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European Borders: Geographical Perspectives Of Territorial Cooperation

Guest Editors:
ANDREA NATALINI and KARL DONERT



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Editorial

*The IV EUGEO Congress took place in Rome from 5th to 7th September 2013. As highlighted by the congress' title *Europe, what's next? Changing geographies and geographies of change*, the event was explicitly dedicated to "change", inviting all geographers to present their contributions and reflections on the evolution of global interconnections and their territorial effects in terms of transformation and re-organization. The importance of this event for European Geography can easily be described by some numbers: more than 500 papers were presented at the congress and more than 700 researchers from 44 countries participated as authors or co-authors, session organizers, chairs and discussants; the congress hosted 38 paper sessions and 4 thematic panels, addressing the central issue from different perspectives. It included several topics, from the traditional fields of interest for geographic studies to the most recent trends concerning new technologies and methodologies adopted to address those issues. Several sessions were organized addressing themes such as urban studies, rural development, local identities, sustainable land management, migration, landscape, food networks, border studies and geographical education. Geographers from all over Europe met in the rooms of the University of Rome La Sapienza to present and share the result of their research and to reflect on the challenges that Europe is facing within a changing world.*

*This special issue of the European Journal of Geography is a collection of selected papers from the session *Breaking down boundaries: geographers for a new Geography of Europe*, organized by Associazione Geografica per l'Ambiente e il Territorio (AGAT) within the IV EUGEO Congress and supported by the European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO). AGAT is an academic Italian association of young geographers founded in 2008, aiming at constituting a bridge between students, teachers, researchers and civil society and promoting research and geographic knowledge at local, national and European level. In five years of work, AGAT's members have developed expertise in organizing and promoting scientific events as well as a strong interest for European studies; they have been running European projects mainly dealing with sustainability and environmental issues, and developing didactic and professional activities related to these topics.*

The aim of the paper session was to explore how the geography of Europe is changing under the effects of European policies established to foster the process of territorial integration: a slow, complex, maybe visionary process, started after the Second World War in order to create an area of peace, safety and freedom and face the new challenges coming from connected and global economies.

The ongoing process of territorial integration promoted by EU policies is drastically changing the face and geography of Europe: it is aimed at gradually deleting ancient political and cultural borders and reducing social and economic disparities between the different regions of the continent. Different tools have been created to foster this process and some of them (such as the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation) are explored in the papers. These represent an ambitious challenge for the political future of the European Union as well as a matter of a great interest for geographical, economic and political studies. Particular attention is dedicated to the development of cooperation tools and building of networks among the member States in the different areas: from environmental management to spatial planning, energy supply, sustainable transport, health, education, culture, tourism and so on.

In the last decade, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has intervened in the three main objectives of Regional Policy: convergence; regional competitiveness and employment; and European territorial cooperation. Since the adoption of the Cohesion and Regional Policies, the European Commission employs a consistent amount of its budget in these programmes. They focus on creating and reinforcing transnational partnerships and cross-border cooperation at different levels, from lower levels of administration to enterprises, associations, NGOs and also by fostering the mobility of its citizens.

On the other hand, European Neighbourhood Policy has sought to extend the area of EU influence outside its external borders in order to promote political and economic stability and the adoption of human rights and the rule of law. The recently reformed Cohesion Policy is highly significant as it will make up to EUR 366.8 billion available to be invested in European regions and cities, and to support the real economy within the programming period 2014-2020. As a consequence this represents the EU's principal investment tool for delivering Europe 2020 goals: namely, creating growth and jobs, tackling climate change and energy dependence, and reducing poverty and social exclusion. (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm).

As a result of this process, distances between people and places in Europe have been somehow decreasing; new connections are being established; new networks between political and administrative institutions, enterprises, diplomacies, professional and citizen associations have been formed, are growing and consolidating. Besides these deep changes in the geography of Europe, the processes initiated by these funding programmes is changing the meaning of concepts such as border, national belonging, identity, citizenship and human rights.

*So, how is the geography of Europe changing as a consequence of the adoption and implementation of European policies? What contribution are geographers giving to this process, both as professionals or researchers? What kind of approaches are they adopting to properly answer those questions? The session *Breaking down boundaries: geographers for a new Geography of Europe* explored the role that geographers are*

playing in the process of European territorial integration and to share knowledge, case-studies and methodologies to address this complex and strategic issue.

This special issue contains a selection of the most significant papers presented at the session; it facilitates an overview of the state of this process, from different perspectives and points of view, analysing and reporting different case-studies. The authors come from six European countries (Hungary, Italy, France, Spain, Ireland, Slovenia) and their papers describe different cases in which the process of European territorial integration is advancing and modifying the pre-existing relations and equilibria between neighbouring regions as well as the actions affecting the relations between the EU member states and third countries such as Turkey, thus facilitating an overview which is not exhaustive but yet quite relevant to the understanding of the state of the art of the analysed ongoing process.

Andrea Natalini, Karl Donert
Guest Editors

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TERRITORIAL COHESION: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION – HOW CAN SOME EU INSTRUMENTS CREATE A NEW GEOGRAPHY?

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Abstract

The future of European cohesion policy is about to be prepared and discussed: One of the main novelties is the concept of territorial cohesion, which can only be achieved by the effective, integrated development of (inner) peripheral border areas. To serve this territorial continuity and connection better there are some innovative instruments for planners and policy-makers. This study describes the cross-border spatial planning possibilities of the EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) tool. It estimates how it can contribute to the regeneration of the spatial connections and local economic development in border areas. As a result of an innovative and efficient regional policy, the geography of border areas is changing very dynamically. The study confirms how this social, spatial, economic and political phenomena can be analysed by geographical methods and confirms the role and importance of geographers is in this new European “space making” process.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, cross-border geography, territorial cohesion, EGTC, borders

1. INTRODUCTION – TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES IN EUROPE

EU regional policy has, since its origin, tried to support the reduction of inequalities in the development of European regions, although with uneven success. However, while clear progress in developmental trends may appear, general differences still exist between regions (Heidenreich 2003) and between urban areas and countryside remain sharp (Niebuhr and Stiller 2003). Moreover regions in recession may also be encountered.

Differences in productivity and in employment rate reflect the capacity of a country or region to mobilize its human potential. This capability correlates with the structure and organization of the labour market and its articulation with the system of social reproduction (Dunford 1996). Regional inequality, in per worker output, in the European Union is closely

linked to intrinsic differences among regions. The importance of national and spatial location components are decisive factors across European regions (Ezcurra, Pascual and Rapún 2007).

Serious territorial disparities may be found at a continental scale. Figure 1 clearly shows that there are still significant GDP differences between Western and Eastern Europe. The boundary of the so-called Iron Curtain still serves as a development borderline. Furthermore, serious territorial disparities may also be experienced at lower, regional, micro-regional scales. Using Hungary as an example, 85 % of the least developed, so-called “lagging behind” micro-regions of the country are located in close proximity to a border (Figure 2). Such phenomena are certainly not specific to Hungary, as similar impasses of development have evolved along the European borders which previously had mainly produced ‘separating’ effects.

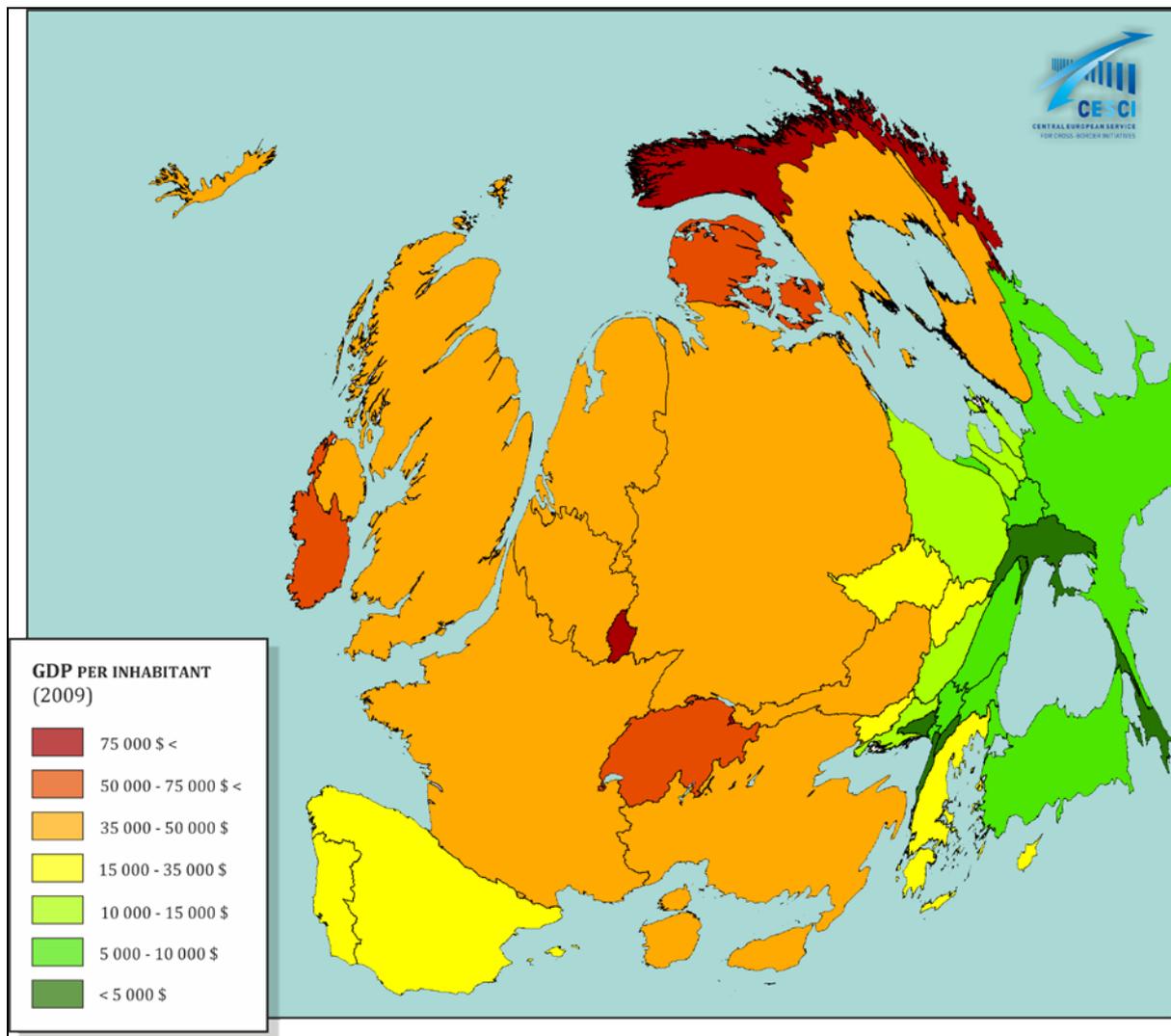


Figure 1. Territorial disparities in Europe

Source : compiled by the author, CESC

Several pieces of evidence are available on developmental disparities and trends characterising Europe (e. g. Dunford 1994, Boldrin-Canova-Pischke-Puga 2001, Sokol 2001, Pittau-Zelli-Gelman 2010, Petrakos-Kallioras-Anagnostou 2011, and ESPON projects e. g.

SURE, SS-LR, TEDI etc.). This study, accepting these research results as a starting point, focuses exclusively on the roles of state borders out of several features in the background of European heterogeneity. Through the estimation of the role of borders, in addition to consideration of EU policies and instruments for development and cooperation, the paper tries to reveal an evolving new geography stressing the importance of territorial cohesion in cross-border areas. With a more theoretical focus (based on applied evidence) it highlights the key function of borders in reducing developmental disparities within the European Union.



Figure 2. Regions in Hungary lagging behind

Source : compiled by the author, CESCO

Therefore the positioning of boundaries separating and slowing down spatial development processes and spatial relationships often correlate with the location of the regions showing higher territorial inequalities. Consequently the question of borders is of great importance in managing territorial disparities of Europe.

2. THE ROLE OF BORDERS

Easing development disparities cannot be successful without understanding territorial processes. The appropriate interpretation of a territorial “dimension” can have an influence on the functioning and development of social structures. Moreover, it seems that the role of space will have greater importance. “Our age (...) can be the era of space. We live the age of simultaneity, co-ordination, the near and far, rightwards and leftwards and spreading. It is such a moment (...) wherein the world looks on itself not as life rising through time, but a net linking spots and intercrossing fibres.” (Foucault 1972). The concept of the social production of space is also critical during its examination (Lefebvre 1974). Accordingly, space is a social construction determined by values, various meanings and interpretations. All these have an

influence on our everyday acts and how we consider the world around us. Therefore, space has an ideological function. Space is defined by the way that it comes into existence as the inseparable unity of spaces of everyday life, abstract spaces as well as spaces that exist in our minds (Lefebvre 1974). Space can be considered as one component of production power of society. Borders and cross-border areas breaking the continuance of this production power have great importance from the aspect of territorial cohesion.

Borders are a spatial element separating different parts of space from each other. They shape territories from space, since the territory is an enclosed part of space. Contrary to the squarely fixed presence of modern administrative borders, social-cultural borders are mobile. They tend to be in constant movement instead of edged borders, in which transitions, mosaics and spatial heterogeneity are more typical.

The definition of a border can be understood through its functions, or rather, how the border separates or connects certain territories (Nijkamp, Rietveld and Salomon, 1990). Consequently, it can operate as a barrier or a 'separating space element', or a filter zone with gates, edges and frontiers as well as contact zones (Nemes Nagy 1998). Borders can also be categorised as mental or physical. Physical borders can be classified as frontier type (political, cultural, population), as well as boundary type (natural and artificial) border zones (Hardi 2000). In many cases, natural and mental borders influence the physical-geographical space as well. Van Houtum (1998) has defined a series of opposite pairs to characterise border zones, such as: natural-artificial, functional-emotional, concrete-abstract, opened-closed. David Newman (2006) emphasizes the process-based nature of borders. He determines the stages of formation, institutionalisation, sustainability, closing, opening, terminating, where the duration and order of certain stages depends on the actual political and economic circumstances.

Guichonnet and Raffestin (1974) define the classical border function typology into five different categories: legal function, fiscal function, checking function, military function and ideological function. These allow the practice of sovereign state power; the legal function fixes the limits of practice of power; fiscal function can be considered through laying down customs; as a result of a checking function the state can filter the factors which stream into or out of a specific country. Today, the military function of a border has much lower relevance than before as a result of the development of military technology. The ideological function can be recognised by separating "us" and "them". The border, as an individual space element with important roles, assigns special functions to the areas near to it. At cross-border areas there is a need for cross-border co-operation at a certain level among local actors (e.g. cross-border management of catchment areas, cross-border labour force-migration).

The nature and type of certain borders and cross-border areas is changing both spatially and temporally. During recent decades, dynamic changes in the capacity of borders to separate have been typical, especially in Central Europe. Borders that were fully separating have turned into totally permeable borders (eg. between the former Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic). The changes in regimes, the European integration process and the extension of the Schengen area have significantly changed the role of several state borders in Europe. However, separating effects have not been exclusively eased, since in some cases the separating power of the external borders of the Schengen area have been intensified, such as the borders created during the Yugoslav war.

Diverse border functions generate different possibilities for the dissolution of territorial disparities. Different functions of separation resulted in different connection facilities and co-operation opportunities. Because of this, co-operation culture and practice are also formed in a different way. These processes move at different speeds. Moreover, the dynamic change of

border functions is far from at an end, as further realignments are expected in the next decade in Central Europe. Therefore, changing border roles may have a radical effect on the economic, structural and developmental course of an area. It is ascertainable, that in our days the separation role of the European Union's inner political borders has definitely shifted from a barrier function to a contact zone function, while the filter impact is strengthening along the external EU borders (Niebuhr 2006, Diener and Hagen 2012). By this token the co-operative development course of cross border areas comes into prominence: cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation is promoted by several programmes and great amounts of money from the European Union.

The "fading" and "disappearing" sharp border lines in central and Eastern parts of Europe have had great importance, as radical change has happened in these former socialist countries and late Eastern bloc, leading to an exceptionally intensive and innovative transformational process. The resultant permeable borders mask great potential. Making borders more permeable in addition to having common cohesion policy may result convergence in the long run (Leonardi 1993, Tselios 2009). For cohesion, this has to be capitalised on by drawing suitable development strategies, especially because these territories are often peripheral, lagging behind regions (Topaloglou et al., 2005). Separating borders play an obstructing role to development (Meliciani 2006). Managing cross-border areas as border regions, by capitalising on complementing features may contribute to the opening of these areas, and from there on to the strengthening of territorial cohesion across Europe.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIAL COHESION

Understanding the territorial disparities of Europe, it is not by accident that the focus of cohesion policy stresses the territorial meaning of cohesion. From 2014 a new budget cycle will apply within the EU, accompanied by a dynamically evolving cohesion policy, a refreshed regional policy. Generally speaking, the revised regulations should favourably affect the status of border areas. It seems that territorial cohesion may play an even more significant role than before. Integrated approaches will acquire increased significance during development, and more and more innovative tools of good practice will be available for cross-border cooperation. Increasing resources are available in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation. With the accession of Croatia, the internal frontier of the EU will increase along the River Drava and new border sections will soon become Schengen borders.

Cohesion is inherently based on the three pillars of concentration, territorial connection and cooperation and supplemented by the increasingly important integrated development approach that has become a more significant part of EU regional policy. Initially, cohesion policy played the role of economically supporting regions socially lagging behind from the average, with specific financial instruments in order to achieve the common EU targets. Parallel to recognising the geographical determination of regional development, the principle of economic and social cohesion (convergence) with territorial cohesion was only completed in the last decade. The appearance of such a principle also means the introduction of a radical new approach: instead of/besides the gradual convergence of the lagging behind regions, the internal spatial relations of the EU, particularity of the regions, has attracted increasing attention, ensuring Community frameworks for regional development treated as the competency of the Member States. The incorporation of territorial cohesion to EU cohesion policy cannot be separated from the process, as regional and urban development has gradually gained ground in Community-wide discourse.

Since the 1980's significant changes have occurred in the orientation of spatial planning (Figure 3). The directives of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) adopted in 1999 used to refer to the balance of the urban network, the development of infrastructure and the protection of natural and cultural heritage. However in the documents discussed and adopted during the Leipzig meeting of 2007, the exploration of the internal potential of the regions and the establishment of a more efficient and more intelligent management were brought to the foreground. The latter should be considered as democratic, multi-level governance with on-going consultation between policies.

