructure. The harmonisation of transport policy, the extension of infrastructural contacts to reduce the isolation of border regions, and the establishment of border crossings on the external borders of the EU are the prerequisites for the stimulation of economic relations. The development of roads, railways, airports and navigable waterways are very important for the surrounding region, since with their assistance, the necessary prerequisites of border cooperation can be created.

The handling of social assignments was mentioned as primary goal by local organizations (10%) and parties along external borders (12.5%), but this value is evanescent. At the same time, the problem cannot be neglected, since of the four freedoms the right to free movement, and labour mobility can be mentioned as the main social goals. The cooperation of border regions also contributes to better understanding. There are border areas that are characterised by a usual identity deriving from historical, cultural and linguistic factors, where the intention of cooperation exceeds the available opportunities. Mainly 'civil-centric' forms of activity may meet these criteria.

The situation is similar as regards cultural purposes, despite the fact that most cooperation is based on cultural-historical traditions. Very few mentioned it as a cooperation form of primary importance, only great-regional (33%) and local (20%) cooperations did so, and only on internal borders. At regional level, neither social nor cultural aspects are primary, this level being basically a means of territorial development. The problem of national minorities must be given special attention, for example, incorporating the language of the neighbouring country in the educational system, in all types of school and forms of education outside schools for the sake of emancipation, since communication is a part of cross-border cooperation. The improvement of language teaching and meetings that facilitate compliance with the conditions of European leisure and service society must be accentuated. Furthering cooperation of the media via shared and repeated news, information services, and cross-border radio and TV programs can play a key role here.

The development of border regions is the result of

a long development process. The peripheral character of border areas is principally defined by how far they are from the centre of the country, and from economically developed centres. The state of the infrastructure is also a defining factor, since the large part of infrastructure in the border regions, in most of the cases, compared to the interior part of countries, was built decades later. Where there is still no appropriate infrastructure, there is often no physical basis of future interregional, cross-border developments. Regional policies concerning economy and infrastructure must aspire to mutual coordination in the border regions, and ultimately to the harmonisation of infrastructural, economic and social-political measures and norms, and the reduction of disparities in development in border areas.

The success of several programs, regional operative programs (ROP) and the Operative Programs of European Territorial Cooperation (2007-2013) make coordination necessary, both on institutional and project levels.⁴⁵

In addition to preserving cultural diversity, border regions contribute to the broadest and most intensive cooperation possible, and to embodying the spirit of European integration. Cross-border cultural cooperation helps to create a sense of affinity among identical minorities, and contributes to the easier understanding of divergent cultural and linguistic groups. This greatly facilitates the spread of a tolerant mentality (usually still lacking) in the area, and understanding between nations. Politicians, public servants, and also print and electronic media have to provide conditions that promote the elimination of prejudices by means of neighbourly relationships.

It is essential to highlight that 75% of the people in external border areas mentioned economic relations as the main goal of cooperation, while this ratio was only 40% in the internal border areas. The difference is equally great in the subject of political cooperation as a major aim: 12.5% in the external, and 30% in the internal areas. Finally, social-cultural purposes as a primarily important aim were articulated mainly in internal border areas.

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACQUIRING RESOURCES

The application system leading to financial resources is an important instrument for the advancement of cross-border cooperation. The usual motivation for an application is a shortage of capital, lack of foreign investment interests, and the pover-

ty of those planning to cooperate. As a consequence of the high unemployment rate, in the external peripheries and underdeveloped regions there is a necessity for programs adjusted to the demands of the economy, for the special management of retraining, and for the elaboration of the system of employment and social services. This is why the present research examined whether or not joining to the European Union—besides the existing relations, cooperative programs—can offer a possibility of development in the reinforcement of the resource-acquiring ability of the Euroregions, in elaborating and realizing cross-border developmental projects, and through these, in reinforcing regional economic, social and political cohesion. Apart from this, the research also investigated whether or not the expected developmental extra resources advance the economic-social cohesion of the region, and, as a result, whether the economic, commercial and employment possibilities are broadening along the external borders of the EU.

All of the three organizational models exist along the Hungarian borders: great-regional structure with national participation, those with regional (county NUTS 3 or region NUTS 2), and those with local/micro-regional participation (NUTS 4), and settlement (NUTS 5). Cooperation with the participation of the local levels seem to function most effectively and beneficially of the three levels, where internal organizational units were set up coordinated by local self-governments. These are able to provide a more professional and organically more stable background for international cooperation than the local self-governments of settlements.

The number of Euroregions shows an abrupt increase from the year 2000. Seventy-five percent of the new local Euroregions are local cooperation systems, behind which there is smoothly functioning self-governmental, town-twinning cooperation between settlements and micro-regions. Thus, the local type of Euroregional cooperation can be called 'project-based' Euroregions. The cohesive force of Euroregions is application resources. Fifty-eight percent of those answering the question 'How many times have you submitted an application for an EU project?' were from local cooperation, while this ratio was only twenty four percent in the case of regional cooperation.

