

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE DISTRICTS OF PRACHATICE (CZ) AND FREYUNG-GRAFENAU (D)

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Cross-border cooperation: a case study of the districts of Prachatic (CZ) and Freyung-Grafenau (D)

The aim of this study is to evaluate the development of cross-border cooperation in the Prachatic district of the Czech Republic and the Freyung-Grafenau district in Germany after the year 1989. In pursuit of the given aim of the work the following hypotheses were formulated: The most important participants in cross-border cooperation are the secretaries of the Euroregions, more than the activities of clubs and interest groups. The intensity of cross-border cooperation is territorially differentiated. The theoretical introduction confronts the paradigms of a border, border effects, a border region, and regional identity. The survey and verification of the relationship development was carried out on the basis of a prepared questionnaire given to the representatives of the towns and villages, the mayors of the Prachatic and Freyung-Grafenau districts. Consequently some of these results were compared and contrasted with the results of research on the borderlands, which was conducted in 2004. On the basis of the survey it became obvious that the institution of the Euroregion and its mission differs in some segments on the Czech and German sides.

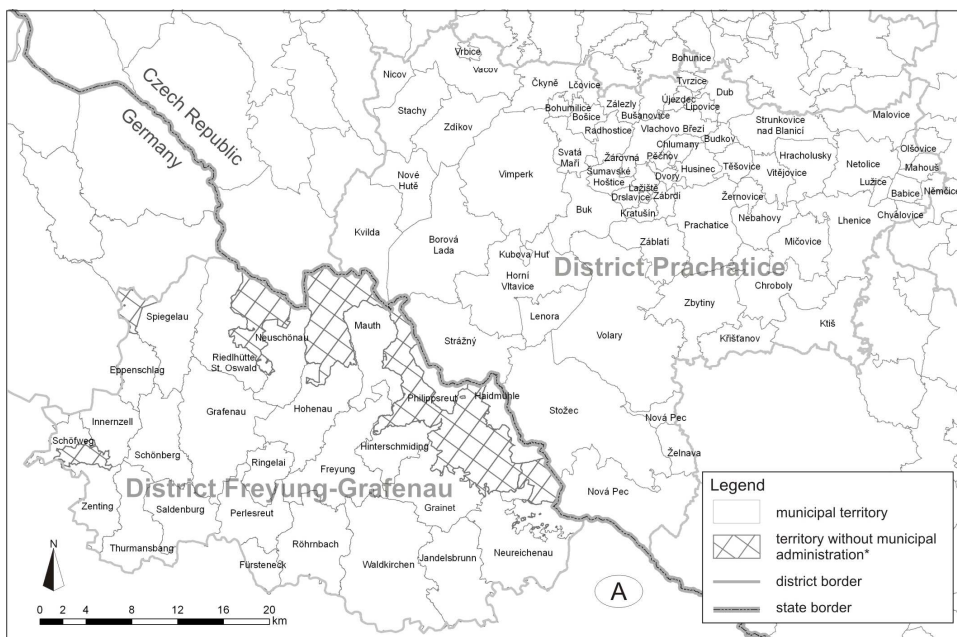
Key words: cross-border cooperation, Euroregion, regional identity, border effect, Schengen, European Union Funds, European regionalism, districts of Prachatic and Freyung-Grafenau

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to evaluate the development of cross-border cooperation from 1989 to 2011 using the example of two areas in two neighbouring countries – the Prachatic district of the Czech Republic and the Freyung-Grafenau district of Germany. It deals with the confrontation of various aspects of the border area and regional development as well as related cross-border cooperation. The last twenty years are used as an example. Opinions of the key participants in the development, especially the mayors of the municipalities are taken into account. When studying the border regions it is necessary to take a short historical excursion into the 20th century to look at the development of Czech-Bavarian relationships and to evaluate them. At the time when the former Czechoslovakia was founded the separatist efforts of the Czech Germans were typical, their call for the right to self-government led to the temporary formation of four independent German regions in the Czech border area¹. After World War II, the so called new border area was created for the needs of local politics, and extensive ethnic redeployments began (the escape of the Czechs

¹ Deutschböhmen, Sudetenland, Böhmerwaldgau, Deutschsüdmähren

following the Munich Diktat, the compulsory expulsion of the Germans and the resettlement with Czechs (see Sležák 1978 and Kastner 1996). In this way the connection (relationship) of the inhabitants to the given territory was lost. In the following period on the Czech side there were property redeployments – the nationalization of the property of collaborationists, traitors and other “enemies” of the state, withdrawal of land from intensive agriculture in the regions at higher altitudes, the increase of forest areas and permanent grasslands, the decrease of arable land (Bičík and Jeleček 2001), and the socialist industrialization. At the beginning of the 1990s, the frontier was opened and with it came the revival and the re-establishment of broken contacts. A big change in the mentality of the local people took place on both sides of the border. On the Czech side of the border a very penetrative change happened in the minds of the people who had “protected” the border in such a way that nobody could escape. After the political changes the slow establishment of bilateral cooperation started. The German municipal partners were very open to help or advise their Czech partners.



* Territory that does not belong any municipality, owned by state (state forests).

Fig. 1. Geographical overview of the district of Prachatice (CZ) and district of Freyung – Grafenau (D) with marked municipalities

The region was characterized mainly by farming and forest industries. From the 15th century onwards numerous glassworks were founded. Industrialization started with the development of railways in the 19th century and it also brought the development of this region. The foundation of the Bavarian Forest National Park in 1970 significantly increased tourism in the local district. The Czech-German border area was occupied by military forces, which supervised the im-

permeability of the border along its whole length. For this reason, any kind of activities in the border area and its adjacent territories was out of the question. The landscape and its character stayed unimpaired for many decades. Now tourism is a major sector of the economy of the region. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 the position of the Czech Republic and Germany within Europe changed from marginal and peripheral to a region which is integrated into a unifying supra-region of the European Union. The connection between Germany and the Czech Republic increased significantly. Especially after the Czech Republic joined the EU in 2004 and after the abolition of border control in 2007, the economic links quickly increased. One of the most important economic trends in this rural area near the former Iron Curtain is tourism. Today, we support the development of tourism in both the community and the district directly. The most important place that attracts tourists is the Bavarian Forest National Park, the first national park in Germany, which occupies a large part of the north of the district.

CONCEPTS / THEORIES IN LITERATURE

Concepts, which serve as a basis for understanding the given problems in this chapter, will be introduced. The words a “border” and “border area” are geographical terms and that is why the questions connected with them appear in many geographical works. Geographers try to define these expressions and there are different aspects to these definitions: geographical, economic, social, legal, political and military.

Prescott (1987) defines the concept of a border as “the line of contact, dividing two bordering states. The role of the state border is to demarcate the territorial sovereignty of individual states and guarantee the non-interference of the other states in the internal affairs of the bordering state. By separating the territory of one state from the other states it allows for the assertion of the law of the state as far as the borderline.”

Heigl (1978) presents a detailed definition of the border from the point of view of its functionality. Under the word “border” he understands the legally fixed and/or given line in the landscape which divides homogeneous and/or heterogeneous regions marking administrative and/or economic units. The border can be closed (impenetrable), partly or fully open, accordingly it represents the administrative and/or economic and/or political line. Identical or diametrically different signs on both sides of the borderline can characterize it.