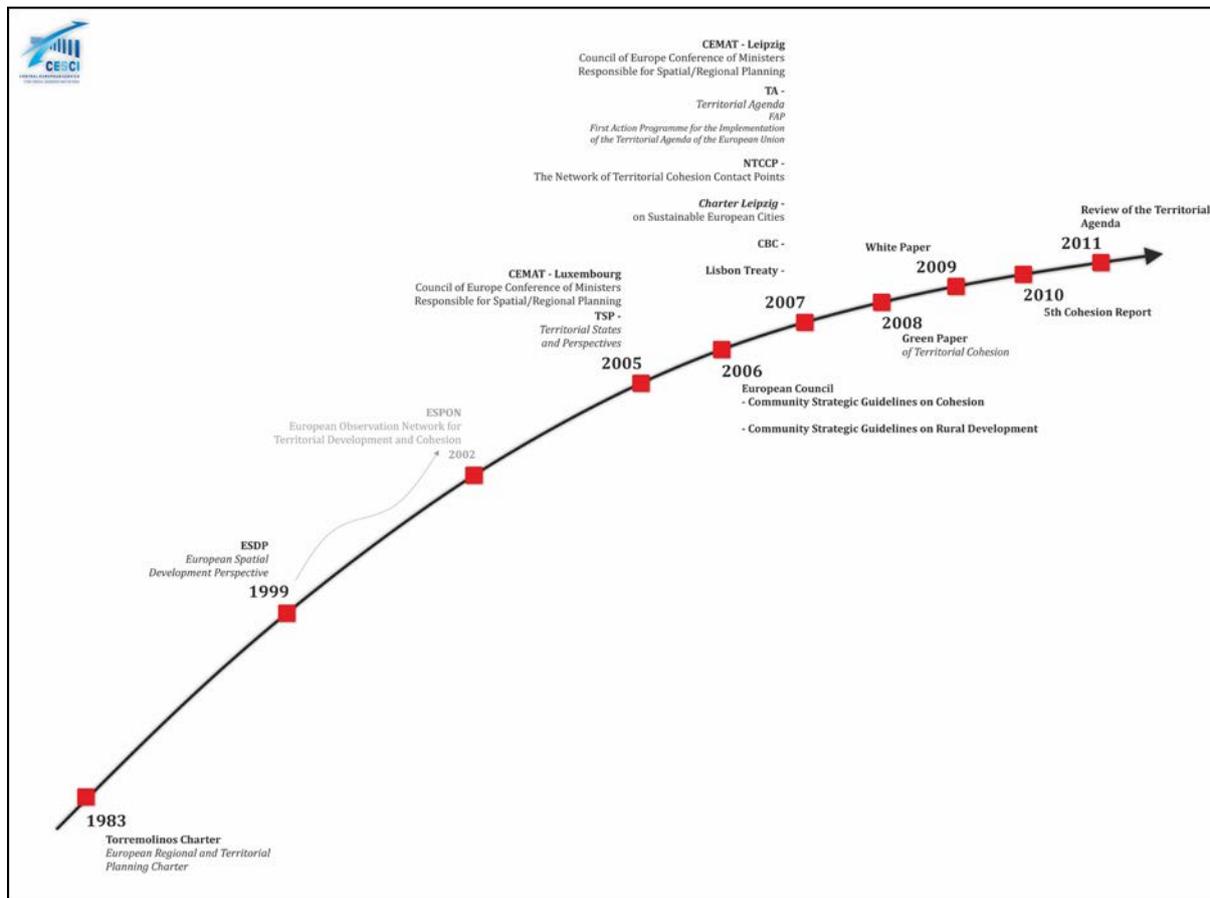


Figure 3. The “evolution” of the principle of territorial cohesion

Source : compiled by the author

In the EU Territorial Agenda attention is drawn to the duality of the conditions of territorial cohesion, accordingly EU policies and local-regional strategies should converge. The importance of territorial cooperation is also mentioned, which is one of the three objectives of 2007 and amongst which instruments there is the establishment of regional clusters and networks. The Green Paper adopted in 2008 is the most important spatial planning document from a methodological point of view, emphasizing the efficiency of industry, integrated problem solving and interventions. The mitigation of phenomena slowing down socio-economic development (3 "D"s: density, distance, division) is deemed essential, solutions should be elaborated for the removal of specific problems (3 "C"s: concentration, connection, cooperation).

The process should be highlighted also in a geographical aspect, which has since 1983 considerably but steadily, increasingly aspired to leak the principles of territorial cohesion and integrated development approach to the practice of planning. Today, the mainstream of European Union Regional Development has reached the point where the principle of territorial cohesion is truly the main principle. The first instruments for a proper integrated development approach have evolved. Today, due to the interpretation of the EU, each dimension (e.g. social or economic) of cohesion has a spatial (if you prefer, geographical) aspect and a regional view pervades the entire approach – essentially, with social and economic aspects also considered as elements of territorial cohesion by the cohesion policy. Following 2014, during the programming period, territorial cohesion will play an even more significant role, supported by the Fifth Cohesion Report published in 2010 (Breska 2010). Frameworks for post-2014 cohesion policy of the EU 2020 Strategy, are specified by the Territorial Agenda revised in 2011 and the regulations of cohesion policy. The resulting policy documents came to conclusions which today define the range of instruments (e.g. the importance of community planning, the need for sectorial integration, the possibility of creating an integration of financial sources, etc.) expected after 2014. New emerging possibilities outlined around the principle of territorial cohesion may serve as a framework for the re-organization of border regions, which in turn sets up a new path for the dynamics of the development of such specific regions.

This study covers the geographical aspects of spatial re-organization supporting the expected territorial cohesion of border regions between 2014 and 2020. An emphasis is put on the tools expected to become increasingly important, the general cooperation and regional development benefits, which can be provided by the EGTC for border regions. Finally, the study also indicates the possible role of geography within such new spatial planning processes.

4. EU INSTRUMENTS IN THE SERVICE OF BOUNDARY DISSOLUTION: THE EMERGING FIELD OF THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION SECTOR

In addition to the conceptual framework supporting the development of cross-border programs and the renewed cohesion policy, the future of cross-border co-operation is also fundamentally determined by EGTC Regulation. After all, this framework of cooperation principally provides institutional options which were not available earlier. Therefore it is necessary to briefly describe the nature of EGTC with consideration to the developments expected after 2014 (Jaschitz 2012). Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 enables the formation of European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Following the Community Law document, each Member State has to accept relevant national legislation, furthermore the regulation allows the participation of other non-EU "third" countries as well.

The EGTC is a cross-border, primarily municipal or governmental grouping, which may act as an independent legal entity in each membership State. It may provide work for its own employees, and is entitled to create and maintain common institutions and business associations. This fact, on the one hand provides highly flexible institutional solutions, but on the other hand allows the establishment of permanent cross-border structures, which enable the integrated sectorial or comprehensive regional development of a border region. EGTC is therefore a cooperative structure, an instrument for programme and project management supporting the sectorial or territorial development of a particular region, and a financing solution providing an optimal use of resources.

The EGTCs registered so far can be categorised into four main types according to their functions (Figure 4). Most of the EGTCs established set the direct development of a border area as their goal. These groupings can be defined as EGTCs for border area development. They are intended for long-term territorial cooperation, implementation of common development and the establishment and maintenance of common institutions ensuring the sustainability of the results of development. Such EGTCs may be considered to be the next generation of the Euroregional cooperation as they elevate work started within the Euroregions, Eurodistricts and other organizational frameworks to a higher level (Ocskay and Jaschitz 2010). The operation of networking, programming and project types of EGTCs may also greatly contribute to the breakdown of the separating ability of boundaries. Moreover, the importance of EGTCs in cross-border developments are expected to rise further after 2014, as there are more and more Europe-wide good practices in relation to the use of the instrument, accordingly the General and ETC Regulations gives them high priority as well.

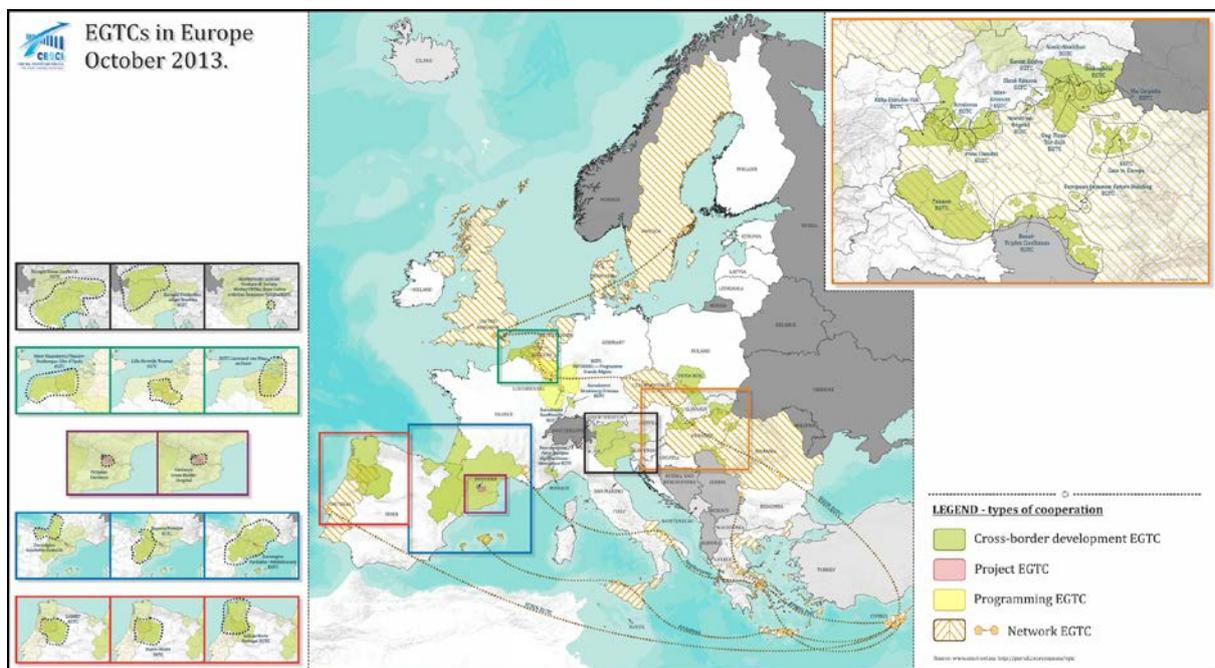


Figure 4. Types of EGTCs in Europe

Source : compiled by the author, CESCO

A further essential point is that the third pillar of the provisions concerning territorial cohesion in the new cohesion policy is to emphasise the governance of territorial development. As a result of the White Paper on Multilevel Governance, cohesion policy and administration are closely intertwined and essentially unthinkable in the absence of each other. This model of multilevel governance allows a territorial approach to replace the sectoral one, thus providing a new structure for economic development.

An adequate institutional solution for such development work is the EGTC institute located at border areas. Multilevel governance is also considered to be an essential instrument by the revised Territorial Agenda. The above-mentioned integrated territorial approach also assists in the creation of cross-border functional regions, but requires the introduction of multi-level governance models. The General Regulation raises multilevel governance among the general principles of programming and implementation (Preamble para. (9), Part II,

Article 5). EGTC appears in the Preamble of the ETC Regulation as one of the instruments for this coordination (ETC Regulations Preamble (28)). This provision confers EGTCs, grouping local-regional participants mainly, with such powers, which were previously available only to nation-states, and such a fact enables a radical new approach with respect to planning and programming along the border area.

In view of the above and in light of the development of ideas concerning the territorial cohesion within the European Union, EGTC can be considered to be the most innovative and most likely future-oriented community cohesion initiatives that may contribute to both the development of the border areas and the dissolving role of borders. The instrument may provide help in many areas, such as managing common institutions and business associations, and enhancing of social relationships. Therefore it is also projected that connections emerging within the framework of EGTC may provide a novel, more vivid pattern to the cooperation and both internal and external economic dynamics of a region.

However, the new spheres of cooperation emerging within the new frameworks along the EU borders should still only be considered a pseudo-structure. Their spatiality is characterized by specific dualities. EGTCs can be considered as a sort of parallel public administration structure. Its participants are identical to those of the national administration systems. However in this structure they have to represent different objectives and they have different competencies compared with the ones they have within their national administration. Moreover, also in terms of their territoriality, a confused design is unfolding: they overlap with national structures (and possibly also other cooperation structures) in such a way that relevant holes remain in the system. This results in a spatial structure simultaneously showcasing a range of different spatial organization purposes and concurrent spatial structures.

It is perceptible that an EGTC institution offers a very wide range of possibilities for the efficient development of border regions. The EGTC institution is theoretically suitable for sustaining long-term living cooperation and to redraw the spatial structures of Europe slashed by nation-state borders of today. However, in order that these goals can be achieved with positive consequences, Europe should proceed very carefully. The incorporation of modifying effects on spatial organization may be expected only in the most clearly justified cases serving this above long-term goal (long-term maintenance of cooperation). The founding of an EGTC would be most favourable in areas which have actual, specific development plans, where such groupings can provide an initial boost to that initiative, but cooperation is not expected to become void after its purpose has been achieved. There are still opportunities for the EGTC to identify new targets for itself. Such circumstances cannot be artificially produced, much less maintained. The fulfilment of this condition is most likely to happen if cooperation was reached as part of a territory of an a priori (or earlier) organic development with natural connections. Long-term financing and motivational background for EGTC activity can only be expected to develop in such an environment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Summarising the findings of this study three topics stand out. Firstly, considering the territorial disparities of Europe, EU cohesion policy and the special role of the borders, it can be stated that without successful cross-border cooperation structures, real territorial cohesion cannot be realised. The role of the borders - slowing down, breaking and reshaping spatial communication - is so strong such that the course of the activities in overcoming the

territorial differences could be underestimated. Recognition of this may also be deduced from the frameworks offered by new cohesion policy.

The second important consideration is that these special, spatially organized border areas can be redefined not only in theory, but their territorial connections can also react very sensitively to policy interventions. The extensive application of EU policies, subsidies, development and cooperation tools also changes the geography of these regions in practice, but to different extents and dynamics. A new, quite complex, space-making process is evolving among the borders of the EU.

Finally, in terms of geography as a science, an important conclusion is that this emerging space-making process also has great relevance in territorial development policy. For the establishment of a proper development policy, truly achieving territorial cohesion, the scientific cognition of these new spatial processes is essential. As for these examinations, geographical research provides the most comprehensive range of instruments as the interventions will also be geographical in nature, trying to influence the geography of Europe in the long run. Geography offers a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, synthesis of knowledge about territorial relationships necessary for the objective exploration of these complex processes. In addition, it also possesses those quantitative and qualitative spatial analysis methods, by means of which the renewal of spatial processes can be mapped, analysed and predicted. Through its two strengths, geography should play a significant role in the research of border areas of Europe and in the preparation of decisions on development policy concerning regional cohesion.

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TERRITORIAL THINKING AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: THE RECENT SITUATION AND FIELDWORK RESULTS IN THE WESTERN ALPS

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Abstract

In this article we discuss the following questions: what is the key to cross-border cooperation, particularly in the case of European mountain regions? Does the legal framework represent a starting point for the development of cross-border relations or is it just a simple tool in the service of territorial thinking? If we consider that there is a strong link between cross-border relations and the European project, the above questions also raise the issue of the relative roles of the bottom-up and top-down processes in the dynamics of European integration. Results suggest that the legal framework represents an indispensable tool in the service of territorial thinking but it cannot be a starting point for the development of cross-border relations. The solutions do not only concern the law but also territory; the essential question is how to define the social, political and spatial boundaries of cross-border cooperation.

Keywords: *protected areas, mountain, legal framework, territorial thinking, cross-border cooperation, European integration.*

1. INTRODUCTION

While legal geography is becoming a well recognised branch of geography in the English-speaking world (Blomley, 1994; Blomley, Delaney & Ford, 2001; Holder & Harrison, 2003) and while it is emerging in France in a relatively independent manner (Cavaillé, 2009; Melé, 2009; Maccaglia & Morelle, in press), fieldwork studies that discuss relations between territorial thinking and the legal framework – without epistemological claims – are very rare. However, in the case of borderland studies, it seems essential to reflect on the practical, professional and political relations between these two perspectives (territorial and legal). Therefore, in this article we discuss the following questions: what is the key to cross-border cooperation, particularly in the case of European mountain regions? Does the legal framework

represent a starting point for the development of cross-border relations or is it just a simple tool in the service of territorial thinking?

If we consider that there is a strong link between cross-border relations and the European project¹, the above questions also raise the issue of the relative roles of the bottom-up and top-down processes in the dynamics of European integration. In fact, the European Union (EU) currently represents an institutional framework aiming to organise political, economical and monetary cooperation between its twenty-eight member states within the European Community area, but it also represents a continuous process on several political levels (Laude, 2004; Mabry, McGarry & O'Leary, 2009; Bitsch, 2008). During the last ten years, European cohesion policies (social and economic) were particularly reinforced in the field of territorial cohesion².

While the latest programmes are approaching their end, the future of European cohesion policy has still to be prepared and discussed. The Commission has adopted a draft legislative package, which will frame the cohesion policy for 2014-2020. The fundamental objective of the Europe 2020³ strategy is to rethink the cohesion of the territorial dimension. The third priority⁴ is an integration of cross-border functional regions, promoting polycentric and balanced territorial development and encouraging integrated development in specific regions. The territorial integration in transnational, functional and cross-border regions is only the third priority. It is achieved after the polycentric promotion of unified standards among different policies, the equalisation of territorial development and the integration among neighbouring cities and regions.

Cross-border cooperation plays an important role in the political cohesion of Europe because it contributes to developing relations between transnational territories, which is key to European integration (Dressler-Holohan, 1992; Amilhat-Szary & Fourny, 2006; Denéchère & Vincent-Daviet, 2010). In 2006, in order to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation, the European Union proposed a legal instrument: the European Grouping of Territorial Cohesion (EGTC). EGTC is a European legal tool designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation within Member States and their regional and local authorities. It can implement programmes co-financed by the member states of the European Union (EU) or other cross-border cooperation projects that may or may not have EU funding. It can implement co-financed territorial cooperation projects or administer territorial cooperation programs initiated by Member States.

2. EXAMPLES OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN MOUNTAIN REGIONS

First of all, mountainous areas play a significant role on a European scale. They occupy 41.3% of European lands (EU-27, Norway, Switzerland, Balkans and Turkey) and are home to 25.4% of European population⁵. If we consider only EU-27, mountains represent 28.7% of landmass and 16.9% of the population. Historically the mountain was the archetype of the natural border such as the watercourses, and used to delimit the state borders between several

¹ Even though the Swiss Confederation is not currently a member, it maintains its close ties with the European Union (for example in the Swiss participation in the INTERREG programme). And see: DATAR, *La cohésion territoriale en Europe*, Paris, La Documentation française, 2010.

² See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

³ Communication from the commission, *Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. Brussels, 3.3.2010 COM (2010) 2020 final. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

⁴ The first and second priorities are promoting polycentric and balanced territorial development, and encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions to foster synergies and to better exploit local territorial assets.

⁵ Sources: ESPON and University of Geneva, 2012.

states (Debarbieux, 1997; Velasco-Graciet & Bouquet, 2005). These natural and geographical elements have been used to justify political boundaries, which obviously involve human and political decisions.

Furthermore, the questions raised by 'mountains' have been treated differently according to the types of states and their territorial spaces. For example in France, a highly centralized country, the mountain has, for a long time, been considered as a marginal space (Gerbaux, 1994; Broggio, 2002). The predominant logic of agriculture priority was based on the average production per unit area. This is described as the "handicap compensation" by the compensator (a French concept that describes the low levels of production in mountainous areas, for instance in agriculture, as a result they are handicapped when compared with more productive lands). In earlier times, the mountain region was an experimental laboratory for decentralization policies in France. In contrast, in the alpine states, like Switzerland or Austria, the importance and role of mountains is very different, because mountains are everywhere. Their politics take into account the relationships between mountains and towns, and encourage their development. Their "mountain politic" is also more global and integrated. This philosophy also predominates at European level (Debarbieux & Rudaz, 2010).

Today, cross-border metropolitan regions are considered laboratories of transnational cooperation, but cross-border mountainous regions are also laboratories themselves (Debarbieux, 2001). There are two reasons for this, firstly, mountain regions are given special recognition, as in article 174 of Lisbon Treaty "Among the regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, cross-border and mountain regions"⁶. Secondly, the European Commission believes that transnational regions are laboratories for European integration. Although these regions are not frequently studied in current literature, they represent specific cases of governance, and the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation. Finally on another note, the protected areas, mainly located in the mountainous regions, represent a privileged topic of cross-border cooperation (Fall, 2002, 2005; Fourny & Crivelli, 2003).

Mountain borders are characterised by discontinuities that generate challenges for spatial integration. The first difficulty comes from nature, in the form of landscape, slope and climate. Nature creates a disadvantage or "handicap" for mountainous agriculture and for economic development, except for winter sport and tourism. The second challenge is directly linked to the presence of borders, as political and legal limits between two or more sovereign countries. The local population can benefit from tax and law differences between both regimes. These regions are particularly important for the European integration. Furthermore, mountain chains such as the Alps are crossroads of major communication routes due to their position in Europe.

We can also add another discontinuity based on the ways public policies are classified. There are often three categories. The first concerns policies with an explicit spatial dimension. Transportation policy is possibly the best example of this. The second, also the largest, concerns policies with a partial spatial dimension. Examples of this include employment, education, health, and agriculture policies. The last one concerns policies without a spatial dimension. At European level, we can only trade in a "borderless" fashion due to the single market built by the Lisbon European economic and monetary strategy. However, at a cross-border level and in mountain space there are no examples of the latter, because the spatial dimension is always crucial in a mountain context.