During the preparation for the EU membership, one might be expected to know that 2004 INTERREG,⁴⁶ which supports cooperation across borders, can be applied not only for the Austrian-Hungarian border section, but also the internal Slovak-Hungarian, Slovenian-Hungarian bor-

der regions, as well as the Romanian-Hungarian, Serbian-Hungarian, and Ukrainian-Hungarian border sections.⁴⁷ In fact, 80% answered „yes” to the question ‘Have the chances for application increased since the joining the EU?’, which shows their confidence in the future. At the same time, it seems that the financial support has not turned out as expected. Some disillusionment can be felt from the answers to the question: ‘Has the fact of joining to the EU truly brought about change in the collaboration?’. A decline of 20% (from the original 88.9%) can be seen in the case of local organizations (62,5%), while in case of the regional cooperation this ratio is even higher (40%). Therefore, while more and more applications were submitted at the lower levels, progressively fewer projects could be carried out.

The financial support of the Union has advanced cooperation established in the border regions of Hungary to a great extent. A strategy and developmental program establishing common priorities is an essential requirement if applications submitted for collective financial support are to be accepted. After the establishment of initial cooperation of larger regions, smaller, local and regional types of cooperation came to the fore. Local initiatives supported by INTERREG A, Phare CBC, CARDS CBC and Tacis CBC programs, besides playing a role in international economic, social and institutional connections, did have a great impact on the shaping of Euro regions.

It is essential to utilise the resources of the European Union efficiently—apart from aims of Hungarian developmental policy—within the framework of active partnership with the neighbouring countries, and to adopt and transfer all developmental and territorial planning experience from the EU to the potential membership candidate, Serbia, and to the non-candidate, neighbouring Ukraine.

The cohesion aim, to develop less-developed territories and regions, and increase the significance of cooperation across borders, has gone hand in hand with the augmentation of EU financial support. The cohesion financial resources—the structural funds and the INTERREG—stimulate state and private investments in the favoured regions, thus contributing to the increase of GDP in the underdeveloped regions. During the debate over the financing and priorities of the EU budget between 2007 and 2013, satisfactory arguments were needed to justify how cross-border cooperation contributes to the fulfilment of the cohesion policy. Cross-border cooperation gives added value to the national regulations.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The structure and institutionalisation of cooperation systems are largely influenced by the differences between national legal and administrative systems, and bilateral and multilateral agreements signed by the central governments, as well as the fact that the north-eastern and southern borders of Hungary are currently external EU borders. The basis for good neighbourhood relations is created through bilateral agreements between central governments, more intensive political conversation, and creating frameworks for closer economic, commercial, interior and judicial cooperation. In its bilateral relations, Hungary has been aspiring to stability and cooperation since the 1990s: basic treaties were signed in the 1990s with the neighbouring countries for this purpose. Hungary made an agreement about the preservation of good neighbourhood relations with Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia. These bilateral treaties deal only tangentially with the issues of cross-border cooperation of local self-governments and administration; however, the reinforcement of global relation system has a good effect on local processes.

In accordance with the Madrid Convention, separate intergovernmental agreements were made with Ukraine (1997) and Slovakia, the text of which is nearly identical to that of the Madrid Convention, except that it contains no accessory regulation⁴⁸ comparable to the Convention. It is a region-specific problem that central governments often do not treat sub-national Euroregional organizations as partners.

In most countries, the intention of the central government is indispensable to the creation of legal and public administration conditions necessary to the formation and operation of Euroregions. To allow the creation of cross-border programs without interstate agreements, the neighbouring countries must provide wider and wider jurisdictions to their local and regional authorities. If a member state provides the necessary authority to the regions, it then becomes possible for sub-national cooperation systems to evolve within the framework of decentralised partnerships, without interstate agreements. It is true that real regions (having elected bodies, financial sources and competences) must be also legally based.

Since Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU on 1st January 2007, the European Union now offers the perspective of accession to Hungary’s southern neighbours, the countries of the Western Balkans. Croatia is a candidate country, and Serbia⁴⁹ also has

the perspective of EU-accession. The prospect of EU-membership is the main framework for the stabilisation and transformation of the Western Balkans. Since May 1999, the Process of Stabilisation and Association provides a framework for creating a safe and prosperous neighbourhood policy with relations based on close and peaceful cooperation.

In the 'Wider Europe' Communication,⁵⁰ the Commission only deals with those neighbouring countries that do not enjoy the prospect of membership, namely the western Newly Independent States (NIS) and the Southern Mediterranean. Ukraine is the only neighbour country of Hungary which has no EU membership prospects. But taking into account the size and weight and the impact of enlargement on Ukraine's relations with other NIS and Russia, it is one of the EU's most important neighbours, and the Union aspires to a policy of deeper cooperation with Ukraine, which shares a common border with Hungary.

It is a common interest of the Union and Hungary that the democratisation process should be successfully completed in the countries on their eastern and southern border, and a politically stable, democratic and peaceful area should evolve, an area that does not endanger the stability and the economy of the EU. The 'Wider Europe' makes it necessary to create new frameworks for the relations of Hungary with its eastern and southern neighbours.