Havlíček and Marada (2004) explain the relationship between the terms border and periphery on the basis of the historical and geographical conditions and the character of the border or the border effect. The authors say that in the border area, the positional determination has a noticeable influence and that is why, compared to the interior, the border lands have a bigger concentration of peripheral areas as the number of articles discussing the influence of the peripheral and border position on the development of the territory in different parts of the Czech border lands prove (Zeman 2001 and Mikšátková 2004).

In the Czech Republic, the development of the area has been influenced by post-war events such as the displacement of Germans, inadequate resettlement of the border region, and the establishment of the Iron Curtain (Hampl 2003,

Chromý 2004, Chromý and Janů 2003, Siwek and Bogdová 2007). “Peripheral regions also often oscillate between dependence (subordination) on different centres and central regions while the change in orientation towards the various centres can influence regional identity and the population” (Siwek and Bogdová 2007).

Formulation of differential aspects (Hampl 2001) outlines the basic attributes of border regions as the subjects of interest of scientific disciplines. On this basis it is possible to see the regions divided by the border as spaces of change, difference and disharmony between the bordering social-economic systems. But the question is, can we consider the territory divided by the border to be one region? For example, in the case of the Czech-Bavarian border, the region historically developed as one, but today the differences connected with the closed border are so obvious that from the socio-economic, but also psychological points of view it is difficult to speak about a homogenous, integrated region.

For the regional development of border regions, it is necessary to identify the function of the border that divides the bordering regions, to describe the possible qualitative change of this border. We try to get to know the influence of the border on the border region or the so-called border effect, and to look for and to formulate the possible future development in the border region in connection with a functional change of the border. The border effect depends primarily on the nature of the border, in other words, what type of border is it; this determines the “border effect”. The border effect depends on the limits of its operation, how open it is and the nature of the neighbouring regions. Compared to other regions the border region is characterized by the influence of the border, this means you can see the border effect (Dokoupil 2002). According to Hampl (2001) by studying the border regions we can see two mutually penetrating aspects: border effects (depending on both territories divided by the border) and a periphery position (in which the border area is the periphery). Next Hampl (2001) assumes that the situation in the border area is always conditioned by the combination of both positional and local factors. So he distinguishes between the solid (geometrical) and socio-economic periphery. The position of the border region can be derived only from an integral hierarchical system – not only in the national meaning, but also in the European context.

There are a number of concepts where these effects in a border area are defined. By its influence the border effect distinguishes the border area from the interior and in this way it contributes to the polarization of the area. The extent of polarization depends on the type of the given border effect. Dokoupil et al. (2004) mentions several border effects (a barrier effect, a contact effect, a filter effect, a diffuse effect, a cooperative effect, etc.), which more or less reflect the character of the border.

The border effects have also been dealt with by Seger and Beluzsky (1993), who more emphasized the contradiction of paired categories (models). In the border regions they formulate the areal effect versus the continual effect. A broader interpretation would be that the border area often becomes the periphery but not only a geometrical one, which is also one of the reasons for the close relation of the border area and the periphery in literature (Leimgruber 1994 and Havlíček 2003).

The situation in border areas is mainly based on a combination of both three-dimensional relations and socio-economic relations between the core and the periphery. Although the border area is mainly three-dimensional (the geometrical periphery i. e. horizontal periphery), it often determines the origin of the social, and the economic (vertical) periphery. Between these relations there is no correlation, because thanks to the spatially unlimited transfer of information and its historical character, it is possible to discover frequent differentiations in human capital (Havlíček et al. 2005). The local participants play an important role in this, because the different extent of their initiatives, especially across the border, differentiates the border area on the local level. Hahne (2002) says: the local participants do creative, educational and independent work where important ideas are raised and spread. Different forms of participation, a multidirectional orientation and systematic marking out of aims help local participants to interfere with the time-tested schemes of the ruling political relationships and also to create the innovative elements and measures for future regional development. Cross-border cooperation helps, on one side, to reduce the negative aspects of a border on the microregional level and on the other side to transfer knowledge and experience on the supranational or international level. Both promote European integration.

Halás (2005) defines the term “cross-border cooperation” based on the example of the agreement between the Governments of the Slovak Republic (SR) and the Czech Republic (CR) on cross-border cooperation. It includes all administrative, technical, economic, social and cultural activities aimed at consolidating and developing the neighbourly relations between the parties, the cities, municipalities and regions and their institutions on both sides of the border, as well as the conclusion of agreements on solutions to common problems. It is also necessary to define the concept of regional development.

Więckowski (2002) states that the legal bases for cross-border cooperation between Poland and the Slovak Republic have been put in place, being constituted by the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Slovak Republic in 1994. The fields of Polish-Slovak cooperation are considered in the following areas: border crossings and transport; economic cooperation and tourism; environmental protection and forestry; culture, education and youth exchanges; cross-border cooperation by local authorities; agriculture and healthcare and emergency medical rescue.

According to Blažek and Uhlíř (2002) regional policy must be understood as part of a set of economic and social policies by which states seek to achieve national objectives, such as economic growth, social and political stability, equal population and distribution of income in a way that the majority of people consider to be fair and at the same time economically stimulating. In relation to the issue of regional cooperation, according to Perkmann (2002) territorial continuity is a discriminating criterion following which he divides the possible forms of regional cooperation into two main categories. In the first category he includes the cooperating regions or regions in which players form a single package (e.g. Euroregions), the other category involves forms of cooperation without a coherent territory (such as a network of cities).

The Council of Europe defines Euroregions as "an initiative of border regions or other local entities" (not necessarily EU Member States) with no defined status in relation to the EU. In most cases, Euroregions are not legal entities and are rather small. The name "Euroregion" is not protected in any way. Euroregions focus on cross-border cooperation, particularly in the fields of culture, tourism and other forms of economic activity. Michl (2008) describes how the Euroregional structures in the SR are significantly different compared to Czech structures. There is one great exception: the Polish-Slovak-Ukrainian-Hungarian-Romanian Carpathian Euroregion, which since 1993 has brought together representatives of the border areas from five countries. Więckowski (2002) adds that central and local governments resemble the statutes of Euroregions and local-authority unions drawing attention to the consistency in various fields of Polish-Slovak cooperation.

There are different categories of cooperation. One uses the concept of cross-border cooperation, and the other relies on interregional cooperation (Perkmann 2002). This categorization may be frequently applied, but it does not describe a situation where there is no common territory for cross-border cooperation, but rather functions like twinning – or the regional network. Therefore Dočkal (2005) proposes the function of regional cooperation for categorizing regions or as an objective criterion. He writes that the common objective could be achieved in an integrative or non-integrative way. A prerequisite of the integration model is the removal of the borderline as a customs frontier with its fiscal implications (Dokoupil et al. 2004). Social aspects are a factor and so is the hierarchical arrangement of the socio-geographical regional systems. The development of geographical organization brings about, among other things, the metamorphosis of the position factor. Although this development leads to the deepening of the initial differentiations, one can expect processes that will be, due to the shift in the geographical organization to a higher level, an important basis for regional integrity.