⁶ The Lisbon Treaty was signed by the EU member states on 13 December 2007, and entered into force on 1 December 2009.

Integration implies horizontality in public policies is essential (Peters, 1998; Bourgault & Lapierre, 2000), especially in mountains which are peripheral and impacted on by dedicated policies from different areas. For instance, before developing a new training centre, the direct connections between difficulties and problems such as labour pooling and skills training should be evaluated. Such questions are important because training centres have rarely built in mountainous border areas. Border towns need a horizontal partnership with not only their city centres, but also universities in order to build uniform, standard, accredited training for their labour pool.

In addition, European policies and those from some States (France, Italy) deal with mountain issues using a polycentric approach (Cole & Pasquier, 2012). The mountains are considered in a centre-periphery relationship, as they are distributed at the edge of the cities' regional frontiers. Public services, administration, health and universities are normally located in central, city areas. This is despite the fact that the mountains do have some important advantages offering important links between rural areas and urban centres and their different politics.

There is a strong dependency ratio between the city and the mountains as they rely on each other heavily, primarily for economic reasons but also for political relations. Taking the case of the Alps, they are the playground of the cities inhabitants. Mountains are the place of sporting and leisure activities, they improve the quality of life of the urban population. In its 3rd Alpine Report, published in autumn 2007, CIPRA demonstrated that peri-alpine cities were dependent on the energy produced in the mountains. Even though the role mountain agriculture plays is relatively weak, it heavily influences the equilibrium between city centres. Mountain valleys, especially those which are located near cities, also participate in this equilibrium as well. In these locations, the migration of employees from rural to urban areas during the week and *vice-versa* for leisure activities during the weekends has been generally observed. Cross-border cooperation in mountainous areas is also characterised by more abated relationships. The cross-border flows of goods and frontier-workers (border residents) in mountainous regions are small when compared with those observed in cross-border metropolitan regions such as Geneva in the Alps.

For all the above reasons, cross-border cooperation in mountainous regions differs between each metropolitan area, as described by various international geographical, sociological or legal literature.

3. CROSS-BORDER FRAMEWORKS: EUROPEAN FUNDS AND LEGAL TOOLS

In 1980 the European Council agreed the Madrid Convention⁷, whose objective was to promote and facilitate final agreements between regions on opposite sides of borders and also among such local authorities, as the legal foundation of the cross-border cooperation. (Bataillou, 2002; Bages Bechade, 2003; Scott, 2006, 2012; Amilhat-Szary & Fourny, 2006). The Convention provides models of agreements and treaties to be used for cross-border cooperation.

The European Convention on cross-border cooperation was supplemented by three Additional Protocols, subsequently adopted by the Committee of Ministers. These three, mainly legal, instruments have been successively completed by a number of recommendations that have been put in practice in order to reduce obstacles to transnational and inter-territorial

⁷ Madrid convention signed on 21/5/1980, entered into force on 22 December 1981. <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/106.htm>. The first additional Protocol was signed on 9 November 1995 in Strasbourg. The second additional Protocol concerning inter-cooperation was signed on 5 May 1998 in Strasbourg. The third additional Protocol concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECGs), was signed on 16 November 2009 in Utrecht but not ratified by Italy.

cooperation between territorial communities or authorities. But the main obstacle to the application of the Madrid Convention has been the lack of information exchange and regulation concerning well-defined legal obligations of each state. Furthermore, states must sign mutual agreements (bi-partisan or tri-partisan) to put the Madrid Convention in place. These are cross-border cooperation conventions based on relations between local authorities (communities, regions, cantons) of the same level in each State that develop and put in practice the legal tools stated in the Karlsruhe agreement⁸.

The first Additional Protocol of 1995 expressly recognises the right of territorial authorities to conclude, in certain circumstances, agreements and create legally registered bodies. The second Additional Protocol of 1998 facilitates cooperation between the authorities of territories that are not directly contiguous. The last Protocol of 2009 establishes rules for the creation of "European Cooperation Groupings" (ECGs) in order for them to have legal status within the scope permitted by local or state laws where the ECG's headquarters are located. But this very important step which would normally result in transnational cooperation cannot be applied, because many states, for instance Italy, have not yet ratified the Protocol. France and Switzerland have ratified it but its application is not yet in place. The governments of Germany, France and Luxembourg signed the Karlsruhe agreement on 23 January 1996. It provides the possibility to create a Local Grouping for Transboundary Cooperation (LGTC), which can bring local communities together. Concerning France and Italy, the cooperation between local authorities of both countries is prescribed by the Rome Agreement signed on 26 November 1993. However, combining the Rome and Karlsruhe agreements is difficult and this had created obstacles to the establishment of a cross border institution possessing legal status for French-Italian-Swiss border (Comte & Levrat, 2006; Jacob, 2011).

For a long time the actors involved have justified the lack of progress in their cross-border cooperation by blaming legal obstacles. From 2006, the EGTC reinforced the existing legal toolbox by virtue of Madrid Convention. The European Union, with the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation offers new perspectives on the permanent structures of a cooperation establishment to cross-border cooperation. Modifications to the EGTC's regulation by the European Parliament and the Council will simplify the tool and give it more flexibility in the application of its rules.

The number of EGTCs created at the local scale is small when compared to the volume of existing cross-border cooperation. Most EGTCs have been established at regional level (Figure 1). However at the local level, operational EGTC projects like "Hôpital de Cerdagne" and "Espace Pourtalet" in the Pyrenees (Séchet & Keerle, 2010), are rare. Hôpital de Cerdagne is a uni-thematic (medical) and local project. There exist local cooperations in the Alps that are more thematic like the "Espace Mont-Blanc" and the "Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour".

This cross-border research is primarily based on documentary work complemented by fieldwork. The French, Italian and Swiss archive documents, to which the authors had access, allowed the history of each cross-border cooperation to be traced, and to understand the context of their creation and development. These written sources consisted mainly of correspondence between cross-border actors and account records of border meetings. Strategic and programming documents and technical reports were studied and analysed in order to derive comparisons between them. Regarding the last INTERREG program, especially in the case of Alcotra (France - Italy), the two cross-border cooperations studied undertook their actions using the PIT (Plan Intégré Transfrontalier) programme, which helped facilitate the comparison. In addition, semi-directed interviews were conducted with the main

⁸ Karlsruhe agreement signed in 1996 between France, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland

stakeholders and also with those keeping the INTERREG records, as well as experts from the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)⁹. From these sources, a simple thematic categorical analysis was carried out.

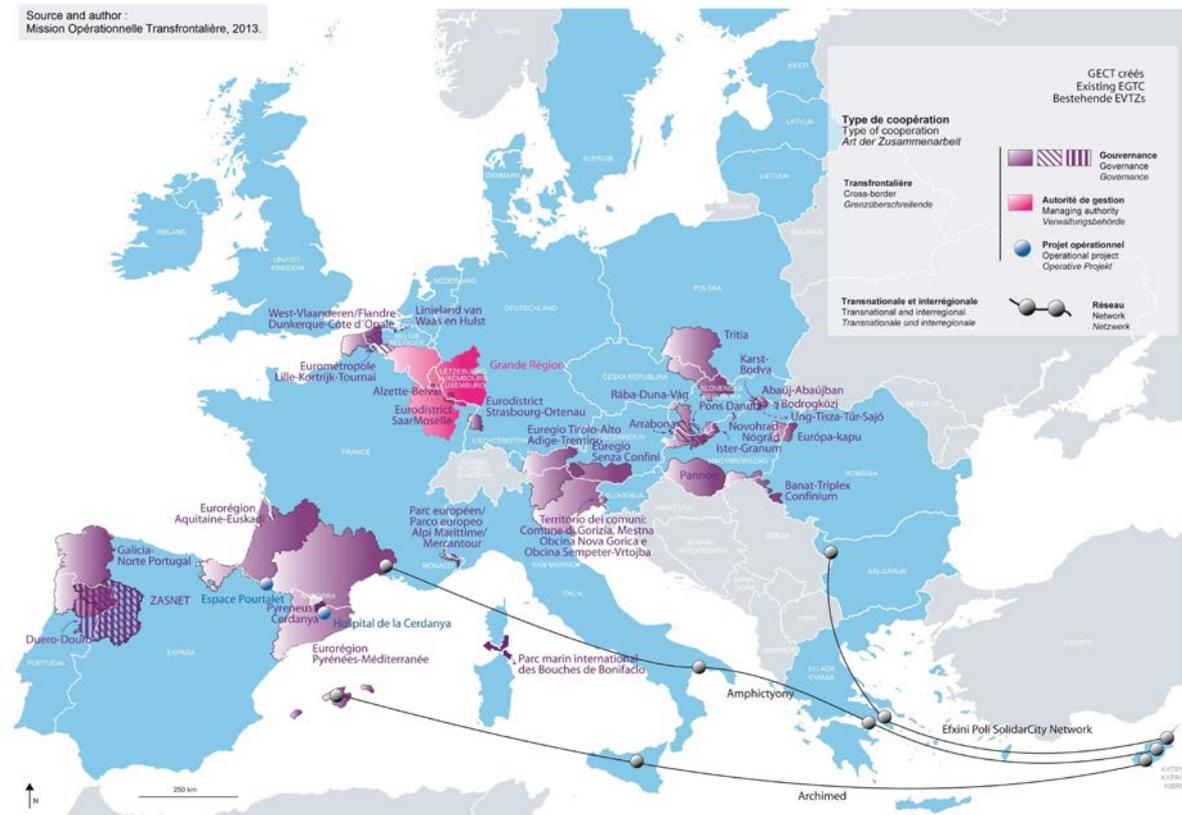


Figure 1. Map of existing EGTCs

Source: Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, 2013

4. THE CONTRASTING RESULTS OF THE TWO CASE STUDIES (Figure 2)

The first mountainous area studied is the Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour on the Franco-Italian border. The French side of the Mercantour massif is protected by French institutional framework: the Mercantour National Park (Laslaz, 2005). The Italian side is protected by Parco Naturale Alpi-Marittime¹⁰. In these parks there are protected species, flora and fauna only existing in Europe¹¹. These two parks, based on the same mountain, have been twinned since 1987. In this case, transnational relations already existed for centuries and collaboration between the two institutions has been taking place for many years. As a result, the creation of an EGTC further strengthens the existing relations between the franco-italian sides of the Alps.

⁹ <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/>

¹⁰ Nanni Villani (edited by), Alpi Marittime, Mercantour : un mondo senza frontiere, un monde sans frontières. Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime : Parc National du Mercantour, 2006.

¹¹ <http://www.mercantour.eu/>, <http://fr.marittimemercantour.eu/>, <http://www.parcoalpimarittime.it/news/48/nato-il-parco-naturale-europeo-alpi-marittime-mercantour>

Initially, the two national parks were not formed under similar circumstances. For instance, although the creation of a national park did not pose a problem in Italy, in France there were a lot of opponents to the Mercantour National Park. This opposition continues to this day. Moreover, the presence and perception of the border has a significant impact on cross-border cooperation (Bergamaschi, 2012).

In principle, the territory of cooperation should be simple as it corresponds to a combined perimeter of the two parks. However, the actual geographical perimeter of the French National Park has shrunk due to absence of signatures from several municipalities on the new 2013 Charter. Indeed, seven French towns have not agreed to the Charter and as such do not fall within the perimeter of the protected area. Concerning the towns situated on the Italian side, they have not even been included inside the Park perimeter. Despite the above problem, the two parks are considered to be part of the territory of the cooperation.

Therefore cross-border collaboration is restricted to the fundamental goals of these two Parks that involves environmental and cultural protection and promoting tourism. As the territory and domains of action were clearly defined, the actors of cross-border cooperation are easy to identify and the cross-border governance is simple to organise. Moreover, with time, the actors concerned have developed patterns of working together. French and Italian actors meet regularly to lead cross-border projects. Nevertheless the act of cooperation is not homogeneous throughout the territory. In cross-border valleys, working collaboratively should be more intensive than in other areas, hence we must consider the concept of the “border effect” in our analysis.

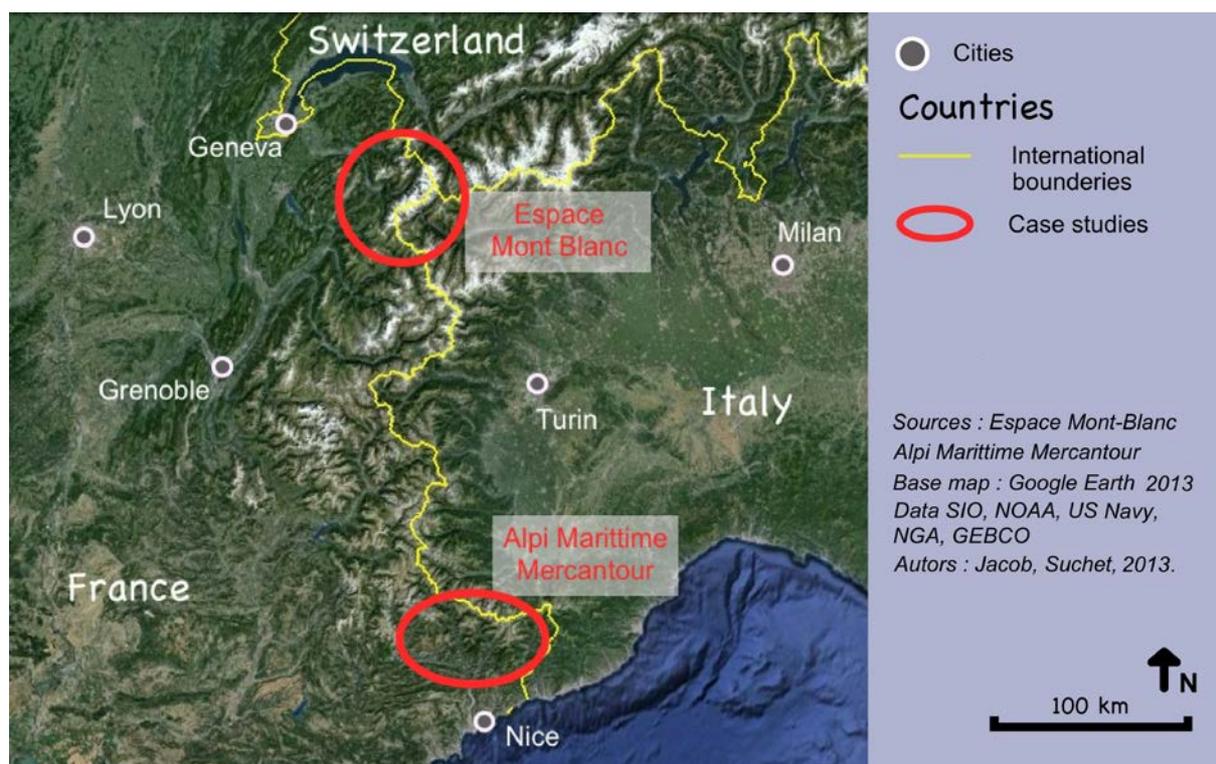


Figure 2. Alpi-Marittime-Mercantour and Espace Mont-Blanc situation map.

Source : compiled by the authors

The second case is more complicated but it allows us to identify and discuss the role of each discipline that contributes to the cross-border actors. Espace Mont-Blanc is a unique case in the Alps because of its Franco-Italian-Swiss border location (Moullé, 2002, 2003; L'Harpe de, 2005). The Conference of the Espace Mont-Blanc was created in 1991, which brought

together thirty-five indigenous authorities (the smallest territorial unit) from the three states ranged by Mont-Blanc area. Today, however, the number of authorities involved is not static, as not all authorities participate in every project. Additionally, there are times when other towns, who are not part of the original Espace Mont-Blanc grouping, participate in projects. The question of defining the perimeter of the cross-border cooperation is fundamental but it remains unresolved because it is variable depending on the projects and actions being undertaken. Each town contributes according to its needs and desires. This spirit is difficult to reconcile given the strict framework of the EGTC. This remains a problem for the future of the cross-border cooperation and we will discuss it later on in the paper.

Initially, Espace Mont-Blanc had the protection of nature and sustainable development as its main objectives. The Conference also has the ambition to develop social-economic actions and transport actions¹². Measures to support mountain farming are necessary for landscape conservation as it helps to market and sell local products, develop environmental education actions, and produce employment and training policies.

Cross-border, multi-level governance has existed from the start as a formal system (Moullé, 2003), but its institutionalisation has not been successful. The legal situation is very complex with tri-national cross-border cooperation, particularly within Switzerland as it is not a member of the European Union. From 2010, the stakeholders involved decided to create their EGTC, and many questions have since been raised: firstly those concerning jurisdiction emerged, secondly geographical questions and finally political ones. The European regulation has not provided a perfect basis for cooperation and it will be simplified and improved in 2014. Strictly legal issues have been relatively “easier” to deal with than the others, as they tend to be technical.

The Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour cooperation has been running smoothly for some time now, resulting in rich experiences. Espace Mont-Blanc cooperation was born out of the conviction of the Environment Ministers of the three nations concerned. The willingness to cooperate has been an essential element to the creation of the cross-border Conference. Three studies have defined the limits of the cooperation area and its priority actions and objectives.¹³

The summary of these case studies is provided in Table 1. In both cases, there are four distinguishing similarities. The first is the development of cross-border projects linked to a European funding opportunity (INTERREG). The second is the fact that both projects were built before the cooperation structure was institutionalised, even if the Espace Mont-Blanc had always sought to find a solution for simplifying legal and administrative dimensions. Thirdly, both need a common management structure to ask for classification within the UNESCO’s World Heritage system.

Finally, for both cross-border cooperations, the preservation and conservation of the landscape, mainly at the heart of the high mountains, was their primary objective. The secondary objective of economic development is interesting when viewed from the point of view of the cross-border cooperation as it is an opportunity to create new relationships and where the opportunities for innovation are found. In both cases, the EGTC is created or wants to be created with the ambition of being nominated as a World Heritage area. In the case of Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour, the classified area is greater than the EGTC as it includes parts of

¹² Schéma de développement durable (SDD) adopted by Espace Mont-Blanc in 2006, <http://www.espace-mont-blanc.com/>, <http://pit.espace-mont-blanc.com/>

¹³ Vers un Espace Mont-Blanc. Bilan et perspectives. Proposition pour une étude de faisabilité., Communauté d’étude pour l’aménagement du territoire, december 1999, Switzerland.

Etude préliminaire pour la sauvegarde du milieu ambiant de la zone Mont-blanc, Regione Autonoma Valle d’Aosta, Espace Mont-Blanc, august 1991, Italy

Espace Mont-Blanc, Etude préliminaire, Bureau d’étude urbanisme et développement régional, october 1991, France.

the Mediterranean Sea. The stakes are much higher with this case than that of a cross-border cooperation.

Table 1. Summary of the two case studies

	Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour	Espace Mont-Blanc
Borders	Franco-Italian	Franco-Italian-Swiss
Creation-context	1987 twinning two national Parks	1992 creation of the "Mont-Blanc" cross-border Conference 1995 GLCT project
Field of action	Protection/conservation sustainable development tourism	Environment, sustainable development, economic development, tourism, energy, transport, employment
Actor types	Parks (Parks agents), public stakeholders	Public stakeholders at different levels, private actors: associations, foundations.
Institutionalization process	EGTC created in 2013	EGTC project since 2010
Governance	Formal ++ / Informal +	Formal +/ Informal +++
Last action programme	PIT (Plan Intégré Transfrontalier) Alcotra 2007-2013	PIT Alcotra 2007-2013
Programming strategy documents	-Plan d'action commun 2011-2015	-PIT Alcotra 2007-2013 -Stratégie d'avenir 2014-2020 -Schéma de Développement Durable SDD 2006

PIT: a cross-border integrated plan funded by the INTEREG programme, especially in Alcotra (France-Italy). Switzerland has participated in funding PIT Espace Mont-Blanc.

