

## CROATIAN-HUNGARIAN TRANSBORDER RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF EUROREGIONAL CO-OPERATIONS

### HRVATSKO-MAĐARSKI PREKOGRANIČNI ODNOSI - NA PRIMJERU EUROREGIONALNIH SURADNJA

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#### SAŽETAK

*Prekogranične veze između Hrvatske i Mađarske imaju svoju dugu tradiciju. S popuštanjem socijalizma već od 60-ih godina 20. stoljeća počela je izgradnja kontakata podjednako na društvenoj i gospodarskoj razini. Nakon promjene u političkom sustavu najrašireniju formu suradnje znače euroregije. No, ta forma je još u početnoj fazi. Cilj moje studije jest pokazati dosadašnje tokove, odnosno nudim neke preporuke za racionalizaciju organizacijskog sastava.*

**Ključne riječi:** prekogranične veze u vrijeme socijalizma, euroregije, racionalizacija

**Key words:** transborder relationships in socialism, euroregions, rationalisation

Between Croatia and Hungary transborder relationships has gained a great past. With the relief of socialism getting in contact has started cautiously from the 1960s already. After the regime change euroregional frames are the most popular forms of cooperation. However, this form is still in a very elementary state needs to be refined on several points. The aim of my study is to present the processes that have already passed off and to make some offers to rationalize institutional structure and operation.

#### TRANS-BORDER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CROATIAN-HUNGARIAN BORDER AREA DURING STATE SOCIALISM

The short democratic period that followed World War II. was too short to set in motion the trans-border cooperation between the two states. From 1949 on the bilateral relationships perished,<sup>1</sup> in the 1950s the permeability of the 621 km long Yugoslav<sup>2</sup>-Hungarian border disappea-

<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Union rejected Yugoslav confederal attempts on the Balkan. As a result of the tension the Kominform convicted Tito in Bukarest, June 21<sup>st</sup> 1948. who has already been considered as an imperialist spy in 1949. Due to the previous actions Hungary dissolved its 5 year economic agreement with Yugoslavia in June 1949.

<sup>2</sup> December 1<sup>st</sup> 1918. the Serbian-Croatian-Slovene Kingdom was shouted out which was carrying the name the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Between January 31<sup>st</sup> 1946. and April 28<sup>th</sup> 1992. it was Yugoslavian Socialist Federal Republic.

red almost completely and became the field of open military and political confrontation. In the summer of 1951 redoubt work started, a 430 km long protection zone was established which was strengthened by minefields, barbed-wire fences and concrete fortresses.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this out of the previously planned heavy industrial improvements nothing has taken place along the cross-border regions.

From the end of the 50s relief occurred between the countries of the socialist block and the »separate passenger« Yugoslavia. Opening has started towards Western Europe too. This western-oriented opening connected our southern neighbour as a »liminal« country into Hungary's export-import system: many products that cannot be imported directly into our country, primarily retail trade consumer goods got into Hungary through Yugoslavian private import.<sup>4</sup>

It made possible that trans-border relationships quickened again from the middle of the 60s. We differentiate between two types from the point of view of the two states, the locally and centrally organized ones. In order to improve cooperation several centrally organized fact-revealing and proposal-making courses took place.

To control complex proposal-making work, in 1969 the Hungarian-Yugoslav Urban and Town planning Constant Vice-committee was established to examine the Hungarian-Yugoslav borderline, work out and harmonize development conceptions. Working out the tourist-holiday regional development plan of the Órség-Lendvai Wold together with the Slovene Environmental and Town planning Committee and the Geographical Institution of Ljubljana University was among the tasks suggested by the vice-committee. The expansion conception of the Danube Region and the preparation of impact assessments about the water power-stations set up on the Dráva and Mura happened in cooperation with the Eszék Urban Institution.<sup>5</sup> One of the most important problems of the Yugoslav-Hungarian borderline was the common environmentally sound use of the Dráva and Mura during the socialist period. In 1978 under an interstate agreement proposals were made in order to solve these difficulties. Concrete and tangible arrangements have already been born before institutionalized interstate planning, for example the delivery of the Gyékényes railway bridge in April 1960.