Two types of processes will be important in the future, and will lead to the linking of a national and transnational system of habitation in Europe: shaping the European (and global) hierarchy and the creation of centres of development, possibly bound to urban macro-structures (Hampl 2001). Macrostructure changes naturally have an impact on the world of the microstructures, which may be regions and border regions. Recently there have been very intensive discussions in public about the future of Europe, mainly focused on debates about European regions. From the same point of view it is the sample peripheral region with specific functions, on which the future is built.

The effectiveness of cooperation depends primarily on mutual cooperation, partnership and co-management (full partnership and shared leadership) of all key processes, namely local authorities, representatives of the public, the private sector, media, and representatives of a higher number of administrative bodies, etc. They must be based on consultation and wider public support to create a compelling and realistic vision of the place (and not just about making money, lots of places are building their "brand" on the basis of cultural, social and even spiritual values) and gather the resources needed to implement this vision and promote the region (Frantál 2007).

GOALS OF OUR INVESTIGATION

Więckowski (2002) described one of the most important goals, cooperation, which is the basis for the agreements entered into between towns and cities in the neighbouring countries. These show the goodwill and willingness of the two parties to take joint action in different spheres, and they mostly lead to closer cooperation and the development of ever-stronger cross - border ties. There are other authors, who describe the role of tourism in borderlands in the global context (Timothy 2002).

The goal of this article is to evaluate the development of cross-border cooperation in the Prachatice district from 1989 to 2011. The aim is to evaluate the impacts of the entry of the Czech Republic into the Schengen Area (cooperation and integration) and to point out the rising role of the European Union, especially in this border region, before and after entry into the EU and the guarantee of regional development of the Prachatice district.

Within the structure of the formulation of the research questions was supposed the re-establishment of close interconnection of the Czech Republic with the countries of Western Europe, especially Germany as a bordering country. In this way the Prachatice region becomes a border region, but also a potential region influenced by direct regional links to the strong regional industrial and service centres of České Budějovice, Passau and Linz.

With the rise of the above-mentioned developing roles and in connection with the expected economic competition among the regions in the Prachatice region we can expect its increased integration with the cross-border regions of Lower Bavaria in Germany and Upper Austria in Austria.

It is also possible to expect the development of the traffic network and investment (industrialization, stores, service sphere, tourism, etc.) in areas mainly along the important routes of traffic communication. It is also possible to expect the development of the residential structure and changes in the social and economic structure of the region. On the basis of this assumption it is possible to formulate the main goals that should be answered by this article:

1) How did the cross-border cooperation in the Prachatice district develop from 1989 to 2011? This goal is to be achieved in the framework of the given research questions.

2) Who are the most important participants in cross-border cooperation? Are they the institutions and villages of the Euroregion or the activities of social groups, stakeholders and interest groups?

3) Is the intensity of cross-border cooperation influenced by the quality, quantity and preparation of the participants? Do the bigger towns with larger town authorities or state authorities have better conditions for such cooperation? Do the bigger towns play a key role in regional and border development? This role, besides the others, becomes evident in the successful raising of funds from the EU. In this case the intensity of cross-border cooperation would be territorially differentiated.

4) The last research question is: do the towns and institutions of the Euroregion on the German side manage to obtain funds (only funds originating from pre-structural and Structural Funds for cross-border cooperation are considered

here) for cross-border cooperation and their own development in a more effective way than the towns and other institutions on the Czech side?

Novotný (2009) summarizes various regional researches (e.g. Houžvička and Novotný 2007 and Zich 2007) that quantitatively show growth of different border contacts. The Czech-Slovak border is one of the new frontiers in Europe. Even though geographical boundaries (hard to reach areas) and political boundaries (distance to the capital) are now negligible, for both countries little has changed since joining the EU (Vaishar and Zapletalová 2005). Increased contacts with Poland, which are regionally unevenly represented, are gradually deepening the interest in cooperation at the local level and thereby overcoming civil ignorance on both sides. The Polish-Czech border acts as a barrier as there are no major transport routes and it is remote from the main areas with industrial development. "The current cross-border potential" (Zich 2007) for Germany and Austria today is very diverse and dynamic even more than other border areas. Relationships are intense, but in the last few years there has been a decline in cross-border links, which is notable especially since there was such obvious euphoria during the nineties about any cross-border contacts with Bavaria and Austria. Ties in these areas are more economically oriented than in the Polish and Slovak border regions and are pragmatic in terms of win or lose (Jeřábek 2002, Novotný 2005 and Hlavatý 2007).

The Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation is one of the most important fields for the development of economic cooperation, nature conservation, development of tourism, development of infrastructure and cultural and sporting exchanges (Więckowski 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The theoretical part of this article is based primarily on knowledge obtained from the study of specialized documents, scientific articles and book publications by Czech and foreign authors. For the purpose of updating data, legislative documents, official statements, and annual reports were also used. This work was carried out by the critical analysis of sources and the situational analysis using a logical and historically comparative method. The term *data collection* is used to describe the process of preparation and subsequent data acquisition. The purpose is to obtain the information necessary for decision on important matters under investigation and the subsequent transmission of the information to other users. Among the main sources for the study were the previously mentioned primary studies on related topics, for example, Jeřábek (2002), Schöne (2004), Havlíček et al. (2005), Vogt (2009), Sarauer (2010) and Nováček (2010). Another source was the use of databases established by the agencies for regional development (like that of Stachy town, Euroregions (Freyung, Freistadt) and those of the Czech Ministry for Local Development).

The empirical part of the work is based on secondary data analysis techniques. The data come primarily from the Czech Statistical Office, the Bavarian Statistical Office and from other Central and territorial administrative offices. Throughout the study, the SWOT analysis focused on cross-border links and analysis of cross-border cooperation was used. The data was used to compare the development of the Czech and the Bavarian parts of the territory, namely the

study districts of Prachatice and Freyung-Grafenau. A second analytical method was used for the evaluation of the allocated funds. The relevant data come from the database of approved cross-border cooperation projects and internal materials of the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald. It was carried out according to the typology of the approved projects, according to the applicant following the direction of projects and was also used to compare funds and Structural Funds of both model territories.

Qualitative research into the perceptions of the effects of the cross-border cooperation was part of the primary research. Interviews with the help of a structured questionnaire are a more concise concept of these surveys (Nováková 2004). Then the data were classified in a way that enables their statistical analyses. This leads to the quantification of the qualitative data.

Data relevant to this process were collected. The key information source was the questionnaire filled out by the representatives of municipalities. A major part of the questionnaire used was prepared directly by the author of this article, but some questions were adopted from the survey used in the common project "The role of the border area of the Czech Republic and the importance of the economic and political cooperation with the border countries for the integration of the Czech Republic into the European Union – aimed at mayors of towns and villages" (Dokoupil et al. 2004). Where possible, the obtained results were analysed and compared to the results of the research of the above-mentioned project.

The questionnaire given to mayors concerned mainly the opinions of the representatives of a particular municipality on the contribution of cross-border cooperation to their town or village and the character of the partnership of the towns and villages after 1989. The issues became problems of Euroregions, pre-entrance funds and Structural Funds for cross-border cooperation, socio-economic development on the local level and the comparison of opinions of representatives of towns and villages. The questionnaire was submitted to the mayors of the towns and villages of the Prachatice and Freyung-Grafenau districts, who filled it out. In Prachatice district, 55 filled in questionnaires were returned by 66 municipalities. Representatives of 9 municipalities were not willing to fill in the questionnaire. In Freyung-Grafenau, a district with the total number of 25 municipalities, 23 filled in questionnaires were returned.