As a result of the enlargement on 1st January 2007, 95% of the Hungarian population earlier separated by borderlines now live within the EU. Hence the new task of minority policy to pay exceptional attention to those areas of the Carpathian-Ukrainian (Zakarpattia Oblast) and the Vojvodina regions populated by Hungarian inhabitants. The aim of Hungary is for in the long run the whole Hungarian population within the Carpathian Basin to become part of the Union. To this end, the Hungarian Government has argued for the Euro-Atlantic integration of all neighbouring countries,⁵¹ and the new neighbourhood policy of the Union constitutes a considerable step towards this goal. The regions on the *external EU-borders of Hungary* must play an important role in the integration of undeveloped, peripheral border areas. In the formation of neighbourhood strategy, therefore, they play a serious role in the period after 2007. The eastern extension of the EU also means new challenges and tasks for the Hungarian Euroregional cross-border cooperation systems.

The national political aspects (e.g. the Visegrád Cooperation) are also valid within the frameworks of regional cooperation within the area of the Eu-

ropean Union. For example, Hungary played a major role in setting up the Consultative Committee of the Visegrád Countries' Euroregions on 6th May 2004. The Hungarian, Slovakian, Polish and Czech Euroregions constituting the Committee encourage cross-border regional cooperation, with the creation of possibilities of interregional exchange of experience. The initiative starting 21st June 2006, in Sarajevo, the 'West Balkan Visegrád Foundation', offers a forum for the assistance of cross-border cooperation between the two regions, for the building of local democracy, and for the debate on developmental demands arising at non-intergovernmental level.

The Hungarian initiative and policy instrument, the Szeged Process (1999)⁵² is a framework that has facilitated the implementation the EU's strategy towards the region, and contributed to the endeavours of the Euro-Atlantic institutions in South Eastern Europe. The Szeged Process supported the priorities of the Stability Pact. Its most valuable contribution has been the promotion of enhanced cross-border cooperation through the support of Euroregions in the Western Balkans. The experience of the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT) Euroregion serves as a model to place Balkan cooperation in the context best suited to their needs. The Szeged Process towards the Western Balkans like the Nyíregyháza Initiative (2003)⁵³ towards Ukraine can provide training and know-how transfer, and can establish the dialogue between local (and regional) leaders of new members and their non-EU neighbours about the best possible cooperation in the context of the changing nature of borders. The programme relies on the experience of the international organizations, mainly the Council of Europe and the EU. The Szeged Process and the Nyíregyháza Initiative are the framework for strengthening the EU's New Neighbourhood Policy across the EU's new eastern borders through the cooperation between local and regional authorities and through the partnership of the latter, as well as civil actors. The forms of cross-border cooperation could promote free movement and cooperation among the people of border regions, and the development of relations on the basis of European norms and values.

Cross-border cooperation is therefore the primary tool for all the neighbouring countries to establish mutually fruitful relationship, building on the existing strong points to overcome the negative consequence of separateness and isolation. Opportunities and threats exist which must be addressed in a spirit of cooperation, looking at what has been achieved and what should be done for the region to become a

Table 3: Types of Euroregions along the internal and external borders of Hungary

Internal Border	Name of Cooperation	Establishment	Area (km ²)	Population (people)
Great-regional	EUREGIO West/Nyugat Pannonia, and. Triple Danube Area Euroregion	1999. 06. 21. (Kismarton), and 2001. 01. 25. (Győr)	15,295 6,162	1,279,585; 696,940
Regional	Vág-Danube-Ipel' Euroregion	1999. 07. 03. (Neszmély)	23,975	2,929,000
	Hajdú-Bihar-Bihor Euroregion	2002. 10. 11. (Oradea)	13,755	1,176,478
	Ipoly Euroregion	2002. 10. 02. (Ipolyáság)	60,325	542,727
	Danube Euroregion	2003. 02. 20. (Neszmély)	750	15,000
	Ister-Granum Euroregion	2004. 12. 01. (Esztergom)	2,199	216,261
Local	Sajó-Rimava Euroregion	2000. 07. 07. (Putnok)	6,000	1,000,000
	Neogradiensis Euroregion	2000. 03. 25. (Lucenec)	4,669	364,697
	Kosice-Miskolc Euroregion	2000. 12. 01. (Miskolc)	14,000	1,014,000
	Zemplén Euroregion	2004. 04. 23. (Sátoraljaújhely)	5,330	317,579
	Bihar-Bihor Euroregion	2002. 07. 11. (Biharkeresztes)	176,000	108,698
External border				
	Alps-Adriatic Working Community	1978. 11. 20. (Venezia)	277,402	40,000,000
Great-regional	Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregional Cooperation	1998. 11. 28. (Pécs)	28,284	2,500,000
	Carpathian Euroregion Interregional Association	1993. 02. 14. (Dessian)	161,192	16,051,000
	Interregio	2000. 10. 06. (Nyíregyháza)	23,156	2,185,304
Regional	Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion	1997. 11. 21. (Szeged)	71,636	5,545,000
	Mura-Drava Euroregion	2004. 10. 02. (Caklovac)	10,550	754,826
Local	Drava-Mura Euroregion	2002. 02. 18. (Nagykanizsa)	4,860	340,758

credible partner and for the countries in the region to become stable and reliable democracies.