As I have introduced before the Yugoslav-Hungarian relation started to get back to normal only in the 1960s, which made possible the unfolding of bottom-up trans-border relationships. In the 70s the configuration of official relationships between cross-border counties and cities started. As a result of the federative nature of Yugoslavia, different types of relationships occurred along certain parts of the common borderline. Along the Croatian-Hungarian part inter-town relationships were dominant such was the establishment of the twin-city relationship between Eszék and Pécs in 1973 which still has a function today. Agricultural relationships gradually came into existence as well. The collective farms around Mohács made an international sugar manufacture

<sup>3</sup> Hajdú Z. 2008: A magyar-jugoszláv kapcsolatok a hidegháború időszakában (1948-1955) In.: A baranyai államhatár a XX. Században. HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum. (Hungarian-Yugoslav relationships during the period of the Cold War (1948-1955) In.: The Baranya state-border in the XX: century. HM Museum and Institution of Military History.) Pécs, pp. 69-77.

<sup>4</sup> Golobics P. 2001: A határmenti térségek/régiók együttműködésének lehetőségei a Dél-Dunántúlon. Közlemények a Pécsi Tudományegyetem Földrajzi Tanszékeiről. (Possibilities for co-operation of transborder areas/regions in the North Transdanubium, Announcements from the Geography Faculties of the University of Pécs), Pécs, pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> Zala Gy. 1988: A határmenti együttműködés szükségessége, eddigi főbb eredményei és problémái. In.: Erdősi F. és Tóth J. (szerk.) A sajátos helyzetű térségek terület- és településfejlesztési problémái A Ts-2/2 program iroda. (The necessity of trans-border cooperation its main results and problems. In.: Erdősi F. and Tóth J. (comp.) Urban- and region innovation problems of an area with special situation, A Ts-2/2 Office)

verticum<sup>6</sup> with the sugar manufactures in Beli manastir, Bellye and Zupanija. Cooperation was based on comparative advantages. Hungarian big mills exceeded the Yugoslavian partner by right of their produce, but the neighbouring sugar manufactures equipped with German technology were more productive than Hungarian processing industry in their sugar export. This cooperation though was based on socialist economy organization: it was not the companies that established direct contact with Hungarian collective farms, but cooperation took place within regulated confines by intergovernmental contracts. From the 60s on bilateral shopping tourism started, which turned into curative- tourism<sup>7</sup> in several towns in our midst. In Hungary Nagykanizsa, Nagyatád, Kaposvár, Pécs in Croatia Čakovec, Koprivnica, Virovitica and Osijek were the targets of consumers. Shopping tourism of the given decades can be characterized by different »product baskets«<sup>8</sup> on both sides. For Hungarian citizens Yugoslavia was an opened door to the West where they could reach a number of services that were unavailable or prohibited in socialist states. As a result of economic instability Yugoslav citizens, mainly those in the Vajdaság put their money in Hungarian banks in the 80s. In the 90s this deposit served as a basis of Croatian and Serb enterprises founded in our country.

The improvement of the economic relations in the 1970s and 1980s was generated by the opening of new border crossing points. Previously border crossing was only possible on a public road at Letenye then a crossing possibility occurred in Udvar, Drávaszabolcs, Barcs and Berzence (1. map) that abolished relational gap disabling former development. Udvar has established the weak counter-balance of the Budapest-Letenye-Rijeka axis in the Danube centerline. Drávaszabolcs has given a great impulse to the shopping tourism of Pécs and Harkány. The opening of the Barcs crossing point though provided the city with new improvement possibilities that haven't been exploited since then.

To sum up we could claim that before the outbreak of the Southern Slav war the cross border relationships of the two countries were characterized by a small border trade based on spontaneously organized private trade, besides which state organized forms have also occurred primarily in the form of agricultural cooperation. Based on our present day experiences we could judge these relationships as the first signs of self-organisation, but they are way too far from the western practice in their efficiency. Supposedly, if Yugoslavia had gone along the path of democratic development in the 1990s then the forms of cross border cooperation could be compared to the Austrian results.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Gulyás L. 2005: Két régió - Felvidék és Vajdaság - sorsa az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiától napjainkig. Hazai Térségfejlesztő Rt. Hn. (The destiny of two regions - Felvidék and Vajdaság - from the Austro-Hungarian Monarch until today. Inland Region Planning Public Company) pp. 233.

<sup>7</sup> Harkány, Nagyatád, Siklós.

<sup>8</sup> In the 70s and 80s Hungarian customers travelled to Yugoslavia to buy »western« products, mainly clothes and high quality electric goods (eg. Gorenje: refrigerator). In the 80s as a result of the increasing inflation Yugoslav citizens came to Hungary to buy food.