The second set of data deals with the use of the funds from the EU and comes from the database of the Euroregion Bayerischer Wald and the Regional Development Agency Šumava, the Centre for Regional Development (CRR) and the Ministry for Local Development (MMR). Another source of information was the Internet. The web sites of municipalities, and developers and the Internet search engine (Google) were used to search for individual projects. The specific character of these data was determined using the chosen methodological procedure of processing the data concerning the individual items, which the towns and villages received from the grant. The chosen procedure led to two basic degrees of analysis: the analysis of the total incomes from the bigger towns in the given districts and the analysis of the other towns and villages as the receivers of the grant. Investment funds were also analysed and compared in the framework of the explicit regional politics and the support of the region. The preference for certain types of projects and certain branches was analysed

on both sides of the border. This attitude was preferred based on the author's knowledge of the above-mentioned region and the mechanisms of the local implementation of projects. The total financial values were converted to per 100 inhabitants to get the relative value which is more comparable and applicable to both districts.

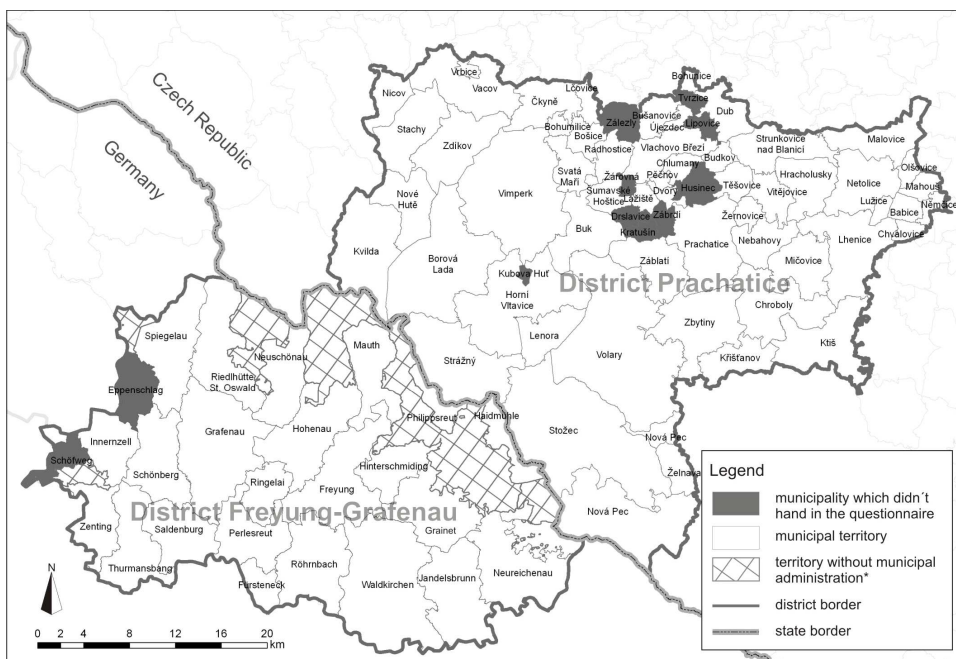


Fig. 2. Geographical overview of the territory of the Prachatice and Freyung-Grafenau districts (with marked municipalities, which did not hand in the questionnaire)

For the purpose of the evaluation described in this article some selected answers and evaluations have been chosen. The reason for this is the amount of data obtained especially for the questions concerning mutual cross-border cooperation and the comparison of the opinions of the representatives from the two sides of the border about certain topics or problem questions. The comparison of submitted application for EU projects is also very interesting.

QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Participants of cross-border cooperation

In the first part of the questionnaire most of the Czech respondents (89%) agreed that the state and administrative institutions on the regional level devote themselves to the questions of problems across the border most, as well as that most funds come from the level of Euroregions and regions, namely the regional level. Answers to both questions reveal that the most frequent communication is always that between the direct participants in the region, between the

nearest links of the individual self-governing authorities. Quite a few of the Czech respondents ticked the top representation of the Czech state – the Government and Parliament. In the next part, respondents indicated that the least effective source of funds for the development of cross-border cooperation comes from the local and central levels as well as from the border states, although the mayors are aware of the fact that funds do not account for all. In the opinion of the mayors, people, human ideas and human ingenuity play a major role. Undoubtedly they constitute a very useful resource in implementation of some projects and investment of funds.

But on the basis of our own experience the last claim should be considered further. Most of the local elites, as well as the bordering states (or the partners from Germany), are aware of the fact that they can raise funds from the EU, in the past it was from the pre-Structural funds and now from the Structural Funds.

The answers of the representatives of German towns and villages were similar; they unanimously agreed on the institutions that support cross-border cooperation most, as well as from where the most funds come. They unanimously marked the institution of Euroregion and the district or federal authorities. On the German side of the border, most funds for towns or villages for cross-border cooperation come from the Euroregion.

In the light of this answer there is obvious agreement between the individual answers of the Czech and German representatives. This is mainly with regard to the nonexistent compatibility of the same authorities on the two sides of the border (in Bavaria the existing level of governmental parishes and district authorities). From the point of view of the knowledge of their functions and tasks this claim is justified.

Next the mayors considered the role of Euroregions and their influence on the development of individual towns and villages. We offered six answers to this question of which every third mayor chose the Euroregion as the main player, as a means for overcoming the disadvantages of the border location and as a source of funds for the above-mentioned activities.

Nearly 95% of German partners see the institution of Euroregion as irreplaceable for the development and raising of funds for cross-border cooperation². At the same time, the German Euroregion is an interesting link for finding suitable partners for different social projects. This answer refers to the following question, because the role of the Euroregion as an institution is perceived as irreplaceable, especially in the field of cross-border contacts.

There are two opinions about the major role of the Euroregion institution coming from the two sides of the border, which to a certain extent corresponds to their differently formed authorities. The German side assesses it as its nearest partner and consultant in everything connected with cross-border cooperation. The Czech side perceives this institution especially as a source of possible funds from the EU.

² The structure and the function of the Euroregion on the Bavarian side of the border totally differs from that on the Czech side. The German secretariat also manages and administers the “soft” and capital fund of the EU.

Most of the small towns and villages (95%) in both districts see the effects of the Euroregion as big in the framework of the offered four-degree scale of intensity. This is mainly through acquisition of grants, and advisory and consulting activities. On the other hand, there are bigger towns in the Prachatice district, which profit from the membership of associations such as the Association of the Historical Seats of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, JCCR, and the South Bohemia Cycle Trail Fund. They belong to these other associations and attach only medium-sized importance for their development to the Euroregion institution. For this reason they do not attach such a big importance to the Euroregion institution as the small towns and villages do.

It should be noted here that the Czech representatives feel that the Euroregion institution on the German side is a very positively consolidated one. They have everything under one roof and are professionally prepared to offer high quality service. On the Czech side such a united and compact institution is missing.