Differentiated integration is characteristic, as the Euroregions that evolved along the borders of Hungary are in the elementary stage of forming structures. It is not surprising that their institutionalisation shows a variety of forms. *Table 3* contains the main data.

The principles of cross-border cooperation (supported by the European Commission) in the operation of Euroregions, based on the evaluation of the leaders, are different, as shown by *Chart 6*.

Chart 6: How principles on cooperation structure are realized on average (on scale 1-5)

Principle	Great Regional	Regional	Local cooperation
Decentralisation	3,67	3,6	4,0
Subsidiarity	5,0	3,6	4,0
Vertical partnership	3,33	3,8	3,5
Horizontal partnership	5,0	4,0	3,6
Programming	2,67	3,8	3,7
Concentration	3,33	3,6	3,4

The research has enabled us to analyse the meaning and interrelation of the units of Euroregions, i.e. the micro-region, the county and the region, as well as

their content from the point of view of how they apply the common principles of the European Union's assistance within the projects and operational programmes. The study lays great emphasis on how the activities of the Euroregions have contributed to the implementation of the common principles of the European Union's assistance.

Programming: Over the years, Euroregions have proved effective instruments for setting objectives, drafting and implementing projects, and building capacities even at local level. Strategic planning and project management capabilities are the main features of successful Euroregions, as regards both internal development and access to funding opportunities established by the EU. Particular mention was made of the desirability, (e.g. in the case of the Drava-Mura Euroregion and the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion) of having a secretariat that could harmonize the proposals, reports, projects and programmes formulated and elaborated by the partners from both sides of the border.

Subsidiarity: In general, Euroregional leaders were realistic in their assessments, appreciating the specific added value of cross-border cooperation as a model for 'new governance' which practices subsidiarity in spite of different administrative structures, political competences and national laws on both sides of the border. However, a few respondents

(e.g. the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion and the Hajdu-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion), believed that the bottom-up approach should bring different communities much closer and should focus on common economic issues, interact and promote their cooperation in the future.

Decentralisation: Border areas face opportunities and problems that national bodies are unable to respond to. Cross-border partnership structures must be put in place at local and regional level. Border regions *need national and European* assistance to fulfil the challenges. Using assistance can be effective in the framework of decentralised partnerships. The fundamental problem of managing cross-border programmes is represented by the often very different administrative levels involved: e.g. the Carpathian Euroregion is the cooperation of NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 levels; in another cases the different legal and administrative rules and traditions of the members create difficulties, e.g. in the case of the Drava-Mura, the Danube-Drava-Sava and the Alps-Adriatic Euroregions.

Vertical partnership: This principle should work between local, regional and national authorities (and at European level). However, the local cooperations, Bihar-Bihar, Drava-Mura, comment upon the lack of the partnership at national, regional and local levels. They are successful in generating projects, but they need strong support to extend their activities. The lack of financial power sometimes frustrates the leaders and much depends on their own experience and ability to make the cooperation work. Not surprisingly, as good politicians, most of them have taken a pragmatic approach, and demanded equivalent contribution from the national government to overcome the Euroregions' financial difficulties.

Concentration: The financing of Euroregions has been solved mainly through EU assistance. The shortage of funding often stems from the lack of general powers of the authorities. This is why they call for the decentralisation of their budgets and their management. Dissatisfaction with the operation of 'concentration' derives from the fact that EU assistance is not matched by national funds. Mostly, the leaders of local cooperations are dissatisfied. Their complaints focus on the inappropriate system of financing and the lack of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

Horizontal partnership: Respondents were satisfied with the fruition of this principle. The internal and external partnerships are essential to the elaboration and the implementation of developmental strategies relying on the consultation and the participation of stakeholders, such as local/regional authorities, economic and social partners and representatives of the

civil society, including NGOs. Partnership provides a basis for openness and transparency in the preparation and implementation of programmes.

Vertical partnership and decentralisation show a higher average value along the external borderlines in the organizational structure of Euroregional cooperation systems (4); that is, the delegation of power from the higher levels to the lower levels, and the cooperation among these hierarchic levels. Subsidiarity (4.25) and the intention of cooperation between identical levels are a little stronger, as the evaluation of the realisation of horizontal partnerships. This tendency evidently shows the willingness to cooperation and its increase along the external borders of the EU, and the lower levels nearer to the citizens play the leading role in this cooperation. The development strategies and plans mean the evolution of the 'improved conversation' with the neighbouring countries.

Chart 7: How principles of cooperation are realized on average (scale 1-5) by borders

<i>Principles</i>	<i>External EU border</i>	<i>Internal border</i>
Decentralisation	4,0	3,7
Subsidiarity	4,25	3,9
Vertical partnership	4,0	3,2
Horizontal partnership	4,25	3,7
Programming	3,25	3,8
Concentration	3,35	3,5

The acceptance of decentralisation (4) is a little higher along the external borders than in the internal ones (3.7). However, it shows that the governmental acceptance of Euroregions should be increased, and it explores the acute problem of the lack of competence of Euroregional cooperation systems, and the fact that cross-border developments still belong to the sphere of authority of interstate agreements.