<sup>9</sup> Golobics P. 2001: A határmenti térségek/régiók együttműködésének lehetőségei a Dél-Dunántúlon. Közlemények a Pécsi Tudományegyetem Földrajzi Tanszékeiről. (Possibilities for co-operation of transborder areas/regions in the North Transdanubium, Announcements from the Geography Faculties of the University of Pécs), Pécs, pp. 30.

## EURO-REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR EFFICIENCY IN THE CROATIAN-HUNGARIAN BORDER REGION

The regime change in Hungary was followed by the appearance of euro-regions aimed to generate cross border relationships. At first the actors of local-governments and urban intervention assigned too much importance to regional co-operations as efficient stimulus of economy, in several cases they overestimated the possibilities. By today it has been proven true that regional co-operation can be used well as a tool for urban innovation, but its role as a catalyst without any appropriate social-economic potential is relatively low. Based on our present day experiences they tend to operate with different efficacy along the Croatian-Hungarian borderline.

From the point of view of my study it is highly important to mention the first euro-regional cooperation, the *Alps-Adria Association* which is relevant from the point of view of Croatian-Hungarian transborder relations and is presently operating. Zala, Somogy and Baranya - three Hungarian counties next to the Croatian-Hungarian border - joined the 30 year old association founded in 1978 only at the beginning of the regime change. During this period members of the association considered the deepening of cooperation between regions and states to be the primary task. It is proven by the Bled Resolution (1987.) and the Millstadt Declaration (1988.). »Due to Europe's results in this area above different cultures, languages and political systems our governments are willing to support and inspire the cooperation henceforward between regions going on in the Alps-Adria Association that makes an effort to open up borders, gives chance to the free flow of people and ideas and realizes economic and cultural cooperation.«<sup>10</sup> After the democratization of the area the new goal was the idea of subsidiarity and the realization of social-economic cohesion.<sup>11</sup> »All barriers causing inequality and imbalance had to be removed immediately.«<sup>12</sup> By the turn of the century the members had to participate in realizing a new aim, which was supporting the EU integration of Hungary and Slovenia. Nowadays it gives remarkable intellectual capacity to Croatia to get to know the laws of the European Union hereby it helps the successful and quick outcome of connection discussions. In 2007 the reforming of procedural and organizational rules of the Alps-Adria Association took place in Klagenfurt aiming to deepen and dinamize cooperation.

Examining the results of the previous 30 years we can ascertain that the association has only fulfilled its aims partially. Several successes that have been booked for the benefit of the association are in fact the results of European macro-political changes. Its success in achieving political aims can be found primarily on the level of regional and local governments in our country. Before the regime change as a consequence of the decline of centralization of the state socialist system Hungarian counties and towns managed to examine internally the democratic local governmental system at members outside the socialist camp, thus the organisation became the first flagship of democratization.

In an economic sense members could come up with a relatively small number of cross border achievements that occurred as a result of the operation of the association. Such were the annual fairs followed by workshop-like gatherings. With this the first primitives of transborder relations were laid down, but the further process has stagnated. In the 90s they tried to refill the cooperation with new meaning. It could be experienced mainly among Hungarian and former Yugoslavian

<sup>10</sup> Alps-Adria Association. Future image in the 21. century Europe, pp.21.

<sup>11</sup> Hungarian members: Baranya, Somogy, Zala and Vas county, Austrian members. Kärnten and Burgenland; Italian members: Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino-Southern Tirol and Venice; Croatia and Slovenia

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.alpeadria.org/magyar/files/Chronology1978-2004.pdf> Date of download: 08. 13. 2008.

members. As a result of the southern slav crisis the 90s became the years of decay in point of cross border relationships. By the millennium a new system of aims was established namely preparing for connection those wanting to be EU members. But this task exceeds the power of the Alps-Adria Association possessing weak coherence. The decay starting in the 90a has changed into a serious downfall. The languidity of members is strengthening, the association has become the depot of cost-of-living politicians. In the future for the sake of result efficiency an administrative, economic, diplomatic operative body should be established on a multinational basis; whose task would be working out and realizing projects convergent with the aims of the EU. This could be further strengthened by boosting the circulation of information and a more intensive colloquy deepening cooperation spread over mezo and micro-regional levels.