An EGTC is the appropriate solution and best compromise given the stated aims of these areas. Cross-border cooperation seeks to reinforce its visibility at the local, national and European level. It ensures an institutional and territorial anchor necessary to develop cross-border territorial projects. The EGTC is also considered a "marketing tool" and a great "communication channel". The creation of the EGTC Alpi-Maritime-Mercantour signifies for the general public the establishment of a single Park, the "First European Park". However, this name is not accurate as the two national parks continue to exist independently of one another.

The levels of government in each country differ from each other. This configuration is particularly complex when you have three states like in the Espace Mont-Blanc, with specific constitutions: the Swiss federal state with autonomous cantons, the Italian regionalism with autonomous regions and the French decentralisation with regions, departments and municipalities. Although there are provinces in Italy, both Italy and Switzerland have no government level equivalent to French departments. This leads to an asymmetric multi-scalar system which raises a number of new questions: how do jurisdictional areas and administration/political structures, affect the spatial definition of their governance areas? Conversely, how do new forms of governance take into account the functional demands for cooperation exceeding existing borders? Additionally, how do these new forms of governance take into consideration the functional organisation (spatial dimension) of cross border territories and institutional levels (public power)? Furthermore, these multi-level governments need to consider the different types of public and private actors involved in the process.

Answering the question of finding a good spatial perimeter for cross-border cooperation is not simple. It is necessary to understand the political/administrative structuring and the spatial organisation of the territory. The territorial restructuring of the cross-border cooperation is a continuous process and is constrained by the mountains, particularly the Alps, which are barriers as well as passages at the same time. For example, in winter some roads are closed,

thus any cooperation must adapt to the specific constraints of topography and climate. The restructuring of socio-spatial relations and networks reflect their own unique situations, which are very different in nature from metropolitan cooperation like the cross-border cooperation in the city of Geneva.

Although mountains are located away from urban areas, these cities should not be overlooked as they play an important role in the structuring of border areas. The classic centre-periphery relationships are interesting as the periphery is often studied from the centre. However, in the case of cross-border cooperation, the inverse relation of the centre-periphery presents a heuristic interest as it corresponds to the bottom-up process of cross-border cooperation. The territorial approach is functional as it takes into account exchanges, flows and relations across the borders and is normally based on quantitative data. However, this approach is restrictive and suffers from a lack of data thus it cannot be successfully applied to the two cases presented above. For example, after twenty year of existence, the Espace Mont-Blanc has finally in 2013 created the Mount-Blanc Observatory, as a cross-border information and evaluation tool that uses common indicators. The aim is to possess a global vision of its area to facilitate the construction of a common cross-border policy.

5. CONCLUSION

The spatial dimension is a common subject in law and geography, it is evident why it is more common in geography than in law, however, legal rules have a spatial registration. Our objective was to show the role of the legal discipline in analysing cross-border cooperation. The legal framework represents an indispensable tool in the service of territorial thinking but it cannot be a starting point for the development of cross-border relations. The law cannot just produce an administrative and border framework, it also has to be adaptable to suit functional spaces. In the case of cross-border cooperation, the issue of creating a clear definition of the perimeter for cooperation is fundamental and the law cannot fully answer this question. Many geographical factors have to be considered, including heritage or the perception of the border in defining the perimeters for the cross-border cooperation (Bergamaschi 2012). In simple terms, the resultant solutions do not only concern the law but also territorial or geographical dimensions; the burning question is how to define the social, political and spatial boundaries of successful cross-border cooperation.

At the beginning of this analysis, we pointed out the importance of legal expertise to cross-border cooperation. But legal competence is only one of the factors we need to consider. Thus, we should also question what role should be played by geographers? The geographer can answer the questions of “where, when, why” and provide coherence among different disciplines in situations where they need to be brought together. Geographers can suggest ideas and provide future possibilities on how to wisely organise actions. Comparative approaches from a geographic perspective mainly focus on the question of structural/functional or spatial integration. From a political perspective, comparative approaches help understand political coordination and governance. Thus, for example, the existence of cross-border functional areas is not sufficient to ensure the creation of cross-border territories. They should be the subject of a political and institutional project. A political dimension is also important as it considers the relative roles in the bottom-up and top-down process in the dynamics of European integration. It is concerned with institutionalisation processes that are negotiated among relevant actors to ensure interests on both sides of a border are served.

Finally, the contribution of law is simple but nevertheless fundamental. We did not distinguish between the disciplines of law and geography as we believe that both provide answers to cross-border issues mutually as well as independently. Our study is recorded in the

current "critical legal geography" which provides a greater dialogue between the two disciplines as well as displaying complementarity (Forest 2009) or decompartmentalized disciplines.

The main limitation of this work is due the fact that this field study is limited to two case studies. The results do not allow us to draw general conclusions, but they offer some promising possibilities for future work. In fact, these studies are part of a broader, multidisciplinary research project that focuses on both the institutionalization of cross-border cooperation and processes of "territorialisation" as well as the aspects of cross-border governance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS BETWEEN FRANCE AND SPAIN 2007-2013 - STAKEHOLDERS AND TERRITORIAL IMPACT

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Abstract

The overall aim of this research is to study the dynamics of economic and territorial development in the cross-border spaces along the border between France and Spain. In particular, it analyses the characteristics of INTERREG IV-A cross-border cooperation projects in the period 2007-2013. It explores these as an example of the dynamics produced between stakeholders and development projects on both sides of the border. To this effect, a database system was set up in order to transfer all the information on the projects and then to extract concise quantitative and cartographic information, using the possibilities offered by geographic analysis systems.

Keywords: *INTERREG, cross-border spaces, territorial stakeholder, cartography, cooperation projects*

1. INTRODUCTION

The present text is part of a research project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation entitled “25 years of cross-border projects between Spain and France in the framework of the European Union (EU). A geopolitical analysis of territorial plans, projects, agents and results”. One of the aims of which is to create knowledge and make a joint

analysis of French-Spanish cross-border spaces, paying particular attention to territorial cooperation projects and their methods, central figures, and results. The project is led by the Territorial and Environmental Analysis and Planning research group at the University of Girona, with the participation of researchers from the Universities of Perpignan-Via Domitia, Toulouse II-Le Mirail, Paris 8, and the Basque Country. The project started in January 2012 and now, over one year later, we are presenting the first results from our analysis of the cross-border projects, the stakeholders, and the territorial implications.

In this article, we present the results from a database of cross-border projects that enables the extraction of comparative information, an analysis of partners involved in development projects, and to delimit the area (using cartography and GIS) affected by the impact of local development projects. The database was compiled from POCTEFAⁱ 2007-2013 projects, the main source of information at our disposal. Important references have been the INTERREG Ex-post assessments made by the European Union and by the managing authorities (LRDP, 2003; PANTEIA, 2010). These documents evaluate whether the global programme has achieved its established goals (social and economic cohesion, environmental protection, economic development, mutual knowledge and cultural objectives, etc.). Despite their completeness, a deep cartographic study is still missing and therefore so is a deep knowledge of the cross-border framework in which projects, actors and territories are represented. Therefore this paper tries to develop a new methodology in order to understand cross border dynamics, such as the allocation of resources and stakeholders.

1.1. The INTERREG initiative from 1989 to 2020

Since the 1990s, the European Union has supported cohesion policies by means of a growing number of initiatives (INTERREG, LEADER, EQUAL, etc.) and increasing financial resources. The INTERREG initiative, probably the most ambitious of all these programmes, was set up in the late 1980s to stimulate cooperation between European regions at different levels (Perkmann, 2003). The project has been financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). One of its main aims is to reduce the influence of state borders and to foster a more balanced development in border regions. These regions often suffer from general neglect, depopulation, and economic and social isolation because of their territorial fragmentation, geopolitical location on the periphery, distance from decision-making centres, and so on.

The INTERREG initiative has run through several different phases: INTERREG I (1989-1993 programming period), INTERREG II (1994-1999), INTERREG III (2000-2006), and the currently operational INTERREG IV (2007-2013). The next phase will coincide with the period covering the European 2020 strategy (2014-2020). At the same time, each INTERREG is made up of three strands of action and funding: INTERREG A (cross-border cooperation), INTERREG B (transnational cooperation), and INTERREG C (interregional cooperation). INTERREG A aims to develop cross-border spaces socially and economically with common development strategies. It is applied to regions adjacent to the border, with the participation of national, regional, and local institutions. This is by far the largest strand in terms of budget and number of programmes (see Table 1). INTERREG B operates at the intermediate level, where generally non-contiguous regions from several different countries work together to solve problems of cross-border coordination. Finally, INTERREG C embraces all EU member states in order to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments through large-scale information exchange and sharing of experiences (networks). This last strand receives the least funding of the three.

The specific nature of INTERREG lies in the obligatory collaboration between the authorities of two or more member states and the need to apply a project on a common cross-

border basis. Once the operational programmes have been approved by the European Commission, implementation is co-ordinated by steering committees, made up of representatives of the authorities responsible for Cohesion Policy measures in each member state. These can be both central state agencies and regional agencies. Like almost all Cohesion Policy measures, INTERREG projects require co-funding to be provided by member states, regional authorities or the project leaders as such. The amount of co-funding required differs by region, ranging from 50% down to 0% in the poorest regions. The overall figure in the space analysed in the present study was 35%. The final beneficiaries of INTERREG funds are usually public authorities, interest associations, and non-profit organisations, such as chambers of commerce, employer organisations, unions or research institutes. Under the current INTERREG IV programme, private firms are only eligible if they apply through a consortium of several firms, whereas in previous programme periods, they were not eligible at all. The 2007-2013 programme also differs from its predecessors by placing a legal tool at the disposal of the local authorities in order to strengthen territorial cooperation. The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is largely the result of the limitations of previous legislative figures and is an innovative figure in this territorial context.

2. METHODOLOGY

The initial aim of this research was to create a database enabling the extraction of information for an overall interpretation of all the territories along the French-Spanish border. The authors needed to design a database that would:

- a) contain and classify by type all cross-border projects since 1989 until the present day
- b) allow to extract valuable information on the number and type of stakeholders involved
- c) chart the results and operate numerically with the data introduced

Furthermore, the database of French-Spanish cross-border projects had to be designed in such a way as to be compatible with other databases that might be available or created for other borders between European countries.

Bearing in mind these determining features, we designed a database system made up of three tables, related to a common field. The first table (A-PROJECTS) collects general information on the cross-border projects. Each register corresponds to one particular project. The information fields are as follows: 1) Project identifier (common field), 2) Name of project, 3) Start year, 4) End year, 5) Type of projectⁱⁱ, 6) Origin of funding, 7) Full funding, 8) European funding, 9) Project leader partner, and 10) Geographic code of partners. The second table (B-PARTNERS) collects information on all the partners participating in the projects. Its function is to describe and represent the characteristics of the stakeholders. Each project has several registers, depending on the number of partners involved. The following fields were studied: 1) Project identifier (common field), 2) Name of project, 3) Name of partner, 4) Type of partnerⁱⁱⁱ, and 5) Geographic code of partner. The third and last table (C-TERRITORY) collects the territories where the project has a direct expected impact, in relation to its specifically designed actions and outcomes. Each project has one or more registers, depending on the number of affected territories. The territories cannot be superimposed and must cover a homogenous area. The following fields were studied: 1) Project identifier (common field), 2) Name of project, 3) Name of geographical space, 4) Geographic code.

To represent the projects and the partners cartographically, we decided to use area representation, i.e., layers of polygons corresponding to the area of each territorial stakeholder. Thus, to each stakeholder was assigned a geographic or territorial code. The

territorial codes mostly coincided with the official European NUTS (*Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics*) classification: NUTS 1 (States), NUTS 2 (Regions: autonomous communities in Spain, regions in France), NUTS 3 (Regional subdivision: provinces in Spain, departments in France). For the municipal partners, we used the Local Administrative Units (LAU Level 2, formerly NUTS Level 5), the official European codes for this administrative scale.

Cartographic layers and *ad hoc* geographic codes were designed for areas with a territorial range that did not coincide with the above classification, as for example *comarcas* and *mancomunidades de municipios*^{iv} in Spain and *pays* and *communautés de communes*^v in France. It also proved necessary to adapt maps and codes in other cases, for example to deal with associations of regions. The vast majority of territorial stakeholders participating in cross-border projects fitted one or other of the geographic codes (and corresponding geographical area) designed for this study. However, difficulties were encountered in classifying some partners, such as universities, which can exert diverse territorial influences. It was finally decided to include each one in its corresponding NUTS 3 area.

The option of assigning a code and a geographical area to each stakeholder enabled us to represent simultaneously several partners on different territorial scales, although this required some previously developed map algebra operations. A methodological problem arose when we wanted to represent one or more overlapping partners from different territorial perspectives on the same information layer, e.g. the partners of a project involving both Girona city and Girona province. One way of solving this problem was using map algebra, by calculating the sum of the different layers represented by the partners. Thus, the sum of Girona city (value=1) and Girona province (value=1) takes into account both partners and their territorial areas, and reflects the double participation of Girona city (value=1+1=2), since Girona city is included in Girona province (see Figures 2a and 3a).

Moreover, map algebra facilitated other operations of interest for this research, such as the representation of projects and stakeholders, not only in absolute numbers but also as a weighted value. In this case, we used the total funding assigned to each project or the funds managed by each of the stakeholder partners to weight the cartographic representation and thus gain a more accurate view of the expected real territorial impact of the cross-border projects (see Figures 2b and 3b). Obviously the funding's assignment is not a determinant factor to evaluate territorial impact, but it was used as an initial assessment.

As a first step in the research project, we applied the whole database to represent all the cross-border projects involved in the financing of the POCTEFA 2007-2013 programme. The same structure could be used to increase the amount of available information by including previous, and even future, INTERREG projects.

3. RESULTS: ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

3.1. Types of projects

The POCTEFA 2007-2013 programme included 133 approved projects, which were classified into nine thematic areas (see Figure 1). It was observed that the largest category of projects (almost 40% of the total number) dealt with “local economic development”, which included the tourism sector, promotion and innovation of traditional activities, professional training, and support for production activities. The outstanding features of this category are farming and stock raising projects, such as the introduction of quality certificates (OTRAC and G+T VALORA), the adoption of working techniques (AGRI-PROXI), the introduction of new

technologies to reduce negative externalities such as carbon dioxide emissions, and professional training (LAZOS-LIENS-LOTURAK).

The next main category contained environment-related initiatives (17%), mostly transversal projects spanning the entire Pyrenean area, with participant partners from several different regions (chiefly research centres, universities and regional administrations). Examples included projects for the joint management of hydrological resources (BIDUR and TTA II), forestry resources (UNCI'PLUS and DYNAFORREST) and coastal resources (MARE-UDINA). The third category was “basic research” (14%), as opposed to applied research to support enterprise, which belongs to the economic development category. This type of project often included participation by universities, especially those of Barcelona, Toulouse, Perpignan, Girona and the Basque Country. These three categories alone cover three quarters of the total number of projects, thus indicating the three key aspects for revitalizing this area: enterprise, research and environment. One last category with over 10% of the projects covered “culture and education”, mainly promoted by cultural and identity links, particularly in the Catalan and Basque cross-border spaces. The remaining categories - accessibility and transport (6%), territorial planning (5%), social cohesion and integration (3%), health (3%) and security (2%) - had few approved projects.

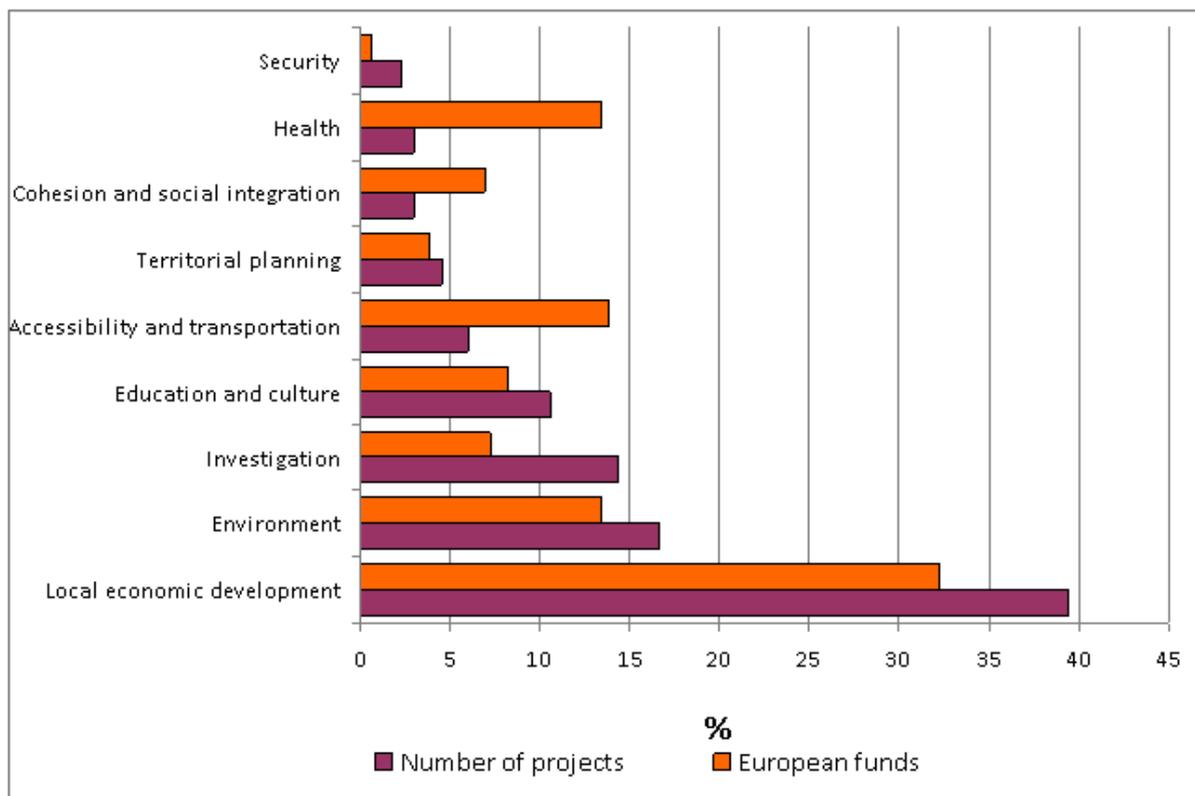


Figure 1. Classification of POCTEFA 2007-2013 projects by number of projects and percentage of EU funding assigned.

Source: Compiled by the authors

However, when examining the amount of money assigned to each category quite a different picture is observed (see Figure 1), instead of looking at the number of granted projects. The budget of the European Regional Development Fund is largely assigned to local economic development projects, with actions of different financial scope: 16 projects benefitted from investments of over €1m, six received €2m, and one received over €3m. Unlike the preceding values, “accessibility and transport” and “health” are now seen to have

greater weight. The latter category received the sum of €20.2m, 90% of which was designated for the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital (HTC) project. The same amount of money was assigned to “environment” projects, of which €18m was for projects promoting natural heritage (85%) and €3m for risk prevention (15%). The same analysis clearly shows that the “basic research” category received only 7% of the budget, despite many approved projects of this type (even more than in the health and transport categories). These were mainly university initiatives of scant economic importance. Social and cultural projects received a similar percentage of the funding. The table is completed with categories of minor economic relevance, such as the 4% assigned to territorial planning (for setting up new cross-border territorial actions such as euro regions and euro districts) and the mere 1% designated for security along the border area.

3.2. Cartographic analysis of projects and partners

As discussed in the Methodology section, the territorial review of the projects was carried out by georeferencing the partners in terms of their administrative area, thus enabling different interpretative exercises on the geographical location of the partners to be performed. A first review was to locate the partners who positioned themselves as project leaders, i.e., the stakeholder who assumes the administrative responsibilities for drafting, organizing, and managing the project. In view of the qualitative importance of the leaders, a first map showing their location was produced (Figure 2a), obtained by superimposing all the leading partners in a series of cartographic layers. On the second map (Figure 2b), however, the sum of the ERDF resources assigned to each project can be observed, according to the location of the leader that manages the funds.