In an optimal case, the regional level should be granted a competence of decision-making, that is, its cross-border competence should be made similar to that of national cases. Local aims are not always identical with those of the central governments.

The realisation of the principles of decentralisation, subsidiarity and partnership is indispensable in the cooperation between European, national, regional and local levels. Authorities below the level of the government and the different groups of the population on both sides of the borders can contribute to peace, security and liberty and serve the defence of human rights, including national and ethnic minority rights. Therefore, border regions play a bridging role for the coexistence of European nations and

minorities, as the elements of the European unification process.

The judgement of cooperation, as for the principles of regional policy, did not fall under the value (3) in the case of any of the principles. Vertical partnership reached the lowest value (3.2), which may be due to the difficulties of cooperation between central government and lower levels. This problem highlights the *obstacles of real regionalisation and decentralisation processes* in Hungary and the neighbouring countries. Strategic programs of Euroregions are not harmonised with the development plans of counties and micro-regions making up the given Euroregion, or with the economic and social programs of regional cooperation systems. Local cooperation systems and enterprise areas and industrial parks connected to them can create a durable foundation for economic cooperation and a social pillar of the organization of the micro-region areas, settlements or settlement associations of Euroregions.

Relations at Euroregional level also greatly depend on the degree of decentralisation in the given country. The competence of cooperating parties is often different, for example, if the Austrian provincial level adjusts itself to its legal status, then state organizations must also be involved in the work on the Hungarian side of the border for complete cooperation. The regulations of competence in the legal system of the neighbouring countries are very different from the Hungarian, but the neighbouring countries' systems are less decentralised.⁵⁴

The removal of borderlines and the reinforcement of their bridge role can induce considerable development along the internal borders of the Union. Cooperation is not only important for people living on both sides of the border, but can create political stability for central governments, and the social and economic development of border regions can accelerate. The external borders, due to the Schengen acquis, are evidently in a more advantageous situation than the internal ones. The strategy towards the cross-border Hungarian population can play a key role in the elaboration of the strategic purposes of Euroregions, and in its realisation, across external borders as well.

7. THE EFFECT OF THE EXTENSION OF THE SCHENGEN ZONE

Since 2008, Hungary has two types of border sections:

- those that count as internal borders; therefore, border control is ceased along the Hungarian-Aus-

trian, Hungarian-Slovakian and Hungarian-Slovenian borderlines,

- those that count as external borders; therefore, the order of border control remains unchanged along the Hungarian-Ukrainian, Hungarian-Romanian, Hungarian-Serbian and Hungarian-Croatian borders, it is modified only a little along the Romanian border. The citizens of the non-Schengen states can enter Hungary with a visa, based on bilateral international treaties; it is possible to travel to Croatia with identity card; and Croatian citizens can still enter Hungary visa-free. From Serbia and Ukraine, it is possible to enter Hungary with different types of visa; a so-called national visa can also be requested.

Euroregions and labour communities evolving along external borders will have the important assignment to actively contribute to the stabilisation of the North-East-European and South-East-European areas, mainly regarding the emancipation of national and ethnic minorities. For this purpose, they must actively support the Euro-Atlantic Integration aims of the countries in the area.

All levels of cooperation of border regions should participate in the activities of regional cooperation forums and organizations, within the framework of vertical and horizontal partnership relations. The principle of building upwards from beneath must be treated with exceptional attention, and civilian and professional organizations can play a key role. This helps these cooperation systems to develop further and be filled with content.

The role and responsibility of Hungary towards the neighbouring countries seriously increased with the introduction of the Schengen acquis, since it must play a dual role: to meet with the Schengen regulations and maintain a strict border control system, and, at the same time, to create solutions that are able to counter-balance the disadvantages deriving from the Schengen system, mainly in border regions inhabited by Hungarian population.

The reduction of fragmentation caused by territorial differences and national borders through cross-border cooperation between regional and local self-governments, gained considerable political and legal acknowledgement in the program period 2007-2013, namely in the legislation package concerning the available cohesion political resources. The European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund support three new objectives: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and the European Territorial Cooperation.

The European Territorial Cooperation is based

on the experience of ERDF and INTERREG community initiative, and its aim is to increase co-operation in cross-border programs by creating trans-national areas and an interregional cooperation network in the Union through the exchange of experience. Since 1988, the EU spent 480 billion Euro on disadvantaged regions. In the period 2007-2013, 308 billion Euro are available from the Cohesion Fund.

The character of cross-border programs differs depending on whether the cooperation concerns areas along external or internal borders. Operative programs along the Hungarian-Austrian, Hungarian-Slovenian and Hungarian-Slovakian borders are financed by the ERDF (see *Chart 8*), within the frameworks of the ETC. In the regions along external borders, it contributes to cross-border parts of ENPI and IPA, whose task is to replace Phare, Tacis, Meda, CARDS, ISPA and SAPARD programs. The new financial instrument created for the purposes of European Neighbourhood Policy, the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, will be granted to the partner states between 2007-2013. The support can be grouped around four main aims:

- Sustainable development of regions on both sides of a common border
- Fight against organised crime, actions in the field of environment protection and public health service
- Building efficient and safe borders
- Local, cross-border programs bringing people together.