The idea of giving birth to a euroregional cooperation aiming to serve the dinamization of Croatian-Hungarian trans-border cooperation with the neighbouring northern local governments was born amongst local-government leaders after the regime change. In order to satisfy the needs of economy and urban innovation the chambers of trade and commerce as well latched on to the cooperation between regional and town communes.<sup>13</sup> Besides the Croatian and Hungarian partners they called in the Bosnian Tuzla commune. As a result an area came into existence with a higher economic and trade potential.

Thus in 1998 the *Duna-Dráva-Száva Euroregional Cooperation (1. map)* was established in an area that had common historical and cultural customs. The fact that on the West-Balkan there was peace and the need for EU integration occurring among the foreign policy aims of post-Yugoslavian states played an important role in its coming into being. But after the foundation the initial impetus stopped. Why? The founding members of the »euroregion« Baranya county, Pécs-Baranya Chamber of Trade and Commerce (Hungary), Osječko-Baranjska county, Ošijek city, Croatian Chamber of Economy, the Chamber of Economy of Osječko-Baranjska county (Croatia), Tuzla-Drina Commune, Tuzla city, the Chamber of Economy of Tuzla Region (Bosnia-Herzegovina) were not the members of the European Union yet. The organization included members struggling with stock deficit needed for innovations and investments. Moreover Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina had to solve restoration after the civil war.

In view of the social-economic situation we might raise the question: what possibilities could an area like the southern part of Baranya have where the whole society is socially disadvantaged and ethnically segregated? Finding a solution to problems existing on both sides and further thinking about the small number of innovation and development possibilities could serve as a basis to improve cooperation. As both areas have a serious stock deficit it is worth paying attention to Union support possibilities when defining priorities.

In spite of the fact that the charter members own significant common historical tradition, the cooperation is burdened by some difficulties that principally come from the different evolution of socio-economic systems. Difficulties are the following according to Pál Golobics:<sup>14</sup>

- the role and competence of local governments and of county/ governments couldn't be clarified
- considering that the mother countries of the regions are at a different level of decentralization not every problem could have been solved, because in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina there are

<sup>13</sup> It is a public body owning a local-government established by the actors of economic life in Hungary dealing with the innovation and support of economy, regional development by law authorization.

<sup>14</sup> Golobics P. 2001: Fejezetek a társadalomföldrajz köréből. Pécsi Tudományegyetem Természettudományi Kar Földrajzi Intézet. (Chapters from the circle of social geography. University of Pécs Faculty of Sciences Institution of Geography). Pécs, pp. 157-158.

areas under governmental control, while in Hungary these are local governmental competences

- other unsolved problems (rebuilding, deeply rooted ethnic conflicts) are often paid too much attention to compared to the euro-regional problems and there is no time to deal with those
- communication is often hard due to the different socio-cultural and historical traditions

The effect of above mentioned problems is supposed to decrease on a middle-distance. In order to fulfil integration criteria Croatia is forced to accomplish decentralization thus strengthening of regional local governmental level can be expected. From 2010 the sum of union subsidy for transborder cooperation will multiply on the Croatian-Hungarian border which is supposed to become a border within the EU and this will be divided by decentralized local governments, and the presently struggling Bosnian-Croatian border can expect significant EU sources too.

In favour of enlarging the efficiency of bilateral relationships they were trying to establish euroregions that cover smaller areas. Each of these was organized by Zala-county or with the initiation of towns within the county. Along the Croatian-Hungarian borderline the social-economic environment is most ideal in Zala, disadvantages coming from the peripheral situation in the last 15 years could be best liquidated here. Koprivničko-Križevačka, Medimurska and Varaždinska county are affected in the cooperation they represent an economically and industrial strong medium level, moreover the majority of Croatian-Hungarian international trade passes through there, through the V/B corridor in the direction of Rijeka and Venezia. Besides the closeness of Zagreb (1,5 hour distance) is not negligible either.