A first observation suggests that most of the project leaders are Spanish. The largest group of project-leading partners were in the autonomous community of Aragon, with 30 POCTEFA projects. These partners were mainly from Zaragoza, in particular from the University of Zaragoza. The autonomous community of Navarre had the second largest number of leaders, with 21 projects, especially focused on environmental projects and support for business enterprises. Next came the Basque Country (19 projects), with a large number of private partners, and Catalonia (19 projects), where the regional administration played an important role. Less involvement in project leadership was observed on the French side. Of the three border regions, Aquitaine led with 19 projects, followed by Midi-Pyrénées (14) and Languedoc-Roussillon (5).

Only a few of these project-leading partners represent a complete regional area, of which the most outstanding was the autonomous government of Catalonia, which has led ten projects. Catalonia, through its various departments and institutes, is the most proactive regional organisation, with a strategic investment policy. In the western Pyrenees, the Government of Navarre plays an outstanding role through organism such as the "Environmental Management - Nurseries and Reforestation of Navarre, SA", which leads nine projects. The geographical location of Navarre as a bridge between Aquitaine and the Basque Country and between Midi-Pyrénées and Aragon affords multiple possibilities for collaboration, as for example, the ENECO and ENECO2 projects for the environmental and energy management of small and medium-sized enterprises. The regional governments of the Basque Country, La Rioja,^{vi} and Aragon lead five projects. On the French side, it is surprising to find that the regional government of Midi-Pyrénées does not lead any project. The other two governments of French border regions led a small number of projects, with four in Aquitaine, and one in Languedoc-Roussillon. One reason for the lower level of leadership participation among the French regions may lie in the different territorial organization between the two countries. In Spain, greater regional autonomy facilitates project

management whereas in France, the more centralist territorial organization tends to limit and reduce these opportunities.

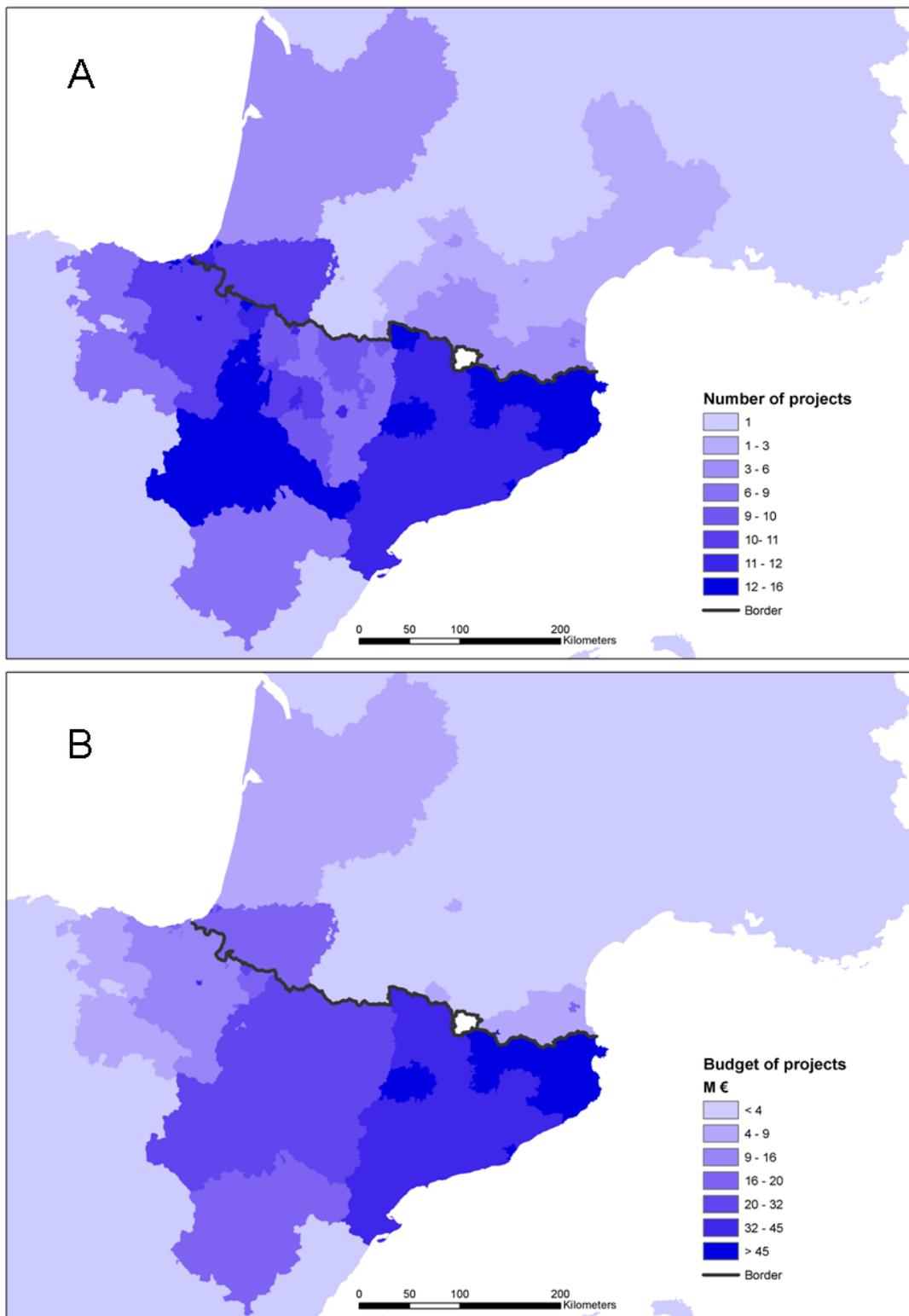


Figure 2. Distribution of project leaders and their resource management.

Source: Compiled by the authors

The second map (Figure 2b), illustrates another dimension of project leadership. It shows the amount of ERDF resources managed by each regional area acting as project leader. Overall, almost three quarters of the total resources assigned to the POCTEFA programmes

were for Spanish leaders and only slightly over one quarter for French-led projects, despite the relatively important weight of Aquitaine. Catalonia and Aragon were the regions with project leaders managing most ERDF resources (24% and 20% respectively). On the other hand, the homologous regions on the French side managed the fewest resources, only 3.9% for Languedoc-Roussillon and 8% for Midi-Pyrénées. As already suggested, the reason for this disparity may lie in the greater administrative opportunities for facilitating project management in Spain. Pyrenean cross-border cooperation takes usually place along two geographical axes. There is a vertical cooperation where we find partners belonging to different countries (France and Spain) with spatial contiguity (i.e. Aquitaine-Navarre) and a transversal one that involves actors belonging to the whole eligible area focussing on a specific topic (environment, employment, disaster prevention, etc). Cross-border projects in POCTEFA programme are usually vertical, and the concentration of a large volume of resources in one country, of necessity, means the management of fewer resources in the other one. Even so, this imbalance was not as strong in the more western regions, where project leadership was more equally distributed (16% Navarre and Aquitaine, 10% Basque Country).

Figure 3 represents the distribution of all the partners participating in the projects, without taking leadership status into account. This information opens up a more complex, interpretative dimension of the dynamics of territorial development, as it represents the whole range of territorial agents mobilised by the projects. On the map showing the total density of partners (Figure 3a), unlike on the previous map, we now see a large number of partners on the French side, particularly in the western sector. The densest spaces coincide with the municipality of Toulouse and Haute-Garonne department and with the municipality of Pau and Pyrénées-Atlantiques department. The fact that these two municipalities are departmental capitals is significant, but the real reason for the high density of stakeholders lies in their concentration in these two departments. Other territories with high stakeholder participation were Ariège and Hautes-Pyrénées departments, and even Pyrénées-Orientales department. These results show the high capacity for mobilisation and participation of stakeholder groups at departmental scale along the French border. The corresponding stakeholders in the Spanish provinces are more active at the NUTS 2 scale (autonomous communities). At the NUTS 3 scale (Spanish provinces/French departments), partners are more likely to be provincial councils, provincial agencies, chambers of commerce or agriculture, private enterprises, universities, etc. Thus, for example, the reason for the high density in the Haute-Garonne department lies in the numerous contributions from the University of Toulouse, and the high density in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department by the combined participation of the departmental government and the University of Pau.

On the Spanish side, the density of partners was not found as much at the provincial scale, despite the relative importance of the provinces of Zaragoza and Barcelona due to the high participation of their respective universities. The provincial partners in Guipuzcoa also play an important role on the Spanish side. Overall, however, results in Spain were largely determined at the autonomous community scale.

Apart from the departmental-level stakeholders, certain places showed a notable presence of stakeholders operating at a minor supra-municipal scale, such as *comarcas*, natural parks, *pays* and French agglomerations. Thus, on the Atlantic French side, we found a particularly high density of them in the supra-municipal Southern Basque Country *communauté de communes*, a group of 12 French municipalities that participate in quite a few projects, usually together with the province of Guipuzcoa or the Basque Country as a whole, and in particular with Bidasoa *comarca*. The Aspe Valley, although it does not appear as such on the map, is another French *communauté de communes* noteworthy for the number of projects (especially environmental projects) in which it participates, as is the case of the Pyrenees National Park, straddling Hautes-Pyrénées department (Midi-Pyrénées region) and Pyrénées-Atlantiques

department (Aquitaine region). This was not the only stakeholder natural park on or near the border, as all the other parks appear at some stage or other. Finally, we must mention the participation of many French *pays*; in particular, the border *pays* such as Pays Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Pays Couserans, Pays Comminges, etc.

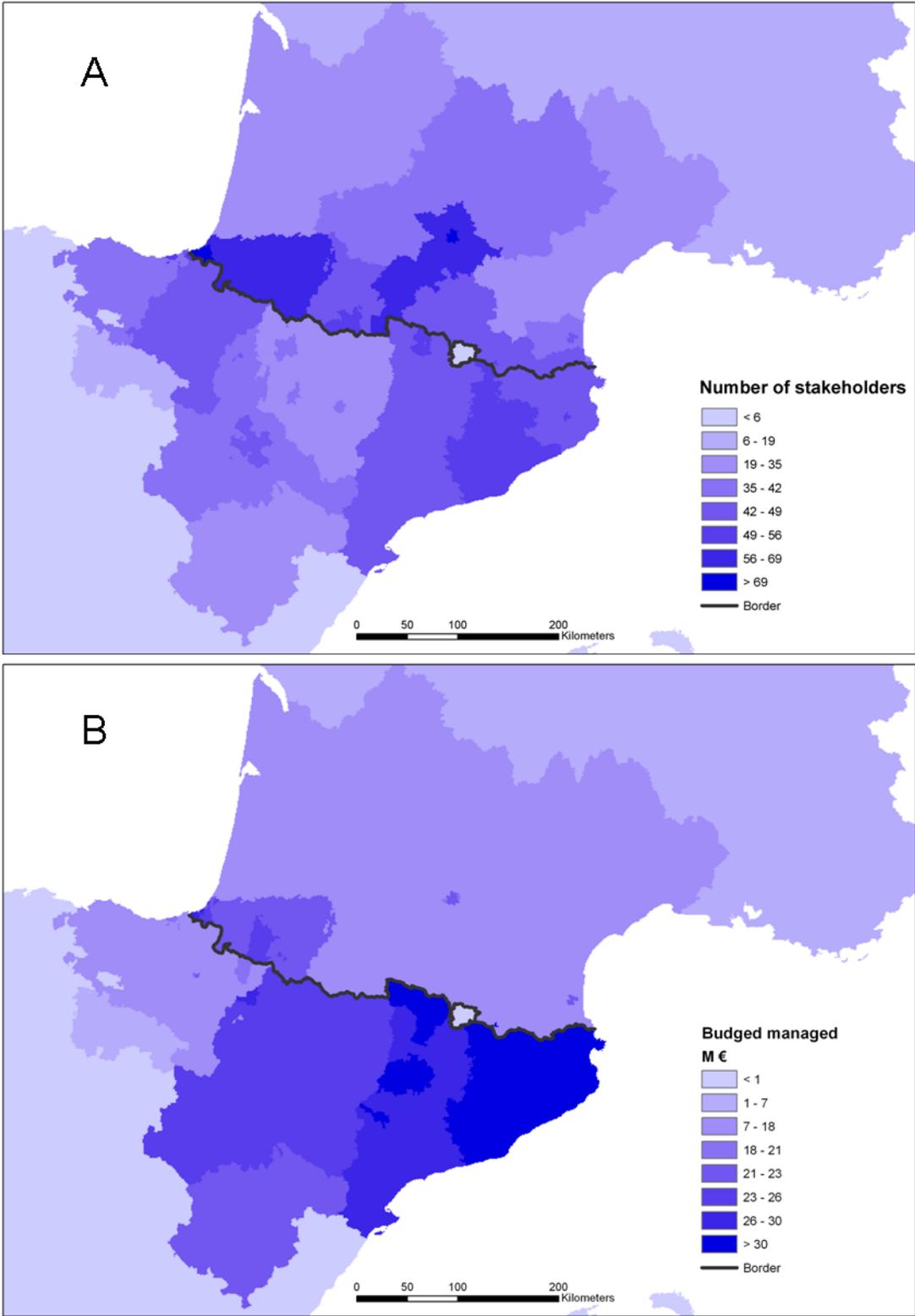


Figure 3. The distribution of project partners and their resource management

Source: Compiled by the authors

On the Spanish side, on the other hand, supra-municipal bodies participated in greater numbers but with less intensity. Unlike the participation of the French *communautés de communes* (in this respect, the Spanish and French territorial organisations were very different), the Spanish supra-municipal bodies mainly consisted of *comarcas*. Aragon is the autonomous community with the highest number of participant *comarcas* (12), with a notable presence of the border *comarca* of Jacetania. In Catalonia, there were a lower number of participant *comarcas*, but the *comarcas* that participated tended to do so more often, e.g. Cerdanya, Vall d'Aran, Alta Ribagorça and Pallars Sobirà. In the Basque Country, Bidasoa *comarca* had a high level of participation, as did the Salazar Valley and Roncal Valley communities in Navarre. However, in contrast with the French side, the only participant Spanish natural park on or near the border was the Ordesa y Monte Perdido Natural Park.

The participation of stakeholders at a municipal scale (including municipal administration and related bodies and agencies, cultural associations, certain enterprises, etc.) was very dispersed and its distribution did not coincide at all with the border area. By far the most noteworthy at this scale were large capital cities representing strategic partners, such as San Sebastian involved with 14 and Toulouse with 13 projects. Other similar examples were Barcelona (5), Bilbao (4), and Zaragoza (3). On the other hand, attention should be drawn to the participation of other smaller strategic municipalities located nearer the border such as Bayonne (6), Irun (4), Girona (4), and Perpignan (3). Finally, the considerable concentration of municipal partners in the Basque border municipalities in both Spain and France should be highlighted.

As with the previous maps, it is important to compare the density of participation of the different partners with the density of the partners themselves, weighted by the total resources managed in the projects. Starting from the (as yet unproven) premise that the higher the project funding by partners, the greater impact on territorial development, this exercise can provide an initial evaluation of the expected impacts of the development projects in the various territories. To this end, the ERDF resources were taken into consideration plus the funds contributed to the projects by each stakeholder. This new picture (Figure 3b) is quite different from the former one, and shows a greater preponderance of partners on the Spanish side, particularly in the eastern sector. The highest concentration of funds managed by partners was in the northeast of Catalonia, coinciding with the provinces of Barcelona and Girona. Catalonia and Aragon taken together, particularly the provinces of Zaragoza and Huesca, also showed high densities of stakeholder-managed funds. On the other hand, in the Atlantic sector, the French partners managed a larger amount of cross-border project funds (e.g. Pyrénées-Atlantiques department), when compared with Navarre and the Basque Country, the corresponding regions on the Spanish side of the border.

The higher values attributed to some territories, such as the provinces of Girona and Barcelona, was due to major participation and funding by the Government of Catalonia for numerous cross-border projects. The Catalan Government, and its associated institutions, for example, the Forest Sciences Centre of Catalonia and the Catalan Summer University Foundation, are involved in many projects that also receive high levels of funding. Such projects included the above-mentioned Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital, and other smaller projects such as NECROPIR (Sustainable Biodiversity in the Pyrenees), GALLIPYR (Pyrenean Network of Mountain Galliforms), CECASALS 2 (Pau Casals Cross-Border Study Centre), etc. However, apart from the major overall stakeholder participation in Catalonia, other Catalan partners participate with a high level of funding at a smaller scale, such as Cerdanya Comarca Council in the Matadero cross-border project, and the municipality of Puigcerdá in the Cross-Border Hospital project. In Aragon, high values of funds contributed by partners can be identified, notably the provincial-scale partners in Huesca, but above all in Zaragoza, which had a major presence due to institutions such as the University of Zaragoza.

Moving westwards towards the Atlantic, an increasingly smaller amount of stakeholder-managed funds was observed. However, several small patches of partners can be found within these places, such as in the Salazar Valley and Pamplona in Navarre, and San Sebastian in the Basque Country.

A very different picture appears when the French side is examined, it is almost the reverse image of the Spanish side. The spaces with the highest density of stakeholder-managed funds were on the Atlantic edge, in particular in the Southern Basque Country *communauté de communes* and the municipalities of Bayonne and Biarritz. This is due to the high volume of funds managed by the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department and, to a lesser degree, by the region of Aquitaine. The numerous cross-border links in the Basque Country and the pivotal role of Pyrénées-Atlantiques department between the Atlantic and central zones can provide the key to understanding these results. No other high-density patches of stakeholder-managed funds appeared in the rest of the French border territories. However, certain territories did stand out, such as Haute-Garonne department and its capital Toulouse, both of which are particularly active through the University of Toulouse. In the Pyrénées-Orientales department, the same was true of Haute-Cerdagne and Capcir and the municipality of Perpignan, owing to their respective management of two large well-funded projects, i.e. the Cross-Border Hospital and the Catalan Cross-Border Stage.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

This article is part of the recently undertaken research project entitled “*25 years of cross-border projects between Spain and France in the framework of the European Union (EU). A geopolitical analysis of territorial plans, projects, agents and results*”. The aim was to reflect and comment on the large, growing volume of cross-border territorial cooperation projects taking place between Spain and France, basing our research on data from the INTERREG programme and, more specifically, the POCTEFA programme. The analysis carried out so far has already produced some interesting results, but sufficiently detailed information has not yet become available on INTERREG programmes funded before the 2007-2013 period.

(1) This study of 133 French-Spanish cross-border projects showed a clear majority of projects concerned with local economic development (40% of the projects and over 30% of the total financing), in fields such as the tourism sector, promotion and innovation of traditional activities, support for production activities, and professional training. There was a wide diversity of stakeholder participation, particularly so in the case of local partners (municipalities, municipal aggregations, intermediary administration, departments/provinces). The next two categories, considerably smaller than the first, were environment and research, with the participation of many research centres, as well as regional universities and administration units. These three categories accounted for 75% of all projects, indicating that the key aspects for the revitalization of this area are enterprise, research, and the environment. Cultural and education projects made up over 10% of the whole, mainly due to the cultural and identity links in the Basque and Catalan cross-border spaces.

(2) A spatial analysis of the projects showed the location of the project leaders, and appraises the qualitative role of these stakeholders who undertake the administrative responsibility of drawing up, organizing, and managing the projects. The first observation was that the majority of project-leading partners were Spanish. We believe that this result is not due to chance, but to the greater management facilities afforded by Spanish administration, which has been less subject to controls and administrative certification than their French homologues. The highest number of project leaders was found among the Aragonese partners, particularly those in the province of Zaragoza, such as the University of Zaragoza. We also found a high density of project leaders in Navarre, the Basque Country, and Catalonia. On the

French side, only the region of Aquitaine and Pyrénées-Atlantiques department stands out in terms of project leadership.

(3) When we turn our attention to the amount of ERDF resources managed by each project leader, i.e., when we weight each project by its monetary importance, a deeper understanding of the reality of the projects is gained. Almost three quarters of the total resources assigned to POCTEFA programmes go to Spanish leaders, of which Catalonia and Aragon manage 24% and 20% of ERDF resources respectively. On the other hand, the comparable regions in France (Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées) manage the fewest resources, thereby reinforcing our previous conclusion regarding the greater administrative opportunities available in Spain. This also introduces a key territorial practice in the cross-border space, i.e., that relationships between partners and projects were mainly produced along a vertical (north-south) axis. Alliances were usually set up between stakeholders north and south of the border, who created their own balances and counter-balances. Transversal (east-west) project-management alliances between stakeholders were much more unlikely to occur.