Among the neighbours of Hungary, in the Ukrainian border area the program is four-sided (Hungarian-Slovakian-Romanian-Ukrainian border section), while the program along the Hungarian-Croatian and Hungarian-Serbian borders belong to the competence of IPA.

Overall resources for the European territorial cooperation objective shall amount 2.52% of the resources available for commitment from the Funds for period 2007-2013. From the sum of EUR 308,041,000,000 (at 2004 prices) 73.86% is available for the financing of cross-border cooperation, 20.95% for transnational cooperation and 5.19% for interregional cooperation.⁵⁵

The extension of the Schengen acquis contributes to the completion of an area based on liberty, safety and justice, and to the defence of external borders. The negative effects of the Schengen borders (organised crime, illegal migration, increased traffic) can be offset by the development of cross-border relations, and the creation of a network of Euroregions can be reinforced with the development

Chart 8: Cross border EU-development programs, 2007-2013

<i>Cooperation Support</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Source (€)</i>
European Territorial Cooperation	Hungary-Slovenia	176,496,479
	Hungary-Romania	224,474,935
	Hungary-Austria	82,280,309
	Hungary-Slovenia	29,279,283
Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)	Hungary-Serbia	50,111,383
	Hungary-Croatia	52,434,124
European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)	Hungary-Ukraine-Slovakia-Romania	68,640,000
Altogether		68,3716,513

Source: http://www.nemzetpolitika.gov.hu/index.php?main_category=2&action=view_item&item=396

of relations of local and territorial self-governments interested in cross-border cooperation. Euroregional development serves the interest of the Hungarian population living beyond the borders.

1. The number of labourers living on side, but working on the other side of the border is quite large, and it often depends on the tempo of economic changes at national level. The number of commuters crossing the border for private purposes is also growing. At the same time, it is also evident that cross-border commuters can cross external and internal borders on different conditions, and irregular movement is also vast, with illegal cross-border commuters are also appearing.

From the point of view of Hungary, this problem has to be given special attention, mainly along the Serbian and Ukrainian borderlines. Regional registers containing the rights of cross-border commuters should be edited, and further friendship treaties should be signed with the South- and East-European countries in order to find a solution to the special problem of cross-border commuting both across the external and internal borders of the EU.

2. The offices of Euroregions should contribute to the improvement of custom and border police authorities to maintain public order and fight cross-border organised crime. The introduction of local border traffic is to be treated as an exceptionally important issue, and its improvement for the inhabitants of border regions, mainly for the sake of the Hungarian population along the borders. The regularisation of local border crossings would decrease

illegal migration, and the border crossings should be open also at night; furthermore, several border crossings could be opened at illegal border crossing points.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In summing up the ongoing processes on the borders of Hungary, it can be stated that despite the need to improve their activities, financial support and information, these cross-border bodies are positive factors in the development of cross-border cooperation. The findings of the research show that a coordinated and integrated developmental strategy for cross-border areas can be achieved through fundamentally institutionalised Euroregions. This is a prerequisite for regular cooperation.

The respondents of the questionnaire agreed that it is essential for local and regional authorities to have the necessary power to play their natural role of promoting and managing competitiveness, innovation and cohesion policies, for the benefit of cross-border cooperation.

All three organizational models exist along Hungary's borders, the regional (county NUTS 3 or region NUTS 2) cooperation system coming closest to organisational construction of real Euroregion.

2. Cross-border cooperation is not possible without decentralisation. It substantially contributes to European integration and to the implementation of cross-border strategies. Furthermore, it brings EU policies closer to the people. CBC cooperation means European, political, institutional and socio-cultural added value.

– CBC initiatives within the region's strategy need a good methodological framework, and resources have to be defined and increased to make those initiatives more effective.

– Successfully strengthened cross-border cooperation needs an appropriate legislative framework in terms of local governance, local administrative reforms and capacity building. To overcome obstacles and barriers created by borders due to national laws and the different administrative structures and competences is the willingness of local and regional authorities. The new European legal instrument, the EGTC is unique because Member States must however agree to the participation of potential members in their respective countries. The EGTC is a legal entity and as such, will enable regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different member states to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality.

– The EU's commitment and the assistance to international communities need to be matched with the dedication of non-EU governments to implement the necessary political and legal reforms, to establish the required administrative capacity, and to co-operate between themselves.

3. Cross-border cooperation systems operate most efficiently in areas where the process is initiated by local/regional actors. This is the so-called bottom-up organizational structure that guarantees the legitimacy of the decisions and the approach towards the citizens. In order to improve economic competitiveness and solve shared cross-border problems jointly at both the local and regional levels, Euroregional strategies are indispensable.

The systematic cooperation of regional/local actors (governmental, civic and business) across national borders builds bridges between the ethnic and national minorities, and provides the practical underpinning to regional cooperation and to reconciliation in areas which have suffered from severed or dysfunctional cross-border relations.