Assessment of the administrative/bureaucratic difficulties of projects

The other questionnaire questions concentrated on the method of administration of applications that were processed, administered and budgeted by the applicants themselves in the monitored period. Small towns or villages unanimously stated that during their processing they consulted with employees of an agency or colleagues from different towns or villages. At the same time they pointed out how time consuming and extensive the whole application process and its completion is with all the requested enclosures. The other four microregional centres avail themselves of a much larger number of employees to manage applications in individual departments. For this reason they do not have such a problem.

As to the preparation of so called “drawer” projects, the mayors municipalities agreed on the abundance of developing projects for their towns or villages. But they pointed out the necessity of co-financing as a problem factor that does not make the implementation of some financially demanding projects possible. Since 2007 this has also been stated in answers from all four bigger towns of the district. This statement can be connected with the present period of the financial crisis. The stated reasons represent the main part of the free answers.

When answering these questions, the German side also thinks, again unanimously, that the difficulty of administration of projects is extraordinary. For this reason, small towns or villages prefer to agree on a joint application as a microregional grouping (it concerns small villages, e. g. Haidelregion). There are no “drawer” projects in German towns and villages. In this connection we have to mention another important factor. On the German side there are, unlike on the Czech side, district authorities that realize super-regional and local projects for which they demand funds from the government of Bavaria. On the Czech side this level of local government is missing. The bigger towns and villages in the region sometimes try to compensate for this. It is a similar case in centres of municipalities that have extended powers or the administrative district municipalities with an authorized municipal office.

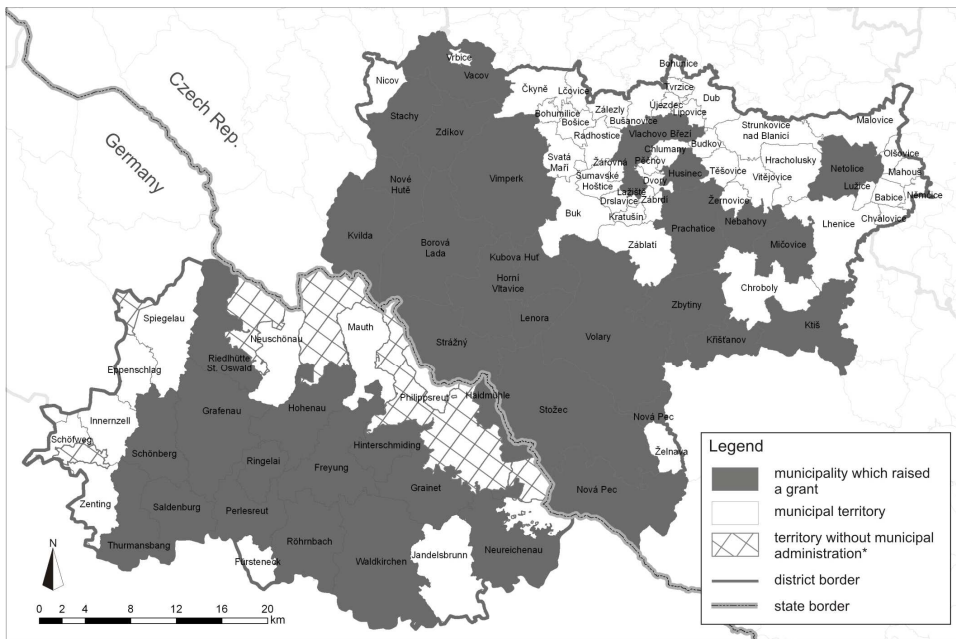


Fig. 3. Municipalities in the Prachatice District and Freyung-Grafenau District, which raised a grant from the EU Phare (pre- fund) Disposition Fund and Objective III (Structural Funds).

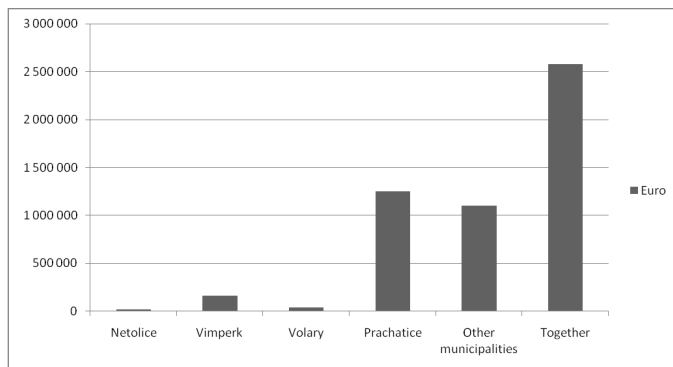


Fig. 4. Prachatice District all EU funds together from 1996 to 2011

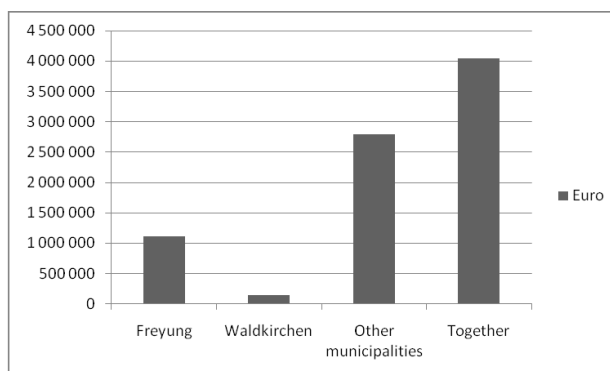


Fig 5. Freyung – Grafenau District all EU funds together from 2005 to 2011

Perspective of cross-border cooperation

The question about the supposed development of cross-border cooperation is closely connected with the previous one. The mayors municipalities evaluated the possibility of mutual cooperation in the near future. Most of the Czech respondents (79%) think that the cooperation will continue developing and stay at the present level, because it is mutually advantageous. About 10% of the total number of answers collected suppose that mutual cooperation could collapse as a consequence of socio-political and economic changes. Comparing this question to the previous question we can see a kind of inconsistency. In this answer the elites present a prediction for future development in the sense of the continuation of the present development, although in the previous question most of them stated that the insufficiency of cooperation of high quality is due to financial and economic reasons. As we can see the mayors are not clear in their minds about this sphere, the analysed answers are indecisive. It is possible that after the economic crisis has been overcome the future perspective will be more auspicious from this point of view.

In relation to the offered possibilities 52 % of respondents state that future development depends on individuals on both sides of the border independently on the top representatives of individual towns and villages. These individuals devote the strength of their convictions to the development of mutual cooperation especially when it is also in their own economic interest. Authoress of this paper can confirm this result from own experience during the mutual cooperation in the region.

Most German mayors (87%) think the present state of mutual relations will be similar in the near future, and it will mainly support tourism and culture. They attribute the present problems to absence of important funds. The mayors rather foreshadowed certain expectations from the arising region Danube – Vltava with regard to the hope of raising the funds. But they also realize that to raise them it is necessary to have the human potential to administer and organize everything. However, small towns and villages are short of this ability.

In this respect the mayors on the Czech side answer indecisively with regards to the continuing financial crisis. They also realize that the development

of cooperation will have financial consequences. The German side seems to be more consistent and more optimistic, but at the same time united with the opinions of the Czech side in the necessity of human resources of adequate quality for raising the possible funds.