(4) As regards the total group of partners, both leaders and non-leaders, taking part in the various projects, much mobilization could be observed throughout the French side, particularly in the centre-west sector (Toulouse and Haute-Garonne; Pau and Pyrénées-Atlantiques). In France, there was a special degree of stakeholder mobilization at NUTS 3 scale (e.g. departmental agencies, chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture, universities, etc.), whereas in Spain, results were mainly determined at NUTS 2 scale (autonomous communities). However, municipal and supra-municipal partners were very important on both sides of the border. In France, a high degree of participation was observed among supra-municipal bodies (*pays, communautés de communes*, natural parks), whereas the Spanish supra-municipal bodies (particularly *comarcas*) participated less intensively but in greater numbers. The most participative municipal stakeholders tended to be the large cities acting as regional capitals.

(5) When the partners are weighted according to the amount of resources they managed, a greater preponderance of Spanish partners was identified, particularly in the easternmost sector. The highest concentration of funds was managed in Catalonia (Barcelona and Girona) and Aragon (Zaragoza and Huesca), due to the high-budget projects developed in these areas. The further towards the Atlantic, the smaller the amount of funds being managed by Spanish partners, and the greater amount by French partners (Southern Basque Country *communauté de communes*, Bayonne and Biarritz municipalities, Pyrénées-Atlantiques department, etc.). Once again, this fact demonstrates the greater importance of vertical (north-south) collaboration and complementarities between cross-border partners, than those found in transversal (east-west) links.

(6) On the other hand, the aim of the article was not merely to analyse the data and its territorial dimensions, but also to test the chosen method of cartographic representation for the different types, sizes and leading figures involved in cross-border cooperation projects. This seemingly simple task led to the initial problem of having to identify ways to represent partners belonging to different and often overlapping territorial scales. To this effect, a database system was devised with a GIS data treatment method, based on map algebra, which could also be applied to other borders and other case studies. Nevertheless geographers and planners should develop further research to improve these kinds of studies, especially for evaluating impacts, outcomes and cross border projects. Qualitative case studies of some specific projects or territories (Berzi, 2013) could be a methodology employed.

(7) A third significant aspect of the article is what we could call its geopolitical nature. In fact, several of our results can be explained from a geopolitical perspective, starting with the disparities on either side of the border deriving from the range of competencies existing in Spain and in France, the different levels of decentralization and the consequences thereof. The

next phase of our research will study the effect of these differences on the effectiveness of resource application, the agility (or efficiency) of project development, and so on. Of an equally important geopolitical nature are some particularities of cross-border cooperation involving Catalonia and the Basque Country and their counterpart territories in France, which share and may wish to strengthen certain historical, linguistic, and functional aspects. It must be added that this review cannot be made solely at a regional scale, as the logic is often acted out with greater intensity at a local scale.

(8) Finally, we wish to point out the two pending aims of this research project. On the one hand, as already mentioned, the aim was to complete the database of projects in order to carry out a long-term temporal analysis of cross-border cooperation and its results. On the other hand, the research seeks to make a detailed study of a limited number of projects which, for different reasons, may serve as cooperation indicators and references, along the lines already stated (formation of local territorial systems such as Cerdanya, differential treatment of the landscape in cross-border natural spaces, the Basque Bayonne-San Sebastian Eurocity, and so on). There is a lot to be said about twenty-five years of cooperation between France and Spain and, at this time of uncertainty regarding the "European project", it is no doubt necessary to make an evaluation of our shared experiences from which we will all be able to learn and support decision makers (regional, national and European) in order to address a more integrated, shared and long term cross-border governance.

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ⁱ Spain-France-Andorra Territorial Cooperation Operational Programme.

ⁱⁱ We designed our own classification, divided into the following categories: Accessibility and Transport, Cohesion and Social Integration, Culture and Education, Local Economic Development, Research, Environment, Territorial Planning, Health, Security.

ⁱⁱⁱ Classified as: public, private, and consortia.

^{iv} *Comarcas* are traditional local administrative divisions found in parts of Spain. *Mancomunidades de municipios* are free associations or commonwealths of municipalities existing permanently or for a particular period in order to achieve a concrete goal.

^v *Pays* is a French planning category designating a territory with a high functional degree of geographic, economic, cultural and social cohesion, which enables the design and implementation of development projects. *Communautés de communes* are public inter-municipal bodies aiming to create mutually supportive associations of municipalities for joint development projects and territorial planning.

^{vi} La Rioja is not a cross-border administration, but participates in certain projects of this nature because of its proximity to the border and its close relationship with neighbouring autonomous communities.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PYRENEES. THE CASE OF Cerdanya

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Abstract

This paper examines how cross-border regions can generate, under certain preconditions and with EU support, territorial cooperation based on local endogenous development, reducing the effect of mental and physical borders as a potential new centrality. The tools made available by the Communitarian legislature (as European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation or INTERREG programme) therefore should not be perceived as an aim but rather as a means to support this process.

The research is divided into three parts. The first reviews the evolution of cross-border cooperation in Europe. The second part analyzes the Pyrennees as a region involved in the last INTERREG IV-A (POCTEFA) programme, focusing on some elements supporting the practice. The last section analyzes the case of the Cerdanya valley, underscoring the homogeneity of the territory, the historical and current cooperation, the limits and some advice to improve it.

Keywords: *cross-border cooperation, local development, INTERREG, EGTC, Cerdanya, proximity.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is the result of work based on my Master Thesis dissertation entitled “*Cross-border spaces between territorial cooperation and local development. The case of Cerdanya*” at the University IUAV of Venice¹ in combination with the first results of an ongoing research project at the University of Girona².

¹ European Master Course in Planning and Policy for the City, the Environment and Landscape

² The research project “25 years of cross-border projects between Spain and France in the EU framework. Analysis from the geopolitics of plans, projects, agents and territorial impacts” has been assigned by Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation to Analysis and Environmental Planning Research Group (University of Girona) that counts on the participation of several researchers from the universities of Perpignan-Via Domitia, Toulouse II-Le Mirail Paris VIII and Basque Country.

Cross-border cooperation in the European Union framework is historically a recent phenomenon. Since the end of World War II, which affected almost the entire continent, there have been several attempts for rapprochement and cooperation between the major European countries, supported by the Cohesion Policy promoted by the European Union at the end of the eighties. Territorial cooperation can be defined as "more or less institutionalized association that develops between the authorities or sub-entities of one or more States, whose highest expression is the creation of cooperative organizations, oriented horizontal and vertical coordination of policies and actions..." (Durà, Oliveras and Perkmann, 2010:24). Perkmann in his studies identifies four steps that marked that particular territorial cooperation (Perkmann, 2003). Moreover the communitarian territory is rich in cross-border regions, which present some characteristics of homogeneity, according to a geographical, natural, socio-economic or cultural point of view. The Pyrenean region is a good example of territorial cooperation. Along the border between France and Spain, from the west to the east side there are several cases in which the boundary generates conflicts or new territorial strategies and Cerdanya is a good example to describe this phenomena.

The methodology is based on both qualitative and quantitative data analyses of cross border projects³ along the French-Spanish border. These data have been exploited for deeper cartographic studies in order to detect cross-border dynamics. Finally it focus on the specific case of the Cerdanya Valley: these data have been used to study the historic cross-border cooperation, showing its limits and its potentialities (Berzi, 2013).

2. EUROPEAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND THE SUPPORT OF THE COHESION POLICY

After the Second World War World one of the first steps in cross-border cooperation was carried out at a local level by applying the principle of twinning, a movement that took place since the fifties. These were symbolic links promoted by local authorities. In 1963 there were 120 twinning projects and today more than 40.000 local agreements⁴ have been signed. At the end of the 1950s regions began to forge agreements with their neighbours. In 1958 the first Euroregion, the Gronau-Euroregio, was established along the border between Germany and Netherlands⁵ (Schelberg, 2001), including today almost 2 million inhabitants. This case became an important precedent for other Euroregions and in general as an example of territorial cooperation.

In the first half of the 1980s important institutional agreements were concluded. Some examples to promote and facilitate cooperation are: the European Cooperation Framework Agreement in 1980; the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions in 1981; and the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1985. Political commitment of the European Economic Community followed with the Reformation of the Structural Funds in 1989 (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1998; Berzi, 2013) aimed at preparing future border regions of the Single European Market (Joan, Patassini 2006).

Nowadays EU Cohesion Policy is an important factor to achieve cross-border cooperation and the INTERREG initiatives represent a key tool for an effective implementation. The main goal is to reduce the socio-economic isolation of border regions. Over a period of nearly

³ For further information see Feliu, Berzi et al. (2013)

⁴ <http://www.twinning.org/>

⁵ The Euroregio includes on the German side Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia Renenia while in the Netherlands the provinces of Gelderland, Overijssel and Drenthe.

twenty-five years there have been four INTERREG⁶ initiatives at the amount of more than 12 billion euro involving more than 79 programs. It provides funds for a large number of cross-border projects in different thematic areas, including employment issues, infrastructure, environmental protection, efficient use of energy focusing on renewable sources, social inclusion and gender equity (Panorama, 2008; Feliu, Berzi et al, 2013).

Several assessments of previous programmes have shown however that despite the INTERREG efforts there have been several limitations that need to be overcome in order to make it a real strategic and effective tool. The main problems have been the lack of confidence between partners, lack of experience, the absence of an efficient common evaluation system, a failure to give importance to bottom-up processes, etc. (LRDP, 2003; PANTEIA, 2010). For these and other reasons, a new legal instrument was established in 2006 leading to the INTERREG IV-A 2007-2013 programme: the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.

Despite the efforts of the Communitarian Legislator to achieve an effective and efficient assessment for cross-border projects, it remains difficult to evaluate the local cross border development. This is mainly due to a lack of suitable tools and indicators (Berzi, 2013). For instance, cartography could be a useful device to map projects, density of stakeholders and territories involved in a better understanding of cross-border dynamics or address future policies (Feliu, Berzi et Al., 2013).

2.1 When Europe empowers local actors: the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

Two basic types of institutional constraints were identified in the INTERREG III 2000-2006 programme (Beltran, 2010). Firstly, the difficulty of local and regional authorities to implement and manage projects due to differences between national laws, an over-complex bureaucracy and the different degrees of regional competence. For example French regions, German Länder and Spanish autonomous communities do not have the same administrative and decision-making powers (Keating, 1997). Secondly, the ineffectiveness of existing institutions were limiting factors, such as the Institute of European Grouping Economic Interest (EGEI), which resulted in the creation of situations and circumstances that were not fit for territorial cooperation purposes and needs (Beltran, 2010). These reasons led the Communitarian Legislator to adopt EC Regulation n.1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

The EGTC provides a legal body since it recognizes, the ability to "...acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property, employ staff and support at trial..."⁷. The members can be national, regional and local⁸ who must approve a convention, a Statute and choose the legal Seat deciding which national laws apply in case of need. Competencies have been well defined to avoid conflicts with national authorities. Finally, the main responsibilities are related to the promotion of territorial cooperation in order to achieve economic and social cohesion. For this reason an EGTC has to support the implementation of the projects which could be funded both by Structural Funds and by other means.

By the end of 2012 there were 32 EGTCs: 7 between Spain, France and Portugal, 5 between Belgium, France and Germany and 12 in the central-eastern European region

⁶ The EU has developed, through Cohesion Policy, four cross-border initiatives: INTERREG I (1989-1993), INTERREG II-A (1994-1999), INTERREG III-A (2000-2006), INTERREG IV-A (2007-2013) and INTERREG V-A for the period 2014-2020.

⁷ Article 1, section 4, Regulation (EC) N. 1082/2006

⁸ At least from two Member States

(Slovakia, Hungary and Romania). Currently another sixteen EGTCs have been established, of which five are awaiting the final approval (METIS 2010; 2012). Along the French-Spanish border there are currently 5 EGTCs, two in the Atlantic region and three in the Mediterranean area - where the Cerdanya case study is located.

For the programme period 2014-2020 the European Commission, together with the Committee of the Regions and other institutions are trying to improve the EGTC framework through technical and legal changes (COR, 2012). These new institutions are considered important tools in the new 'Communitarian Strategy Europe 2020'. In addition to the specific role they perform, they could also be used to implement real policies of territorial cohesion (Berzi, 2013). Local authorities can therefore seize this opportunity offered by the Community legislation to provide a new tool that is not only limited to INTERREG programs and structural funds but at the same time stimulates a new territorial governance (MOT, 2008).

2.2 Cross-border cooperation in the Pyrenean region

The French-Spanish border has always been interesting from the perspective of cross-border cooperation. The border has changed many times over the centuries. The agreements signed between the two kingdoms in different historical periods generated many conflicts (Sahlins 1989; Capdevila 2009). Specifically, some areas, such as those belonging to the Basque and Catalan cultures, suffered fragmentation of the territory, for example in Northern Catalonia and the Basque Country in Southern France. Due to these conditions there have been local and regional initiatives of reconciliation between the cross-border communities sometimes diverging from the centralizing strategies of national governments (Castañer, Feliu, Gutiérrez, 2010; Oliveras 2009). Many cross-border institutions are now involved in this area. At regional level they include the Euroregió Pirineus-Mediterrània, the Platform Aquitània-Euskadi, the Space Pourtalet and at a local level the Cross-border Comarca Bidasoa-Txingudi (West of the border), Eurodistrict of Catalan Cross-border Space (MOT, 2008) and EGTC Pirineus-Cerdanya.

The introduction of Cohesion Policy and INTERREG programmes allowed local and regional stakeholders to develop many joint projects in support of economic, commercial and social cooperation. According to data provided by Comunidad de Trabajo de los Pirineos, in the POCTEFA 2007-2013⁹ a total of 133 projects have been approved belonging to different thematic areas, such as local economic development, environmental conservation, health services, infrastructures, green-tourism, etc. (Berzi, 2013; Feliu, Berzi, et al., 2013). More than €68 million was granted by FEDER fund, supporting on average over 50% of the costs of each initiative.

An analysis carried out by the University of Girona has shown the general involvement of the various stakeholders such as, for instance, public and private associations, local, regional enterprises universities, Natural Park authorities (ibid.). Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the number of French and Spanish stakeholders (Figure 1) mainly due to differences between the capabilities and decentralization of administrative competences, as Spanish Autonomous Regions have much more power than French ones (Keating, 1997). In relation to the actors involved in the CB projects, a significant mobilization has been observed throughout the French side, especially in the central-western (Haute Garonne Toulouse, Pau and Pyrenees Atlantiques). In these French territories there has been specific engagement of actors at provincial level (departmental agencies, Chambers of Commerce, universities, etc.) while in Spain regional stakeholders are most common (Figure 3). Even so, local agents are

⁹ Programa Operativo de Cooperación Transfronteriza España-Francia-Andorra 2007-2013
<http://www.poctefa.org>

important on both sides of the border. Important supra-municipal stakeholder are also registered on the northern side as *Communauté de Communes*, *Pays*, Parks Authorities.

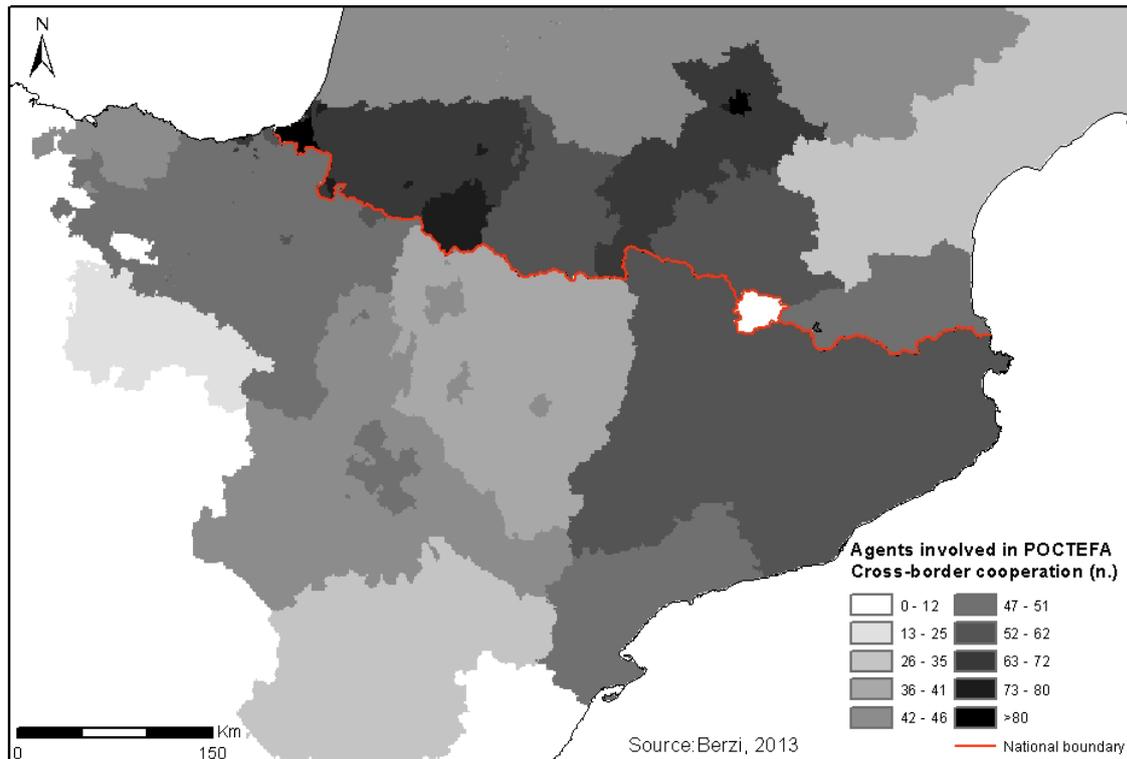


Figure 1. Number of partners involved in POCTEFA 2007-2013.

Source: compiled by the author

The Spanish partners received a greater amount of funding, especially in the eastern part. The highest concentration of funds are located in Catalonia (Barcelona and Gerona) and Aragon (Zaragoza and Huesca), due also to expensive projects. On the Atlantic side there is an higher density of French partners (*Communauté de Communes Sud Pays Basque*, municipalities of Bayonne and Biarritz, *Département des Pyrénées Atlantiques*, etc.). This fact seems to demonstrate that the cooperation is more developed on north-south partnerships rather than transversally (east-west).

3. LA CERDANYA, A CROSS-BORDER REALITY

In the cross-border region of the Cerdanya Valley, the physical and cultural characteristics are important elements for historical territorial cooperation. Geographically it is located in the eastern Pyrenees (Figure 2), between the Region Languedoc-Roussillon (France) and the Autonomous Community of Catalonia (Spain). More precisely the Cerdanya is a valley of about 200 km² in area, surrounded by mountains, adjacent to the south side with Catalans Comarca del Berguedà, Comarca del Ripollès. Bounded to the west by the Comarca del Alt Urgell and Andorra, on the north by the plain of Roussillon and to the East with Conflent and Capcir (Vila, 1984). Administratively, it is divided between the provinces of Girona, Lleida in Catalonia and the French department of Pyrénées-Orientales. Many authors have described how the national boundary does not respect natural borders (Vila 1984; Blanchon 1992; Sahlins 1993, 1998; Mancebo 1999; Moncusí 2003; Berzi 2013).

The Cerdanya is rich in wooded areas, meadows and is crossed by two major rivers, the Segre and Carol, which have been subject of much conflict and cooperation. In the whole area

there are no physical elements of discontinuity and the only division is the national border between France and Spain following the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 and the subsequent Treaty of Bayonne 1866-1868. The political events produce not only administrative and legal differences between the two side of Cerdanya but also social and cultural producing also a *mental borders* (Moncusí 2003).