4. At local level, it is a characteristic of cooperation systems that the actors act within the borders of their own settlements, and are not able to get on within wider frameworks. The organization of micro-region cooperation system has already begun, but the process is slow and is hindered by several factors. These include economic reasons, lack of resources, lack of communication and information exchange, and isolation, as well as problems of ideology and psychical factors. The enlargement of the European Union will have a particularly significant impact on the territorial and social cohesion of these areas. Conversely, stagnation and social crises in the borderlands could threaten the EU's ability to manage its new external border effectively. Border regions need national and European assistance to meet these challenges. To this end, the EU provides the necessary funds which help to stabilise the situation in the border regions (Eastern and South Eastern Europe). Regional economic policy in cross-border regions should promote the border related differences in development and be integrated into basic goals of national development, also European policies (regional and social policy objectives etc.). In this way cross-border cooperation becomes a constituent element of regional development.

5. Cross-border networks at local and regional level can promote not only economic cooperation, but also make an important contribution to tolerance and building mutual trust via socio-cultural cooperation (education, language training). Cross-border cooperation therefore will remain an indis-

pensible factor to facilitate partnerships between neighbouring countries. Partnerships of this kind can build the new multilevel good neighbourly relations on the borders.

*Translated by Balázs Kántás
Proofread by John Harbord*

NOTES

1. Association of European Border Regions. European Charter for border and Cross-border regions. New version. Gronau, 7th October 2004. Preamble, 3.
2. The results of the paper are part of the research project 'The legal and administrative aspects of cross-border cooperation' supported by the OTKA-project No. T 042892. The information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as the basis for the research supported by OTKA. The survey was completed in March 2006, the analysis of the data started after that.
3. Practical Guide to Cross-border Cooperation Systems, Gronau. 1997, AEBR, 1997: B1, 7
4. Tamás HARDI, *Conditions of forming uniform border regions—the possible border regions in the Carpathian basin* [Ph.D. Dissertation] (Centre for Regional Studies, Győr-Pécs 2001) 76.
5. European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities CETS No.: 106 Opening for signature 21/5/1980, Madrid.
6. According to Article 2 (2) of the Madrid Convention, 'territorial communities or authorities' shall mean communities, authorities or bodies exercising local and regional functions and regarded as such under the domestic law of each State. Based on this, in Hungary, the subjects of agreements regulated by the Madrid Convention can be local (municipal, NUTS 5; micro-regional, NUTS 4) and regional (county, NUTS 3; planning /statistical region, NUTS 2).
7. Interstate agreements are the following:
 - Model inter-state agreement for the promotion of transfrontier cooperation
 - Model inter-state agreement on regional transfrontier consultation
 - Model inter-state agreement on local transfrontier consultation
 - Model inter-state agreement on contractual transfrontier cooperation between local authorities
 - Outline agreements, statutes and contracts between local authorities:
 - Outline agreement on the setting up of a consultation group between local authorities
 - Outline agreement on co-ordination in the management of transfrontier local public affairs
 - Outline agreement on the setting up of private law transfrontier associations
 - Outline contract for the provision of supplies or services between local authorities in frontier areas (private-law type)
 - Outline contract for the provision of supplies or services between local authorities in frontier areas (public-law type)
 - Outline agreement on the setting up of organs of transfrontier cooperation between local authorities
8. Practical Guide to Cross-border Cooperation Systems, Gronau. 1997, AEBR, A3. pp. 2-3.
9. Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities. Strasbourg, 9. XI. 1995.; and Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities concerning interterritorial cooperation. Strasbourg, 5. V. 1998. CETS No. 159
10. Coming into force: after ratified by 4 states, 1st December 1998.
11. Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning interterritorial co-operation CETS No.: 169 Art. 2.
12. Revised preliminary draft European Convention containing a uniform law on groupings of territorial co-operation (GTC) Council of Europe. CDLR (2006) 17 Strasbourg, 20 April 2006.
13. Revised preliminary draft European Convention containing a uniform law on groupings of territorial (GTC) Council of Europe. CDLR (2006) 17 Strasbourg, 20 April 2006. Article 13 (3), Appendix I Article 2. (2).
14. Revised preliminary draft European Convention containing a uniform law on groupings of territorial (GTC) Council of Europe. CDLR (2006) 17 Strasbourg, 20 April 2006. Appendix I. Article 4. (3).
15. Revised preliminary draft European Convention containing a uniform law on groupings of territorial co-operation (GTC) Council of Europe. CDLR (2006) 17 Strasbourg, 20 April 2006. Preamble 13. and Article 3. (1).
16. Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. Brussels, 29th October 2004, CIG 87/2/04 REV Preamble Part I Title III Article 1-11 (3), Official Journal of the European Union, C 310, Volume 47, 16.12.2004.
17. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities brings together the elected representatives of the local and regional communities. It is a Council of Europe consultative body, being intended to genuinely represent both local and regional authorities, it comprises two chambers: the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