The following questionnaire questions were connected with the previous questions. The first of them evaluated the factors limiting the practical cooperation municipalities across the border using the four-degree scale. Altogether 12 possibilities were offered to choose from the list.

The three most important limiting factors were: the different mentality of the inhabitants on the “other” side of the border, different purchasing power of the currency and language problems. This partial concurrence probably results from the subjective evaluation of the elites’ own qualities and knowledge.

Some respondents were not always able to choose the correct degree on the given scale, or they did not have their own opinion of it. Such uncertainty was found mostly in response to the assessment of the planning systems and different national/state interests (54.5%).

The suggestions for how to overcome the main problems of cooperation were mainly the change of generations, because the new one already knows its neighbour's language at least at the communication level. It is necessary to support meetings of mayors so that they get to know each other and acknowledge their different professional orientation, problems, attitudes, mentality and so on. The other proposals on how to avoid the problems connected with mutual cooperation included suggestions for building traffic communications, improvement of public transport and the possibilities of using free time (i.e. culture, sport and relaxation).

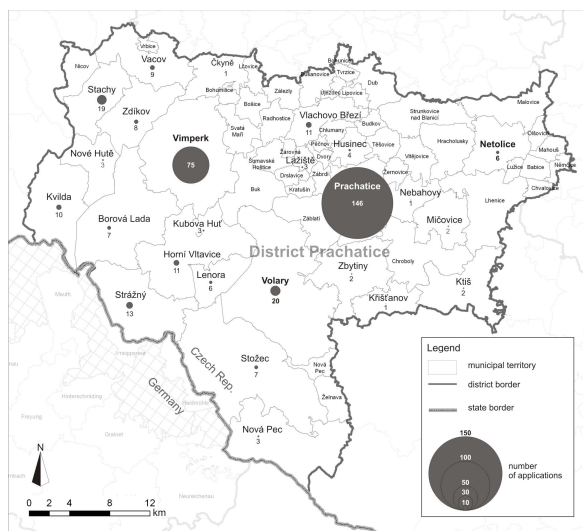


Fig. 6. Prachatice District – the number of individually raised projects Phare (pre-fund), Disposition Fund and Ziel III (Structural Funds).

The German side presents especially the language problems and the different level of facilities and infrastructure as the most important factor, which limits the daily cooperation of municipalities across the border. Another important factor is the regional political problems caused by the different levels of support for the projects on their side of the border when they are the applicants. Usually, the Czech side raised a bigger percentage of the grant than the German side, so it depends on how the individual governments arranged the conditions for their state. Another determining factor is the fact that smaller towns and villages on the German side do not have enough employees to administer projects and obtain funds. For this reason they gather into interest microregions such as the Haidel microregion to get the funds for the development of tourism. The necessity to insert the town's own financial share that is, co-financing and at the same time pre-financing, also plays a role. This is also a problem for small Bavarian towns and villages.

General conclusions can be drawn from the survey. The first is the fact that the German side can agree in a more effective way on proposals of projects, and get the important funds for joint projects which will have interesting results for several towns or villages – see the diagrams. The local towns and villages can very easily agree on paying the co-financing amount or in some cases the pre-financing of the whole project when demanded. There are projects such as the reconstruction of a museum area, sewage plants, reconstructions of railway station buildings, maintenance of cross-country tracks and buying a snow cat, a Celtic village, an open-air museum of agricultural holdings, a glass museum and so on. It could be speculated that just for this reason – the Czech mentality of preferring the local, but not least the microregional interests puts a check on the grouping of municipalities and thus it makes raising the funds available from the EU impossible.

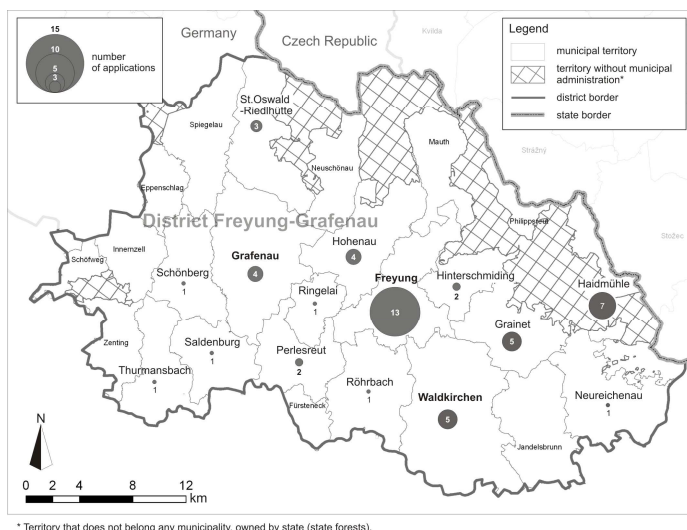


Fig. 7. Freyung-Grafenau District – the number of individually raised projects Phare (pre-fund) Disposition Fund and Objective III (Structural Funds).

From the evaluation of the questionnaire the following questions that were judged very differently or very similarly by the elites of the towns or villages have been chosen. The question was: What factors restrict practical cross-border cooperation? Two partial answers were adapted into diagrams. The first issue was the answer about language problems, to which the Czech elites attributed to a considerable effect on the restriction of cross-border cooperation, while the German side does not see this factor as an essential restriction. This is most probably related to the fact that most of the representatives of elites on the German side use also another world language, in which they are able to communicate. Most representatives of the elites on the Czech side do not have this ability so this problem is mainly on the Czech side (Fig. 8).

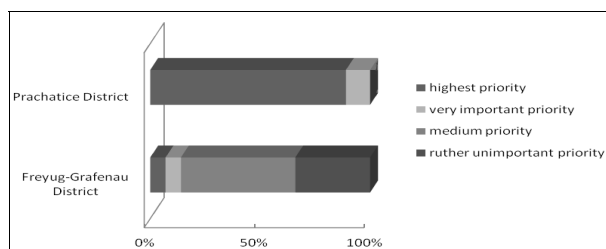


Fig. 8. Comparative analysis of the answer to language problems (in %)

A different situation was presented by the answer to the question: Do different national and state interests restrict practical cross-border cooperation? (Fig. 9). The elites on both sides agreed that different state interests restrict the cross-border cooperation. Both groups answered identically that the border areas are still outside the main interest of development of the individual state areas with regard to their being the peripheral areas of Bohemia and Bavaria.

The mayors of both districts hold the same view of the remaining language barrier as a fundamental problem for the development of mutual cooperation. For cross-border cooperation the Czech elites perceive in different way the mentality of the inhabitants and the purchasing power of the currency. The German elites perceive the different levels of facilities of territorial infrastructure and regional political problems.

The next analysed question related to fields the mayors of the towns and villages see as problematic or favourable for cross-border cooperation. Several implications could be derived from the ascertained results: the mayors evaluated the immediate existing perceptions, which are the impulse or the source of the development of towns or villages and the nearby region, in the context of problems discussed. The regional and economic development necessarily relates to the development of the traffic and technical infrastructure in the form of urgent improvement to the net, especially in the direction of the former border crossing on the road 1/4. This is to a considerable extent crucial for the regional and economic development. The traffic infrastructure in the mentioned region has been significantly neglected and underdeveloped because of the existence of the Iron Curtain.