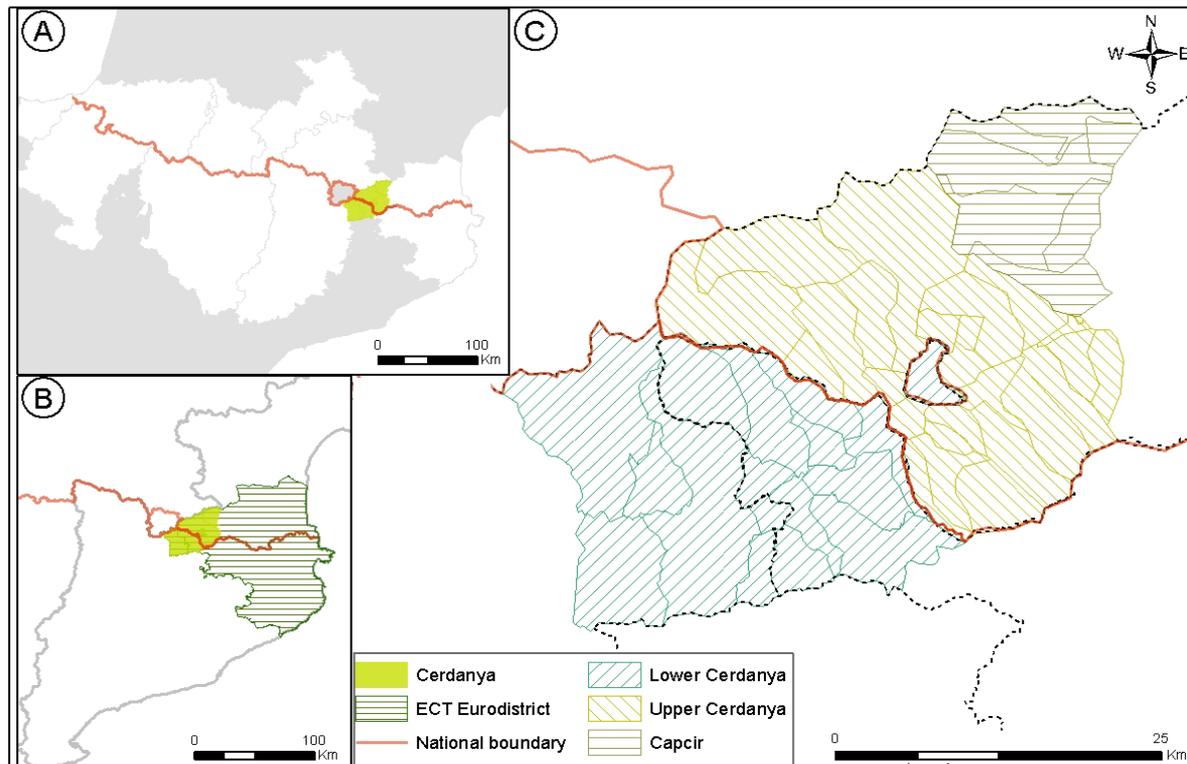


Figure 2. Localization of the Cerdanya in the Pyrenean region within the POCTEFA's eligible area (A), in the Eastern Pyrenees and inside the recent 'Cross-border Catalan Space Eurodistrict' (B) and showing its administrative structure (C).

Source: compiled by the author

Historically, the territory has been composed of small villages and a few larger centers installed in the valley bottoms as for example at Saillagouse and Puigcerdà, which is the capital for all the Cerdanya (Vila, 1984). Currently the population of the area is around 31,550 inhabitants (INSEE, IDESCAT, 2009) being most numerous of the Catalan side but during periods of peak tourist season could reach 150,000.

Historically, the main activity was based on agriculture and cattle farms (Moncusí, 2003), while the processing industries included several slaughterhouses, dairies and textile mills, located primarily in Puigcerdà. The interaction between the physical structure of the land and farming has produced a typical landscape of Cerdanya, *el Bocage Cerdà* managed by local communities (Observatori del Paisatge, 2013). In recent decades this landscape has undergone a process of transformation by the modernization of agricultural activity, the development of the tertiary sector, such as construction and tourism, including skiing and spa resorts. The appearance of low-density second residences leads to the loss of cultural heritage and landscape throughout the county.

The Cerdanya valley has a rich cultural heritage. Several studies highlight the importance of oral and written traditions, works in prose and verse, witnesses of the ancient agro-pastoral system in which the collective life constituted the identity value (Vila, 1994; Mancebo, 1999; Moncusí, 2003; Berzi, 2013). An important role was led by the cultural associations, born in

the late seventies (Oliveras, 2013) which promoted a shared vision of the territory, realizing different activities and involving local community.

3.1 Historical cooperation

The main reasons that led to the basis for cross-border cooperation are the homogeneity of the territory, the socio-economic structure and common cultural values. Cross-border actions take place in several sectors: local administration, education, environmental resources, traditional activities and tourism. The most important successful and unsuccessful initiatives are considered in the following sections.

3.1.1 Institutional cooperation

Since the 1980's the Institut d'Estudi Ceretans (IEC)¹⁰ has promoted the Day of the Cerdanya - *La Diada de la Cerdanyai*, an institutionalized event to discuss local, cross-border cooperation: here the mayors and the inhabitants of Cerdanya celebrate a yearly meeting alternating each time the celebration in Lower and Upper Cerdanya. Furthermore, since 2009, they introduced the use of a new common flag and an anthem, symbolizing their union of local administration. In 1991 the Association of Municipalities of Cerdanya (AMC) was established in order to promote agreement between the municipalities (43 of 50 in total) in several sectors such as tourism, environment, infrastructure, transport, health and culture. Towards the end of the nineties, during one Diada, *The Manifesto of Font-Romeu* was approved and the creation of the *Grand Council of the Cerdanya* was set up to connect local institutions.

The Pyrenees-Cerdanya EGTC¹¹ has been established since 2011, between the Regional Council of Cerdanya and the Communauté de communes Cerdagne Pyrenees. Despite these important initiatives to improve institutional cooperation, shared territorial planning is still missing. Strategic planning between these municipalities could be an effective tool to strengthen the institutional cohesion and social capital (FLOCH, 2004), to provide local services and the enhancement of common heritage¹² (Berzi, 2013). For instance, the adoption of Climate Neutrality Plan as in the Italian-Austrian border area¹³ and the 'Covenant of Mayors' could reinforce the established relationships and increase mutual trust as well as sensitizing local people about the efficient use of energy and the importance of climate change.

3.1.2 The difficulty of shared education

There have been several proposals in the past to establish shared public schools for Cerdanya's pupils. The first attempt to set up a French-Spanish school in Puigcerdà was launched at the beginning of the last century. In the 1990s Estavar and Llívia's Primary Schools tried to institute a new and common one, but the initiative failed for lack of political support (Oliveras 2013). It was tried again in 2001, but there were too many difficulties due to

¹⁰ The Institute of Ceret is a non-profit cultural association for the preservation and dissemination of the Cerdanya's culture. It organizes 'The International Colloquia of Archaeology' in Puigcerdà. See <http://www.ddgi.cat/iec/activitats/activitats.html>

¹¹ <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/en-US/news/Pages/NewEGTCPirineus-Cerdanya.aspx>

¹² This concept is referred to as the common resources and heritage (tangible and intangible) that, if improved and managed by local agents, can lead to local indigenous development. See Magnaghi 2000, 2006; Dematteis 1994, 1997; Dematteis, Governa 2009.

¹³ <http://www.klima-dl.eu>

local conflicts¹⁴. In the same year, the IEC proposed the creation of a secondary education center in Puigcerdà introducing a joint graduation system recognized by both French and Spanish national authorities. However the project did not start because of a shortage of students.

There have been a few examples of cross-border educational cooperation, for example in the French department of the Eastern Pyrenees there are several private institutions, such as "Escola Bressol" which provide opportunities to study in the Catalan language. The *Festa de l'Arbre* is an example of a successful joint educational activity (ibid., Berzi, 2013). It involves all primary and secondary schools students in the Cerdanya who learn about environmental awareness and planting symbolic trees in the valley. This event has also been a platform to propose other cross-border actions. For instance the pedagogical project "The Segre, a river without borders" which has been active since 2009 in the local schools. This project aims to improve student awareness of environmental, socio-economic, historical and political issues related to the River Segre. Aside the latter initiatives, it still seems difficult to create a shared educational system. However, with the institutional support of EGCT, the new Cohesion Policy could be an effective tool to create a common school providing a shared education.

3.1.3 Shared management of environmental resources

Cross-border cooperation on the environment has produced numerous agreements and projects. In the past, local communities used to cooperate to manage natural resources and resolve conflicts related to water use (Joseph 1996, Oliveras 2010, 2012b). The management of trans-boundary rivers passed through joint agreements among all communities of the Cerdanya according to their needs, mainly via agricultural activities, mills and forge shops (Moncusí, 2003).

One of the first actions was the completion of the 'EDAR' treatment plant of Puigcerdà in 1989, supported by the Association of Municipalities of Cerdanya (Oliveras, 2010). Puigcerdà's wastewater treatment plant was also built thanks to the intervention of the respective management authorities and INTERREG I funds. The Generalitat of Catalunya and the French government agreed to connect their municipalities to the EDAR plant and through the INTERREG II funding, eleven villages are now connected to sewerage systems.

An interesting cross-border environmental project is the "Contract of the Segre River" signed in 2004 between the County Councils of Cerdanya, Alt Urgell and the Communauté de Communes Pyrénées-Cerdagne obtaining the Interreg IIIA funds. The aim of the project was to improve the management of one of the most important resources of the Cerdanya, through an integrated and shared strategy to enhance water quality and riparian ecosystems. Specifically the river deposits were regulated, most of the riparian vegetation and the common heritage along the river, such as old mills and forge shops, was restored (Oliveras 2010; Berzi 2013). Several environmental education actions were set up. In the same INTERREG IIIA programme another project for the Carol River (Querol in Catalan) was approved. This river is a tributary of the Segre and crosses the city of Puigcerdà. The high level of contamination in the river was increasing due to the polluted waters coming from Pas de la Casa, a small Andorran stream. In 2003, the river was decontaminated and the wastewater purified with the financial support of ERDF funds. In 2009 the treatment plant in Latour de Carol (Upper Cerdanya) was inaugurated.

Other than water resources, cooperation developed to prevent forest fires and to protect agricultural activities. In 1959 Catalan and French firefighters signed an agreement to harmonize maps, symbols, improve the exchange of information and the coordination of

¹⁴ The diversity of educational systems and the parental rejection of the school's location is technically problematic (Oliveras, 2013)

interventions. Throughout Cerdanya there are 17 fire units, 4 in the Lower and 13 in the Upper and Capcir (Bosom, Valiente, 1993).

Environmental cooperation in Cerdanya seems to have resulted in successful collaborative experiences (Berzi, 2013). A further achievement could be the institution of the first cross-border protected area in Pyrenees. Large-scale environmental and natural heritage are clearly common elements. Both the Upper and Lower Cerdanya present natural protected areas, the *Parc Natural del Cadi-Moixerò* and *Parc Régional Natural des Pyrénées Catalan*. The idea of cross-border parks is spreading worldwide, understanding that nature and biodiversity have no political boundaries.¹⁵

3.1.4 *The need for local services*

Cross border cooperation involves several different local activities and services. The primary economic sector was very important for the Cerdanya's community. In 1974, French breeders and farmers formed an association (CCVB), which now has 140 members (Oliveras, 2012b). In 1996 the pioneering "Comunidad Agroalimentaria de los Pirineos" was set up, that aimed to develop rural areas through the establishment of quality-based assessment of local produce. Nowadays this has resulted in different brands like the IGP 'Rosee vedelles et des Pyrénées Catalanes' for meats, the PDO 'Alt Urgell Formatge Cerdanya' and the PDO 'Mantega de l'Alt Urgell i la Cerdanya' for dairy products which will be soon be extended to the northern side of the region (ibid.).

In POCTEFA 2007-2013 the project 'MTC Slaughterhouse of the Cerdanya' was approved¹⁶. The main goal of this initiative was to build a new and shared slaughterhouse, supporting farming and local meat production. It was also an opportunity to follow new EU legislation for the livestock sector. The implementation of a new slaughterhouse provides a shared facility for the entire valley, located in the village of Ur (Upper Cerdanya). The new building will centralize the killing of the stock, about 900 tons/year at least (Berzi, 2013). Thanks to MTC the farmers will no longer send their animals to be slaughtered out of the valley and they will complete the production cycle on-site. This project also gives support to the individual breeders who will produce their own meat and retail it at local markets. An EGTC form was chosen for the management of the slaughterhouse, but now it seems that the partners will change it into a cross-border partnership (Oliveras, 2012b).

The weekly market is another important activity. Depending on the day and place, traders and customers from Upper and Lower Cerdanya move to sell and buy products as if the border does not exist. However, French traders are disadvantaged due to different timetables favorable for the Spanish trade. Another local service is the Technical Review of Vehicles (ITV). Since 1996, approximately 150-200 trucks per year stop in Puigcerdà ITV's station, renting the testing room once a month (Berzi, 2013). This is a very useful service for truckers and French companies that do not have to go to more distant French centers (ibid.).

The need for coordinated health services is now the most symbolic issue of cooperation in Cerdanya. In the past there were several attempts to connect the two different health systems (Oliveras, 2013). In the Lower Cerdanya the health centres are located in Puigcerdà while in the Upper Cerdanya there is a lack of local services¹⁷. Moreover, a "psychological barrier"

¹⁵ Two examples are the the *Parc Naturel Transfrontalier du Hainaut* between France and Belgium and the *Peace Parks Dreams* in the southern Africa (see <http://www.peaceparks.org/>)

¹⁶ The MTC project was presented in 2002 during the Day of the Cerdanya and the following year ERDF funds were assigned to conduct a feasibility study. The study had a positive outcome and partners -Association Abbatóir Cerdanya-Capcir from the French side and the Catalan Regional Council for Lower Cerdanya-proposed the project to POCTEFA. Due to the lack of Spanish funds the project is still not completed (Oliveras, 2012b).

¹⁷ Hospitals in Prades and Perpignan are respectively approximately 40km and 80km away (Oliveras, 2013).

existed between the French and Spanish health systems as the latter was considered by French citizens as worse in qualitative terms (Mancebo and Moncusí, in Oliveras 2013).

A number of random events led to the need for cooperation in health provision, breaking down the negative attitudes and creating a shared service (Oliveras 2013; Berzi, 2013). Regional and local institutions began to sign agreements for the potential development of a new cross-border hospital. A positive feasibility study, financed by INTERREG IIIA in 2003 proposed a new project. The Generalitat of Catalunya, together with the Fundació Hospital Transfronterer de la Cerdanya¹⁸, proposed the HTC project 'Hospital Transfronterer de Cerdanya' for POCTEFA 2007-2013, obtaining more than €18M of ERDF funding. The scheduled objectives were essentially twofold: i) providing a local service for the 30,000 inhabitants involved (all the Cerdanya and Capcir) up to 150,000 people (the seasonal tourist peak) and ii) promoting local economic development. In 2010 the statute for the EGTC Hospital of Cerdanya was adopted, whose legal framework simplified many issues.

One of the biggest challenges was to overcome legal problems linked with births and deaths¹⁹. To avoid this, the Catalan Government and the French Ministry decided to give to the EGTC Hospital of Cerdanya a similar status as an embassy. Moreover, when completed, the hospital will get trilingual staff (at least speaking Catalan, French and Spanish) and this will give more opportunities for training students. If the hospital achieves its expected results, it will be a very important precedent in Europe. A scheme like this could generate a more cohesive context between institutions and societies, offering employment and induced collective integrated development in the area such as in planning, accessibility and transport, tourism. The effect would also create cross-border networks among key stakeholders like pharmacies, universities and medical research centers (Berzi, 2013).

It is too early to assess the impacts of the slaughterhouse and the hospital, currently the two most important projects in Cerdanya. Nevertheless the INTERREG programme could be a strategic tool to help set up new local services. For instance, regarding the proximity of infrastructure and waste management, in INTEEREG V-A 2014-2020 local stakeholders could propose a feasibility study about the introduction of an integrated public transport system, so far absent from the region (ibid).

3.1.5 Cooperation in tourism

In the Cerdanya cross-border cooperation in tourism is fairly recent (Oliveras, 2012a). A first experiment took place in 1990, when local governments collaborated to set up the "Cerdanya Museum" offering a glimpse of much of their historical and ethnographic heritage in one place. However the development of the facility, was hampered by political, economic and local conflicts. As a result, the museum was never built and paradoxically they created two museums, one in Sainte-Léocadie in Upper Cerdanya (called Musée de Cerdanya) and the second one in Puigcerdà (Museu Cerdà). Nevertheless since 2010, the Regional Patronage of Cerdanya and the Community of Municipalities Pyrénées-Cerdagne have shared joint promotion of tourism through the exchange and translation of information and advertising. They jointly promote *El Tren Groc* (The Yellow Train), a small tourist railroad connecting 20 villages between Latour de Carol and Villefranche de Conflent. INTERREG IIIA also financed improvements to the ancient *Roman Road*. EGTC Pirienus-Cerdanya, established in

¹⁸ It is a Foundation created in 2005 entrusted to manage the project of the new hospital..

¹⁹According to the French law, citizens born out of Metropolitan France are considered "born overseas" even for the HTC cross-border hospital. The eventual repatriation of remains from Lower Cerdanya, even though it is close to the border, has to follow specific, lengthy procedures. <http://www.elpuntavui.cat/ma/article/2-societat/14-salut/382221-hospital-transfronterer-pero-nomes-de-nom.html>

2011, became a promoter of several tourist and cultural initiatives, trying to differentiate the offer and reduce problems of tourist seasonality.

An interesting project that provides international exposure of cross-border collaboration is the sporting initiative *Gran Volta de la Cerdanya*, a mountain circuit about 215 km long, sponsored by EGTC Pyrenees-Cerdanya, which annually attracts world-class athletes for competitions. This includes the "ULTRAFONDO", a professional running event. Winter tourism generates a strong economic impact in the region, mainly through skiing and geo-thermal activities. However cross-border cooperation is almost absent and no relevant experiences have been developed. In order to achieve a real, joint, profitable, tourist offer, local administration and economic stakeholders need to start to cooperate. A good example for the next INTERREG programme might be the development of a "Cross-Border Ski pass" that unifies skiing in the region (Berzi, 2013).

4. CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS A CROSS-BORDER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Territorial cooperation in the communitarian framework is nowadays an important strategy for internal and external border regions. Regions facing common challenges and needs are provided with financial and legal support through INTERREG programmes, in order to help them set up cross-border projects. In the French-Spanish border, since the reformation of Structural Funds in 1989, resources have been committed and stakeholders involved. As a result, many cross-border institutions have been established. In some specific cases cross-border cooperation has been strengthened by socio-economic and cultural factors, like the Basque and Catalan cross border community.

The case of the Cerdanya valley shows how the local communities, in setting up several initiatives, are facing common issues for a shared future in areas such as health, natural resource management, institutional cohesion and the support of traditional activities. Local and regional institutions have in some cases been able to find common solutions to their problems, especially through the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, whose institution demonstrates that the social, mental and bureaucratic "borders" can be overcome through stakeholder participation and political will (Metis 2010; Pucher, Radzyner, 2011; Pucher, Radzyner, Gaspari, 2013).

However, despite these efforts, it is not yet possible to speak about a common and strategic vision. This is because in some sectors the "mental" borders, which seems difficult to dissolve still prevail, for instance in winter tourism, education and territorial planning. The conflicts that still exist between the administrative services and insufficient cooperation among important stakeholders continues to undermine social and institutional cohesion (Berzi, 2013). Therefore an overview is absent and decision makers often lack the will to jointly manage this territory that has many similarities.