18. European Charter of Local Self-Government. Strasbourg, 15. X. 1985. Council of Europe, European Treaty Series No. 122.
19. Coming into force: after ratified by 4 states, 1st September 1988.
20. The conference arranged in Budapest, similar to previous conferences, requested the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to continue working on the Charter's proposal. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was sad to acknowledge that they do not have the necessary majority in the Committee of Ministers to accept the proposal, therefore they proposed that the debates continue.
21. The European Charter on Local Self-government, 15. Oct. 1985. Strasbourg, signed from the side the Republic of Hungary on 6. Aug. 1992 and approved with the Act XV of 1997:
22. The legal background to the international relations of local governments is provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, (44/A § (1) h) and the Act on Local Governments (Act LXV of 1990. 1. § (6) c).
23. Act on Local Governments (Act LXV of 1990: 1. § (6) c).
24. Considering the need to make individual territories of the member states commensurable the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) was established by Eurostat in order to provide a single uniform breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics for the European Union.
25. 1970: 10 Euroregions were founded in the castle of Anholt. Two more were in the process of being established: The Regio Rhein-Waal and Euregio Noord (later Regio Ems Dollart). Some time after this, the Regio Bodanica developed into the Euregio Bodensee (Lake Constance). The German Land of Schleswig-Holstein, the Saarland, the Region Nord-Pas de Calais, the Regio Basiliensis and Ostfriesland participated as national border regions.
26. European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions, New version, Gronau, 7 Oct. 2004 <www.aebr.net>.
27. István SÜLI-ZAKAR, *Ten years of the Carpathian Euroregion interregional association* (University of Debrecen, Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen 2003) 63.
28. György ÉGER, *Regionalism, the Euroregion as the specific spatial form of integration* [Pro Minoritate books] (Osiris, Budapest 2000).
29. Association of European Border Regions: Practical guide to cross-border cooperation. 1977 B2, pp. 11-12.
30. Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). OJ L 210 31.7.2006.
31. János REHNITZER, *Cross-border cooperations in Europe and in Hungary* (Centre for Regional Studies, Győr, Pécs 1999) 35-36.
32. Organizations only existing in France.
33. See also: Edit Soós, Zsuzsanna FEJES, 'The institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation systems in Hungary' [2007] June Európai Tükör 104-121.
34. HARDI (n 4) 71.
35. Éva KRUPPA, *Regions on the border. Cross-border cooperation in the EU and in Central Europe* [Ph.D. Dissertation] (Budapest 2003) 151.
36. Barbara BALLER, 'The changing role of Euroregions after Hungary's accession' [2004] 1 Európai Tükör 156-157.
37. 2004): Formation of cross-border regions. Magyar Tudomány (Hungarian Science), 2004/9 pp. 56-59
38. HARDI Tamás, 'Az államhatárokon átnyúló régiók formálódása' [The Formation of Cross-border Regions] [2004] 49 Magyar Tudomány 57.
39. KRUPPA (n 35) 145.
40. BARANYI Béla: 'Euroregionális szervezetek és új interregionális szerveződések Magyarország keleti államhatárai mentén' [Euroregional organizations and new interregional formations on the Eastern border of Hungary] [2002] Magyar Tudomány 1510-1512.
41. KRUPPA (n 35) 149.
42. Practical Guide to Cross-Border Co-operation. Regional policy and cohesion. Second edition. 1997 p. 3.
43. János REHNITZER, *Border Regions and National Strategy* (Centre for Regional Studies, Győr, Pécs 2001) 48.
44. Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropol <<http://www.lillemetropole.fr>>.
45. Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013; Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007 – 2013; Hungary-Slovakia Territorial Cooperation Programme 2007 – 2013, Hungary-Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013; Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013; Hungary-Slovenia Territorial Cooperation Programme 2007 – 2013.
46. INTERREG is a program of action from 1989, which supplements the financial support of the Structural Funds in the area of cross-border cooperation, between nations and regions. Its aim is to render the means of development and policies more effective.
47. To understand the results it is worth noting that the Slovakian-Hungarian frontier section became the inner frontier of the EU from 2004, thus it became the beneficiary of INTERREG III.
48. FORGÁCSNÉ OROSZ Valéria, A Madridi Egyezmény végrehajtása Magyarországon [The implementation of

- the Madrid Convention in Hungary] [2002] 2 Magyar Közigazgatás 96–100.
49. The EU signed the association agreement with Serbia on 29th April 2008.
 50. European Commission. Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, Brussels, 11. 3. 2003 COM (2003) 104 final.
 51. On the new directions and tasks of the Government's European Policy <www.kum.hu>.
 52. See more details at the website of Szeged Centre of Security Policy at <www.scsdp.hu>.
 53. First Conference of 'EuroClip' Initiative, Nyíregyháza. The prospects for regional cooperation across the new EU borders. Nyíregyháza, 16-17th October 2003.
 54. FORGÁCSNÉ OROSZ (n 48) 96–98.
 55. European Union. Regional Policy. The cohesion policy 2007-2013. Commentaries and official texts. Handbook, January 2007, p. 55. General provisions. Article 21.