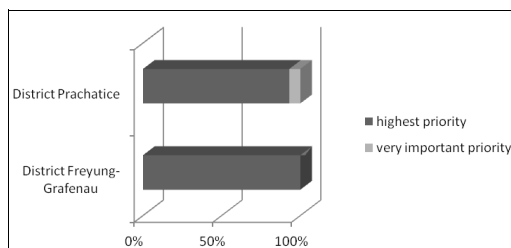


Fig. 9. Comparative analysis of the answer to possible different national and state interests (in %)

It is very interesting to compare the results of the answers of the representatives of the German municipalities who put emphasis on traffic and technical infrastructure. They consider them to be the base necessary for further development of subsequent activities. Similarly to the Czech mayors, they see cross-border cooperation as the second important field for regional development. These fields are immediately followed by that of the environment and environmental protection, which is not perceived in Bavaria as strongly as it is on the Czech side. This statement emerges from the experience and continuity of a good, regular and reciprocally useful cooperation between the German municipalities and the administration of the Bavarian Forest National Park. As the least urgent of the offered fields of the questionnaire, they evaluated tourism, almost on the same level as leisure time, culture, and sport. These are the activities, which according to their comments are an excellent extension of cross-border cooperation. Various clubs were to a certain degree spontaneously established without much support or protection from the individual towns or villages. In the following diagrams (Figs. 10 and 11) two partially differently evaluated indicators are compared. The issue was the answer about the role of tourism to which the Czech elites attached considerable importance while the German side did not see it as important and did not analyse this field.

A different situation was revealed by the analysis of the field of regional and economic development. The elites on both side of the border agreed that this area is of high importance for cross-border cooperation.

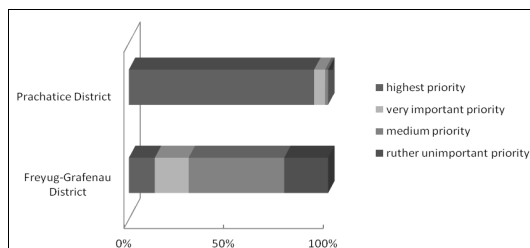


Fig. 10. Analysis of the answer – tourism (in %)

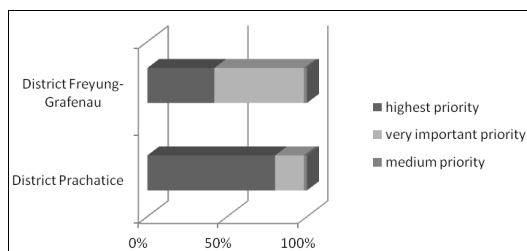


Fig. 11. Analysis of the answer – regional and economic development (in %)

The elites on both sides of the border agree with the statement about the importance of cooperation in the field of regional and economic development as well as on the traffic and technical infrastructure. Different answers appear in the field of the environment and environmental protection, which the German side would like to support more, and in the field of tourism, which on the contrary they evaluated as the least urgent.

CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of the research was to evaluate the development of existing cross-border cooperation in the Prachatice district after 1989 with its German neighbour taking into account their specific culture, economic position and other aspects. The aim was to point out the increasing role of the European Union, particularly in this border region, to compare it before and after entry to the EU and in the securing of regional development for the Prachatice district.

The study of the border area is based on the existence of the borderline delineating the territorial sovereignty of individual states, which builds a so-called dual concept. The borderline can be a distinct dividing line, but also a contact zone. This “polarization” may achieve various forms and primarily depends on the permeability or rather the openness of the political border.

In general, the main point is the potential differences of the socio-economic environment in the border areas that share a state border. This introduces a new element into the use of theories involved with the cross-border regional development. Border effects have specific importance for the regional development of a border area. A cross-border diffusion of new ideas, different methodological approaches and different social behaviour are a potential impulse for further development. The extent of the influence of the border effects depends on the symmetry or asymmetry of the border and on the differentiating or integrating aspects. This includes a combination of positional and local factors as well as the scale of hierarchization of the bordering regions and their positional conditions. In its way the border effect differentiates the border area from the inland area and contributes to the polarization of the area. On the basis of the functional evaluation of the border there is variability in the border effect from closed to open.

Euroregions are good examples. For many towns or villages, the Euroregions carry out the role of an intermediary institution in the process of develop-

ment in an exogenous way. This is apparent from the developing strategies. In the progressive theories and also in practice the Euroregions fulfil the role of a net maker. The functional border effects – a diffusion effect and a potentially distinguishing effect influences these nets.

When investigating who is the most important participant in cross-border cooperation, the development of cross-border cooperation and also the intensity of mutual contacts before 1918 was analysed. There are various participants and actors in cross-border cooperation. As to the results of this study, the most important ones were the institutions of the Euroregion and the municipalities.

This fact is obvious also in other Euroregions in the border areas of the Czech Republic such as *Egrensis* or *Silva Nortica*. However, this statement holds true also for other Euroregions in Europe such as Silesia, Biele-Biele Karpaty, Neisse-Nisa-Nysa, Pomoraví-Zahorie-Weinviertel, Beskydy, and Tatry). For the institutions of the Euroregion and the municipalities it concerns, among other things, conceptual activity. Individual societies or interest groups work on a voluntary basis and if they want to, they carry out their activities in their spare time. For this reason we cannot speak about continuity. Regular cooperation on this level is rather rare. The discontinuity of the unity between a person and a region and different Czech mentality is the reason. For the future, the different mentality of both nations may continue to cause smaller personal engagement on the Czech side in contrast to the German colleagues, where help, ideas and willingness are considered to be natural and common. The difference in the national mentalities is the reason for a different evaluation of the engagement in various European Euroregions. The German mentality, which incorporates thoroughness, precision, reliability and confidence, is absolutely extraordinary and exceptional in Europe.

It is true that in practice the intensity of cross-border cooperation is influenced by the quality and quantity of mutual contacts, and the degree of preparation of the participants. The larger towns with more staff in local or state authorities have better conditions for the development of cooperation. Importantly, thanks to the servicing function of these microregional centres, they can also better influence the development of cooperation with the neighbouring villages. So, the bigger towns play a key role in regional and cross-border development. This role has a positive impact on the successful raising of funds from the EU as well as in other areas. It appears that the intensity of border cooperation is territorially differentiated. These problems are also connected with the possibility of raising funds from the EU sources. Moreover, there are differences in the extent of raising and using funds from the EU sources between the Czech Republic and Germany.

The intensity of cross-border cooperation is territorially differentiated. In regional development the bigger towns in the district play a more important role than small towns or villages thanks to more engagement and interest from the participants, and representatives of the authorities in other regional border and national institutions and the funds from the EU. In small towns or villages, cross-border and the Euroregional cooperation is declaratively discussed on the level of regional development at many meetings. But in practice there is no potential for its distinctive value in use besides the other things with respect to the above-mentioned statements.

A very interesting finding that comes from a thorough analysis of the gained financial resources on both sides of the border, is the fact that on the German side the municipalities make an effort to gain the resources for cross-border cooperation with help from the Euroregions much more effectively than the municipalities on the Czech side. This is connected with the fact that the regional development and the continuity of cross-border contacts including the raising of funds from the EU are influenced by the different workings of the political system and different political composition of the representatives of local government on both sides of the border.