The first such initiative that was proven to be dead was the *Dráva-Mura Euroregion (2. map)*. The founders of the initiation were Csurgó, Marcali, Nagyatád, Nagykanizsa, Letenye, Lenti, Zalakaros, the Slovene Lendava and the Croatian Varaždin. From the content we can see that the members were inspired to help the cooperation and the innovation of the Croatian-Slovene-Hungarian tripartite border. In connection with the organizational construction several ideas occurred. The idea of the small region-based<sup>15</sup> euroregion was rejected, because such a formation doesn't even exist either in Croatia or in Slovenia. The county-based construction was rejected too, because of the Hungarian administrative regulation.<sup>16</sup> Finally the »city-idea« won. This way it became possible that cities and settlements of small regions around them could be participants of the organization as well. The above mentioned towns signed a manifestation of will September 9<sup>th</sup> 2000. about founding the Dráva-Mura Euroregion, this was then followed by the signing of the skeleton agreement from the Hungarian part September 14<sup>th</sup> 2001. to which only Lendava joined among the foreign partners December 21<sup>st</sup>. The entry of the association in the commercial register took place in June 21<sup>st</sup> 2002.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> According to the present constitution in Hungary there are the following administrative levels: parish, county, city, capital. In socialism the county was the trustee of regional administration and innovation. This was changed during the regime change. Today the county is a regional administrative unit without money and tasks, which is unable to fulfil its function as a result of the lack of sources. Besides its competence is limited by the irrationality that the county government is in equal relationship with settlement governments. Today there is no efficiently operating constitutional medium-size administrative unit. Small regions came into being as separate companions of settlements and are only ruled by decree. They have no chosen corps, they only have a work corporation including delegates of the settlements. Their sizes are different their content changes often either based on the interests of certain settlements.

<sup>16</sup> Today the role of a county is partially devolved to planning-statistical regions by the government, but they don't own constitutional rights.

<sup>17</sup> Nagy T. 2005: Zala megye határon átnyúló szubregionális együttműködései. Diploma Dolgozat (Trans-border subregional co-operations of Zala county. Thesis Work) pp. 20-21, pp. 51.

The organization in the shape of a public company started its operation with great impetus and hope. This is shown by the fact that Nagykanizsa as a founder member separated 2 million HUF<sup>18</sup> in order to establish the association and support experts with the first steps. Behind there were unconcealed prestige aims, because this way the town became the seat of an international organization.

The initial dynamism was followed by a period of failure and stagnation. The minimizing of functional costs and other financial conditions took place. But these arrangements were proven to be inefficient. The greatest problem was caused by the members' inability in multilateral cooperation, plus the decline of interest turning into negligence. »Characteristically two-two towns are able to work together in carrying out a project or handing in tenders, but no extensive program, initiation was born so far. The low-level involvement on the part of other members is not a guarantee for constant, medium-term planning at all.«<sup>19</sup> In view of this it is not surprising that the liquidation of the association started in September 2005. further tasks were devolved to the Competition Office and the Mayor Cabinet. Since then there are attempts to restart but without any remarkable results.

As a result of another previously disapproved conception the *Mura-Dráva Euroregion (3. map)* was established. During the foundation process Hungarian interest was more significant. In order to eliminate difficulties with the Dráva-Mura Euroregion founders thought it would be better if cooperation would be under the control of regional administrative units (counties). In 2004 coordination of cross border cooperation was undertaken by the office of the Zala County Assembly. In October 2004 the Mura-Dráva Euroregion was established in Čakovec. The members: Medimurska county, Zala and Somogy county. In the meantime Somogy quitted the cooperation. The organization is on the right way to strengthen the social-economic cohesion of the area. It is proven by the fact that between 2004-2006 under the INTERREG III.A Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia Neighbourhood Program they were successful in numerous tenders. The permission and financial support of a public road bridge between Murakeresztúr and Kotoriba was the most important amongst all. According to the local hopes if the public road-river bridge is built as soon as possible it will play an important role in amending the accessibility of Croatian-Hungarian neighbouring micro-regions. A touristic project entitled »Down to Mura on the Kerka« was also proved to be very successful. From 2007 on the euroregion considers the operation of the partner-network and an innovation strategy coordinated in common with Hungarian and Croatian partners as its most important function.<sup>20</sup>

The situation of the »*Muránia Euroregion*« is significantly different from the previous ones. While in previous cases we were talking about middle-sized towns then in the case of »*Muránia*« euroregion it is not true. Here each settlement owning economic potential and the legal status of a town can be grouped into the category of a hick town with the best intent. Region-building started with a project-oriented strategy. The organization slowly fills its fifth year. On the basis of the project-description we can see that innovation of tourism is among the primary priorities of the cooperation. »In favour of common promotion and marketing an integrated network

<sup>18</sup> This amount is equal to approximately 4-5 thousand euros.