It is necessary to mention the fact that the German society living in the border region is more continuous – its base is formed by old residents. They have a different attitude towards property and the landscape than the people on the other side of the border. Thanks to the political decisions of the communists, on the Czech side the population was gathered from all the corners of Central and Eastern Europe. This fact is also reflected in the relationship to the landscape and its future development and the attempts of the individuals for its development and attractiveness. In my opinion it is not possible to eliminate these problems within twenty or thirty years, but maybe within a much longer period. The main reason is the necessity to build up a strong connection between the people and the region.

On the basis of the authoress' experience of ten years working as a coordinator of Czech-Bavarian cooperation, the development displays the following features. Thanks to the convenient geographical location, existing raw material sources and follow-up industrial sector, the border region has an advantageous starting position for further economic growth. The economic growth of Bavaria ranges about the average for the EU and its dynamics are gradually decreasing from this high level. But in the Czech border area, distinct regional differences can be seen as well as partially mono-functional areas; there are areas in which restructuring of mainly the traditional industrial branches is taking place. A low level of innovation, insufficient capital resources for companies and insufficient qualified labour also cause the deficits in the Czech part of the area. In spite of these facts several close contacts and cooperation within the ongoing economic cooperation have already formed. Knowledge about the existing economic structures in the bordering country is limited, as a result of a long-term division of the area and the differences in the working of the two economic systems, and there still remains a lack of informally functioning networks. The economic productivity of the Czech-Bavarian border area is in general lower than the relevant national averages. In the border area, there are differences between its Czech and Bavarian part and between urban and rural areas. The importance of the traditional branches is declining. The establishment of modern technologies and innovations is mainly, in the Czech border area, still very restricted. There is also insufficient awareness of the general economic, institutional and juridical conditions. With the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU the conditions for cross-border economic cooperation (e.g. between the economic and business chambers, craftsmen, associations of businessmen) have improved.

The local Czech-German cooperation has significantly developed mainly in the field of tourism. Preserved natural heritage offered a variety of options in terms of improvements in tourism infrastructure that is very actively involved in

both the Czech and German community. Another interesting link is mutual co-operation in the field of culture because many customs and traditions are very similar and the local population is trying to use this to increase the visiting rate of this region.

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Růžena Štemberková

PŘEŠHRANIČNÍ SPOLUPRÁCE: PŘÍPADOVÁ STUDIE OKRESŮ PRACHATICE A FREYUNG – GRAFENAU

Cílem této studie je zhodnotit vývoj dosavadní přeshraniční spolupráce v okresech Prachatice a Freyung-Grafenau po roce 1989 a rovněž dopady vstupu České republiky do Schengenského prostoru. Dále upozornit na rostoucí úlohu Evropské unie obzvláště v tomto příhraničním regionu před a po vstupu do EU v zajištění regionálního rozvoje Prachaticka a okresu Freyung-Grafenau.

V rámci stanoveného cíle práce byly zformulovány následující hypotézy. Nejvýznamnějšími aktéry příhraniční spolupráce jsou spíše instituce euroregionu a obce než aktivity spolků a zájmových skupin. Intenzita příhraniční spolupráce je územně diferencovaná. Větší města okresů sehrávají v regionálním rozvoji důležitější roli než okolní malé obce i díky vyšší angažovanosti a zainteresovanosti představitelů samosprávy v ostatních krajských, příhraničních i národních institucích a zásluhou finančních zdrojů získaných z EU. U malých obcí je příhraniční a euroregionální spolupráce i v regionálním rozvoji diskutována proklamativně na mnoha společných jednáních, prakticky však potenciál nebo jeho využití chybí. Obce a instituce euroregionu na německé straně dokáží daleko efektivněji usilovat o prostředky na příhraniční spolupráci a vlastní rozvoj než obce a další instituce na české straně. S tím souvisí i myšlenka, že regionální rozvoj a kontinuitu příhraničních kontaktů vč. čerpání finančních prostředků z Evropské unie ovlivňuje odlišné fungování politického systému a odlišné politické složení představitelů samosprávy na obou stranách hranice. Navzdory tomu, že území je již několik let součástí Schengenského prostoru (od roku 2007), který napomáhá zvýšení kooperačních a integračních tendencí mezi obyvateli členských států, je stále příhraničí, z pohledu jednotlivých územních celků, periférním územím.

Teoretický úvod konfrontuje paradigmatu hranice, hraničních efektů, příhraničního regionu, regionální identity, dále se zabývá jednotlivými institucionálními rámci přeshraniční spolupráce a regionálního rozvoje, které přímo ovlivňují regionální rozvoj, a nástroji řešení. Zde jsou uvedeny procesy změn přeshraniční spolupráce v rámci posttotalitní transformace, integrace a euroregionální spolupráce. Zjišťování a ověřování vývoje vztahů proběhlo na základě připraveného dotazníku položeného představitelům

obcí, kterými jsou starostové, v modelovém území okresu Prachatice a v modelovém území okresu Freyung-Grafenau. Některé z těchto výsledků byly následně porovnávány a konfrontovány s výsledky výzkumu pohraničí, který byl uskutečněn v roce 2004 (Dokoupil et al. 2004). Toto porovnání umožnilo srovnání vývoje v různých příhraničních regionech České republiky a upřesnění postupujících a navazujících dalších vývojových tendencí. Na základě dosažených výsledků, ale i vlastních zkušeností, byly popsány možné perspektivy rozvoje zvolené modelové oblasti.

Na základě výzkumu můžeme konstatovat, že instituce euroregionu a jeho poslání je na české a německé straně v určitých segmentech odlišná. Její poslání je stejné, ale vytvořený úřad ve smyslu instituce se značně odlišuje. Na německé straně působí jako ucelený orgán, který je zastřešen jednatelem a obsahuje poradenské i konzultační centrum stejně jako administrátora mnohých projektů. Zastupitelstva obcí a představitelé euroregionu patří mezi významné aktéry příhraniční spolupráce a regionálního rozvoje. Obce jako nositelé spolupráce umí dlouhodobě využívat zkušeností našich sousedů při správě obcí, při začleňování se do evropských struktur, při čerpání prostředků ze strukturálních fondů, ale i v dalších oblastech. Disparita čerpání finančních prostředků mezi malými obcemi a městy vyplývá především z nedostatku lidského potenciálu v menších komunách a s tím souvisejících myšlenek a nápadů potřebných k realizaci projektových řízení. U větších obcí je vyšší potenciál lidských sil k administraci náročné agendy spojené s projekty. Dalším podpůrným faktorem je skutečnost, že větší obce mají obvykle více disponibilních finančních prostředků k předfinancování projektů. Zároveň je i kofinancující podíl menším problémem pro větší města než pro městečka či obce regionu, která si logicky nemohou dovolit větší počet bytů i měkkých projektů. Tento trend je velmi podobný na obou stranách hranice. Na německé straně je výjimečný fakt, že spolky či jiní dobrovolníci velmi rádi a s entuziasmem stejně jako patriotismem ke své obci či regionu nasazují své síly i finanční prostředky pro prospěch různých místních aktivit. Tato skutečnost na české straně ve větších městech či obcích úplně vymizela, u menších obcí je spíše výjimečná.