<sup>19</sup> Litter N. 2005: Előterjesztés Nagykanizsa Megyei Jogú Város Közgyűlésének 2005 szeptember 27-i ülésére. Napirend: Dráva-Mura Eurorégió Kht. Működése. (Proposal to the General Assembly of Nagykanizsa City to the meeting of September 27<sup>th</sup> 2005. Daily routine: The operation of the Dráva-Mura Euroregion Public Company), Date of download: 27.02.2008.

<sup>20</sup> Füzi A. 2007: Egy hátrányos helyzetű kistérség munkaerő-piaci helyzetképe. TDK dolgozat Nyugat-Magyarországi Egyetem (The labor-market situation of a backward small region. TDK competition-work University of West-Hungary), pp. 74.

of tourist products should be built, plus a tourist-zone should be made in cross-border regions in order to improve common innovative tourist products. The recognizability of the area could be boosted by establishing the common MURÁNIA Tourist Zone in cross-border regions. Other aims are: building innovative and affective tourist products from a qualitative and market point of view by applying the natural and cultural heritage of the multicultural region; the common promotion of the integrated tourist product; stimulation of tourist enterprises; organizing visits giving information in connection with the tourist zone; increasing the number of tourists.«<sup>21</sup>

At present the Slovene Lendava on the Hungarian side Letenye and Lenti are the members of the cooperation. In the 2007-2013 budgetary period from the available IPA sources Croatian areas can also be involved in the cooperation. In the euroregion there is already an intent for that. It would be expedient to get the Croatian Mursko Središće involved in the cooperation. In other words there would be an association on the Croatian-Hungarian-Slovene tripartite border along the Mura that owns a notable historical-economic cohesion.

Lenti, Lendava and Mursko Središće have the most opportunities in deepening their social-economic relationships. Each town is the centre of only a crossborder micro-region with limited central functions and is in a peripheral situation and, moreover from a traffic point of view they show »blind« signs. In the case of Lenti it is manifested in the form of a railway going nowhere, while Lendva is the end of a railway line arriving from Mursko Središće. Public road traffic shows a paradox picture. In spite of the underdevelopedness of the road-system it is still forced to transact the majority of transit traffic from Austria towards the sea. From the point of view euro-regional innovation the restructuring of the road-system is indispensable, by limiting transit traffic and repairing modern railway-connection. At this point we must think it over whether it is worth expanding cooperation by even accepting the change of image. Investments needed to advance cohesion are far beyond the power of the above mentioned villages. It would be worth making a »sectoral« cooperation with the Croatian Čakovec and Varaždin, Nagykanizsa (Zala county), Koprivnica (Croatia) that can not be left out of the list and finally Zalaegerszeg. But this could only be realized with well-made steps. In a cooperation configured by exploiting comparative advantages »Muránia« could preserve its »Harmony of Existence« atmosphere and besides its ideas about necessary traffic innovation could predominate on a state level. The heavy traffic of Lenti and its neighbourhood can be remarkably reduced by establishing the Zalaegerszeg-Lenti-Lendava-Čakovec clearway connection. It raises the question that after such a project what justification could a Nagykanizsa-Čakovec-Zalaegerszeg-Lenti »euroregional« train get that would bring the burgenland area even closer. It would find priority from the point of view of all EU aims.

The previously introduced three organisations (*Dráva-Mura*, *Mura-Dráva*, *Murania euro-region*) show significant differences from the operational experiences, successes and failures of the Alps-Adria Association and the Duna-Dráva-Száva Euroregion. All three is placed in a relatively narrow 35 km radius circle. Most members of the cooperation are neighbours with each other, so there is no »liminal member«. These members though situated on a relatively small area and had a different line of improvement in the last 80-90 years still can find linking points in developing transborder relationships more easily. In these days the Croatian-Slovene-Hungarian tripartite border of which we have been talking about when analyzing the above mentioned euro-regions

<sup>21</sup> A »Muránia-régió« integrált gazdaságfejlesztésének marketing stratégiája. Phare Kísérleti Kisprojekt Alap 2003. Magyarország-Horvátország HU. Aquaprofit Műszaki, Tanácsadási és Befektetési Rt. 2005. december (The marketing strategy of integrated economy-innovation in the »Muránia-region«. PHARE Experimental Small Project Fund. 2003. Hungary-Croatia HU. Aquaprofit Technological Advisory and Investment Public Company 2005. December).



has lost its peripheral nature. By 2008 the centre areas will set forth a stronger appealing effect here and integration into the international economic system is stronger too. Due to this came the above introduced initial successes. Opportunities are further given, but they are mostly unexploited. Many of the above mentioned improvements affecting the region would need an international cooperation. For this political willingness is already there, but is not joined with actual actions. The need for cooperation is clearly declared in each case but in many cases is not needed. From the Hungarian part it is needed, from the Slovene it is not while the Croatian partner is passive. In order to improve the tripartite border the Slovene state doesn't bring every influence to bear. The Croatian neighbour is loaded with burdens from the Yugoslav era which is still a ground for conflicts. Slovenia can easily reach European centre areas without Hungary. Its interests drag it to North Italy and Carinthia. For Hungary it is highly important to deepen its relationships with its neighbours what is significant because of the character of the basin and the social-economic damages caused by the Trianon peace treaty. It is necessary for Croatia to reach the European centre areas and integrate areas within the state border into the economic circulation of the Old Continent. Unfortunately the improvement of the tripartite border is not a primary aim on the international level. Medimurska county is taking part at consultations actively but its competences are weak to dinamize euro-regional co-operations to develop the tripartite border.

### **THE PROBABLE EVOLUTIONARY DIRECTIONS OF EUROREGIONAL CO-OPERATIONS AFTER THE EU CONNECTION OF CROATIA ALONG THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF HUNGARY**

As a summary of the experiences of euro-regional co-operations we can say that for the present they only offer opportunities for improvement, perspectives but real co-operations based on mutual advantages are still in an inchoative stage and partially institutionalized. The socio-economic grassroots of the Duna-Dráva-Száva Euroregion provide a more certain basis for establishing an international cooperation structure but the notably different socio-economic problems of partners question the chance of co-operations in the future. Along several parts of the Croatian-Hungarian border (between Pécs-Ošijek, Barcs and Virovitica, at the Croatian-Slovene-Hungarian tripartite borderline) the realization of projects that could create the basis for real transborder relationships and concrete physical-mental relations has already started. The Dráva-Mura and the Mura-Dráva Euroregions are looser less formalized crossborder cooperative organizations without real structure but supposed to gain significant success in the near future in the 2007-2013 period in point of bilateral project-based co-operations due to the Hungarian and Slovene experiences in Union tenders. But we cannot forget that none of the organisations out of the previous two owns none of the significant, strongly conditioned members. Thus they and the Murania euroregion have to calculate on the danger of marginalization.<sup>22</sup>

On the whole we can claim that in the last almost sixty years there was a significant change in Croatian-Hungarian trans-border relationships. State-governed cooperation was replaced by project-controlled co-operations under the guidance of local-governments and the civil sphere. Unfortunately, stock and human workforce deficit very often obstructs success. Besides it is a

<sup>22</sup> Golobics P.-Merza P.-Tasnádi P. 2005: A Phare CBC és az Interreg IIIA Szlovénia-Magyarország-Horvátország Szomszédsági Program megvalósítása a Dél-Dunántúlon. Pécsi Tudományegyetem Földrajzi Intézet (The realization of the Phare CBC and the Interreg IIIA. Slovenia-Hungary-Croatia Neighbour Programme in the North Transdanubium. University of Pécs Institution of Geography). Pécs, pp. 40.

permanent problem in our country that state politics has a great influence on local-government politics. So in a certain euroregion the success of operation highly depends on where the local-governments and civil organization belong to politically and on the leaders' ability to validate their interests. As a result of stock deficit mentioned previously project-based co-operations occurred.<sup>23</sup> But these ad hoc project associations are not able and won't even be able to use union sources efficiently and generate any kind of long-term regional development.



Own construction based on Tamás Hardi. Basic map was published: MTA RKK NYUTI Announcements 175. Subject leader: Tamás Hardi PhD, academic associate, MTA RKK NYUTI. Made: commissioned by the Department of Local Government and Innovation. Transborder strategic survey. Győr, 2007, March pp. 42.



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## SUMMARY

Between Croatia and Hungary transborder relationships has gained a great past. With the relief of socialism getting in contact has started cautiously from the 1960s already. After the regime change euroregional frames are the most popular forms of cooperation. However, this form is still in a very elementary state needs to be refined on several points. The aim of my study is to present the processes that have already passed off and to make some offers to rationalize institutional structure and operation.

<sup>23</sup> »Pannon-Palette« the common tourist and cultural project of Kaposvár and Koprivnica. For the more than 58 million HUF worth program the majority of support was won in EU tenders by the participants.