Strategic planning, by imagining the region as a potential functional space (Figure 3) could be an important tool to reduce the effects of physical and mental borders that still divide the Cerdanya. Local stakeholders could cooperate on three fundamental concepts: (1) social and institutional cohesion (2) proximity of shared services and infrastructure and (3) the enhancement of common heritage. With the support of EU Cohesion Policy, it is possible to overcome the limitations imposed by national legislation and set up projects that operate under multi-level governance involving local, regional and national stakeholders. In this new strategic cross-border vision, the instruments made available by the Communitarian Legislator should not be perceived as an aim but rather as a tool to start long-term integrated development processes, addressed both to local needs and also big global challenges (climate change, poverty reduction and environmental management). Furthermore the Communitarian

Legislator is improving the evaluation system. A new approach to assess cross border projects and programmes may be found which is focused more on local development, possibly according to the three main concepts argued above. Some advice here could be to set better *core indicators*, targets and expected impacts and to better exploit cartography tools as shown by Feliu et al. (2013).

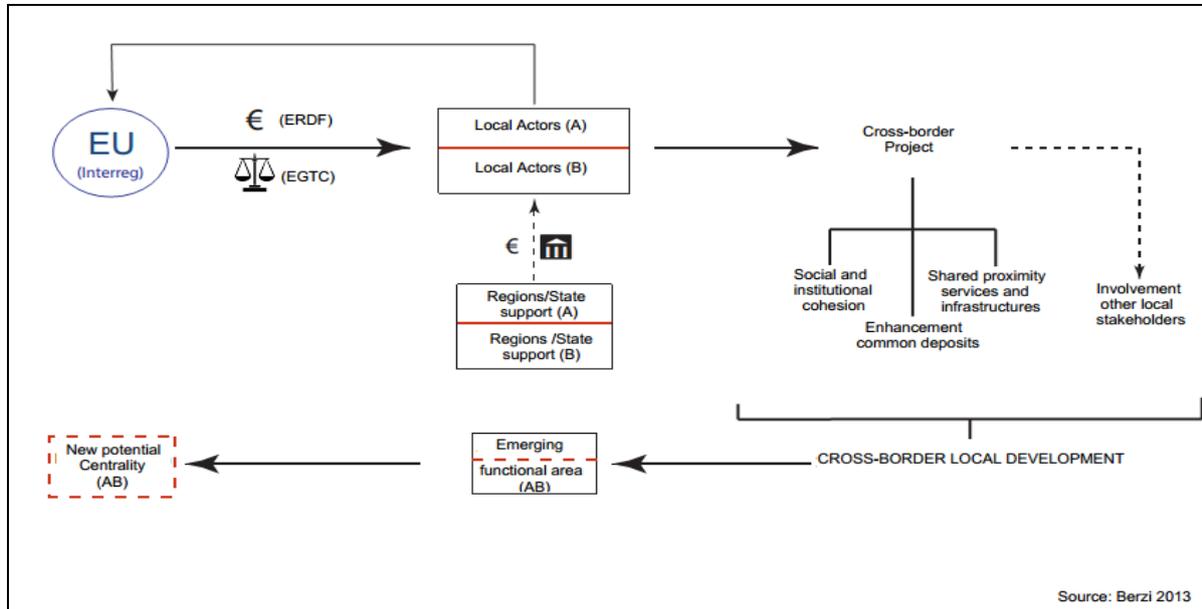


Figure 3. A possible theoretical model for cross-border local development in an EU context

Source: compiled by the author

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TURKEY AND THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION

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Abstract

Consideration of the report on the IPA-CBC territorial cooperation programme between the EU and Turkey is the starting point to study about reconstructing the process that brought territorial dimension to the centre of the EU “foreign policy”. At the present time, the Union's relations with the third countries can be classified according to geographic criteria: either as territorial cooperation with neighbouring countries; international cooperation in the other cases. The political process pointing at the regional dimension within the enlargement, integration and neighbourhood policies is analysed through EU documents, thus showing the change in the meaning of “border” due to decentralization, cohesion and territorial cooperation on different scales.

Keywords: cohesion, cross-border, integration, neighbourhood, territorial cooperation, Turkey, Europe.

1. INTRODUCTION

National borders are changing their significance and regions are considered new fields for cooperation. The main objective of this paper is to reconstruct the process that brought territorial dimension to the centre of the “foreign policy” of the EU (IPOL-REGI_ET(2007)397237). At the present time, the European Union's relations with the rest of the world can be classified according to geographic criteria: territorial cooperation with neighbouring countries; international cooperation in the other cases. The political process pointing at the regional dimension within the enlargement, integration and neighbourhood policies has been interpreted through the documents produced by the EU, expressing the change in the meaning of “border” due to decentralization, cohesion and territorial cooperation on different scales (Cappellin and Batey, 1993; Batt, 2003; Paasi, 2009). The effects of these processes are reflected in both internal and external dimensions of the EU.

The Euro-Mediterranean area represents the limit to the possible enlargement of the Union, in fact the Treaty on European Union states that any European country may apply for membership if it respects the EU's democratic values. The question is how can the EU increase its influence in a polycentric world having size limitations? The role of cooperation and cohesion with neighbouring countries is the instrument to expand and stabilize the area of influence of the EU. In parallel with the process of great enlargement to the East (2003), in fact, the debate on the Turkey's accession would also rekindle this (access to negotiation was

opened in 2005). The examination of the course of relations between the European Union and the Euro-Mediterranean region, in particular with Turkey (Christensen, 2009), has been used to show this phenomenon, in which the concept of “proximity” refers both to spatial contiguity and sharing of common interests and values (Rehn, 2006).

The State, identified as the epicentre of regulation and sharply demarcated, has been influenced by the process of globalization, thereby generating profound changes through the manifestation of territorial links established by the integration processes (Brenner, 2003). This is particularly evident in recent European history. The territorial projection of that choice, perhaps obliged by the search for “non-belligerent” responses to meeting needs, has triggered processes of cooperation and co-opting that have made sustainability objectives common, so that, consequently and implicitly, the resources have become common and their efficient management convenient to all parties involved. Thus, the concept of ‘border’ has changed from a “limit” to become a “place for mediation and meeting”. This new sensibility involves all territorial scales and justifies the consequent reflection on what European identity is or how the EU intends to build it (Kahler, 2009).

As a consequence, it is possible to understand how the path that led to the establishment of the principle of subsidiarity (Maastricht, 1992), implying the progressive involvement of regional and local authorities within the EU, has been retraced in the case of external territories, overcoming cooperation toward a greater cohesion through territorial cooperation (Allegri, 2009). The shift from the geographic theme of distance to that of proximity as well as the involvement of regional authorities facilitates a dilution of the dichotomy internal/external of the European Union and produces three main effects: overcoming the rigidity resulting from the involvement of the State levels; a greater sharing of the *acquis* of the Union; and diffusion of stability and safety.

In this article the process from cohesion to territorial cooperation within the Union is reconstructed, highlighting the link between the changes that occurred in the programming of structural funds and spatial planning topics, connecting to the main lines of research on these issues (Bennett, 2004; Faludi, 2004; Schout and Jordan, 2007; Adams, Cotella and Nunes, 2012). Secondly, how these modifications (i.e. changes in the structural funds objectives and enlargement) within the Union are analysed and how this involves relations with Mediterranean countries, in particular with Turkey. The choice of this country is due to the double opportunity of reflecting both on the change of vision from border to central country with multiple regional identities (Davutoğlu, 2008), and on the issue of territorial cooperation and territorial cohesion in the different steps of Turkey’s relations with the EU.

A deductive methodology was used to examine the main regulations concerning the structural funding programmes, as regards their objectives of territorial cooperation and cohesion¹, thus showing the importance of the territorial determinant within the development processes led by regional policies. These in turn are dedicated both to internal consolidation through the application of rebalancing and regional convergence tools, and to the EU enlargement processes. This dual movement constitutes the beginning of a reflection on subsequent changes of external relations. As an actor in the global multi-polar system, the EU is involved in major strategic decisions that also implies and creates territorial links (Dühr, Colomb and Nadin, 2010). These links are an expression of the networks to which the future role of the EU should be tied, especially in its relations with Turkey.

The Cohesion Fund has always been dedicated to the development of networks and it is interesting to notice that the Turkish territory was already considered as part of the system of European corridors in the report of the first round table on European Regional Planning Concept (CoE, 1980). This fund led to the use of ‘networks’ as a metaphor concerning the aspects of territorial cooperation with Turkey. In this paper the historical links between EU and Turkey are reconstructed, paying particular attention to major CBC programmes involving Turkey and two European countries: Greece and Bulgaria. These examples

emphasize the importance of examining territory at a subsidiary scale, in order to disseminate the principles of democracy from below, confirming the importance of the public in the environmental/social sphere, and to put into practice ESDP principles (Doucet, 2006).

The reconstruction of the link between balanced development, planning of structural funds and territorial cooperation serves the purpose of highlighting the role of Europe in facilitating and fostering relations based on the principle of subsidiarity and geographical proximity in the implementation of territorial cooperation.

2. INTEGRATION AND EUROPEAN REGIONAL POLICY

The process of integration can be considered the parent of other EU policies. Initially structured into pillars – justice and internal affairs, police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, common foreign and security policy – it developed transversal competences so as to transform the Community into a Union. This shift was achieved through processes that involved subsidiary scales of territorial government. The role of regional policy on decentralization and cohesion was crucial as a process to promote and “to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and by mitigating the backwardness of the less favoured”, as written in the preamble of the Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, a declaration already present in the Treaty of Rome of 1957.

Regional policy, therefore, represented the *passé-partout* that, due to the application of the principle of subsidiarity, involved local actors for the achievement of the EU development goals, measured by convergence and competitiveness. In fact, the marriage project-programme-plan materialized in the dialogue between European, national and regional/urban levels. Indeed, the application phase of economic policies benefited from the urban connotation of Europe, which promoted forms of integration and interpenetration of organizational models of government (Salone, 2005). These innovations disarticulated the hierarchical structure and conjugated the dimensions of economic development with spatial planning, thus triggering the debate on the strategic role of territorial organization at European level (Lash and Urry, 1994; Kunzmann, 1996; Faludi, 2007).

These considerations were derived from the debate on the relations between space and power and the birth of a new regionalism. Ohmae (1993) used the expression “Regional States” to describe how regional entities had replaced national states as organizing economic units within the global economy. It was recognised how these kinds of regions were connected to some particular cities (Scott, 1996; Sassen, 2006), creating cities as “regional centres”. The process of rescaling state powers led to a “new regionalism” through a functional view of the region, based on the concept of the network. From this perspective, the network was the result of the combination of market-driven self-regulation and actions of government in an area of common interest. The following step led to the known formulation of polycentric spatial development, as defined in ESPD (1999) and ESPON 1.1.1 (2005) (Albrechts, Healey and Kunzmann, 2003).

Finally, in Europe, the reflection on the functional region refers to the institutional definition given by AER (Assembly of European Regions) in 1996, according to which the region is “the territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the state and endowed with political self-government” (AER, 1996). EU Cohesion Policy as presented in the first multiannual financial framework, also known as Delors I package, established the above-mentioned scenario.

The process of enrichment and modernization of this policy, started in 1986 with the Single European Act, is also recognizable in the subsequent succession of treaties: Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice, until the Treaty of Lisbon, which expanded the European

vision including territorial cohesion. In the framework of integration, which started a process of transfer of competences upwards within the European Community/Union, the stress was placed on how, thanks to cohesion, an instrument of cooperation simultaneously existed, which facilitated the horizontal union through the organization of competences on a regional scale, in order to start and/or support local development processes. The passage of the identification of regional levels on which the objectives of European structural funds fall and the consequent possibility of collaborative actions between regions show the link between cohesion and cooperation, which generates synergies at various territorial scales.

During the different stages of enlargement, there was a need to modulate the available tools for balancing regional development within the Union, starting with a process of consolidation/adjustment of policies and objectives. The experiences and results achieved in these areas eventually suggested the possibility of exporting such a model to the new border territories of the Union. In fact, the birth of the Barcelona process in 1995 supports this reading of the cohesive/inclusive course of spaces unrelated to accession. Therefore, cohesion policy and cooperation identify the geographical distribution of Community action that has been changing in relation to the objectives gradually achieved within the European Union. The initiatives and Community programmes implemented by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, indeed, have had interwoven stories until the structuring of territorial cooperation within the pre-accession/neighbourhood policy.

3. SPATIAL PLANNING: COHESION

The political realization of the role of spatial planning moved along a path that led to the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) of 1999. The idea of regional planning within Europe had been proposed as a consequence of the reflections of the Conference of Local Authorities of Europe in 1958. Many traces of this theme can be found within the conferences promoted by the Council of Europe, which consolidated this direction in a first report entitled “Regional Planning: European Problem” (Strasbourg, 1968). It was the search for the formation of a unity that stimulated reflections on the need for a common regional planning policy; reflections that were resumed afterwards by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT).

Thus far, it has been established that a connection exists between balanced/sustainable development and cohesion in Europe, with a territorial nature stressed in the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter (Council of Europe, Torremolinos, May 1983). The problem of planning on a European scale, in fact, became even more important by the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s, due to the creation of a Single European Market and the other political changes taking place within the Community. These same changes were also behind the hindrance of some of the processes of accession on several occasions, including the case of Turkey.

The search for a larger role for Europe in the field of territorial development policy was, indeed, the main innovation emerging from the documents published by the European Commission, Europe 2000 and Europe 2000+ (CEC, 1991; CEC, 1994), later confirmed in the principles proposed by the informal Council of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning at Leipzig in 1994. This expansion of role would result in the elaboration of a spatial planning draft: the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (Resolution 226 of 20/07/1998). This political document was the result of consensus and cooperation among member states, with collaboration considered essential to overcome the institutional weakness of the Union, resulting from the absence of specific competences in the subject. The union answered this “lack of competence” with a consolidation of the bond between spatial planning and the privileged fields of action of the Community initiative INTERREG at transnational and interregional level, also linked by the reform of the Structural Funds and

Cohesion Fund, especially from the perspective of enlargement. Moreover, there was an explicit reference to the need for introducing regional planning at community level, considering that the intergovernmental dynamic had exhausted its possibilities for action (Paragraph 20 - Resolution on regional planning and the European Spatial Development Perspective, Official Journal C 226, 20/07/1998 P. 0042). In fact, regarding the same topic, it is argued (in Paragraph 22) that the Council “*welcomes the Commission proposal to maintain Interreg, with particular regard to cross-border cooperation; considers that its financial allocation should be consolidated and that it is therefore necessary to go beyond the present predominantly bilateral form of cooperation and promote the creation of joint management bodies for the programmes in which greater participation by the regional and local authorities can be ensured*”.

From the Leipzig political principles, which oriented the following works and linked spatial planning to Structural Funds – competitiveness, sustainability, cohesion – the adjustments to the objectives of the funds also originated². Competitiveness, occupation and cooperation, therefore, are the results of the territorialization process of development policies. Furthermore, the formal adoption of ESDP highlights the growing interdependence of countries, which undermines the basis of the expression of a sovereign state government: the territory. The problem of legitimization and repartition of powers, consequently, was addressed in parallel by structuring the guidelines according to the principles of subsidiarity and the implementation of governance systems. The European Parliament report of 1998 (PE 224.312/fin. A4-0206/98) states: “*The idea of regional planning implies a basic political option, namely intervention by government to obtain the best possible distribution of social and economic activities in its territory, with the ultimate aim of increasing the welfare and standard of living of its citizens.*

So far, the idea is universally accepted and practised throughout the Member States. It implies that the public authorities should be empowered to correct economic trends, anticipate social and economic change and, ultimately, endeavour to make the most of the advantages of their particular region and offset its handicaps.

Even at national level, this exercise involves securing a difficult political and social consensus, by calling into play not only questions of the regional and institutional division of powers but also purely ideological issues. It is thus hardly surprising that suspicions should be aroused and progress slow when the idea of regional planning reaches the European domain”.

In the same document transnational, cross-border and interregional levels are reiterated as representing examples of European cooperation in the field of spatial planning. So, it is possible to dissertate on a further classification that sees cooperation as a prerequisite of cohesion. The European spatial planning agenda was intended, therefore, as political message that: “*sketches the framework for an integrated European regional planning policy based on a search for consistency through coordination between territories (geographical), sectoral policies (horizontal) and levels of government (vertical)*” (PE 224.312/fin. A4-0206/98).

Parallel to this direction, in the years between 1992 and 1995, the link between cooperation and cohesion with Mediterranean countries also took shape. In the Recommendation 7 (1994), regarding the topic of proximity relations with the Mediterranean area, the Council of Europe (forerunner or prompter of the Commission) recommends that the Commission of the European Union “*attributes the highest priority to regional/spatial planning in transfrontier regions inside and outside its territory, and develops operational concepts in this respect, in close co-operation with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), particularly with regard to Eastern Europe and the southern Mediterranean countries*” (Recommendation 7, 1994). The considerations contained in the annex of the aforementioned report are equally indicative: “*Guidelines for regional/spatial planning in the greater Europe*”.

Based on the principles and evolution generated from the Leipzig Conference of 1994, therefore, the resulting form of organization was the vision of a balanced and polycentric space, with equal opportunities of access to infrastructural networks as well as to knowledge, ensuring the protection of cultural and environmental heritage. Looking long term, the ministers responsible for territorial policies emphasized the need to boost the relations of cooperation, as a natural expression of cohesion, both with European third countries and with Countries of the Southern Mediterranean (Gillespie, 2003; Lavenex, 2004).

4. TERRITORIAL COHESION AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

The territorial issue is an innovative aspect in policies related to Mediterranean countries; the transition from a bipolar world to an increasingly multi-polar reality is a frequently underlined theme. This section highlights the link between the will to promote polycentric dimensions within European space, as an application tool of the cohesion policy, and suggests the possible projection of the same interpretative scheme on a global scale.

In brief, it is possible to reconnect the threads that, from a dual structure – internal and external of the Union – show a convergence through the evolution of cohesion and neighbourhood policies. With the adoption of the European Spatial Development Perspective, the Union responded to some impulses related to its setting: from the fall of the Berlin wall to the adoption of the single currency. The domino effect influenced the practices of integration, leading to a more structured accession policy (Copenhagen criteria, 1993). These spatial impacts are documented in the fluctuating outcomes of the enlargement process that some countries such as Turkey have experienced.

As a consequence, important changes can be read in the modifications of the structural funds regulations; in the Agenda 2000 document in support of social and economic cohesion; in the Lisbon European Council announced objectives (March 2000) which proposes a strategy aimed at making Europe “*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*” by 2010; in the Göteborg European Council (June 2001), that introduced in the strategy the centrality of environmental protection and the need to follow a more sustainable model of development.

It would then seem that the problems of socio-economic disparities, as amplified by the enlargement process, requires answers that transcend national boundaries, so arriving at the completion of Cohesion Policy, which acquired the pillar of territorial cohesion: “...*Based on articles 2, 6, 16 and 158 included in the EC Treaty, territorial cohesion has been considered as the third dimension of Cohesion Policy ...*” (Territorial Agenda of the European Union, 2007). What emerges is that development and economic evolution of countries are determined by structural factors: institutions, democracy, knowledge, etc., i.e. balancing factors of globalization, that make it easier to supply basic needs such as raw materials, savings, capital goods. Territorial cohesion has not received any official definition and according to John Bennett (2004) is a policy objective that can contribute to the harmonious and balanced development of the Union. In addition to these considerations, the European experience of peaceful development, started with the process of economic integration, was reproduced in the Mediterranean area as a disincentive to conflicts and also as a natural extension of European integration (Kramsch and Hooper, 2004).

So, Community social policies at regional level were redirected in order to become more effective, integrated tools, thus welding through the funds the three dimensions of cohesion, which by its very nature does not have a predetermined boundary. This is what happened with the extension of the INTERREG programme and specifically relating to the cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, enriched by the modifications occurred with the PHARE, TACIS and MEDA initiatives within the framework of more developed tools in pre-accession and neighbourhood policy, rewritten since 2006. It is the Regulation

1082/06 that indicated the importance of European territorial cooperation along with the objectives of convergence and competitiveness.

In this framework of transformation of the EU, made possible by the overcoming of nationalist tendencies and movement towards a shared vision implemented in integration, the relations of Europe with its changing borders as well as the consciousness of its own limits are inserted. In geographical terms, the Mediterranean Sea is the natural southern border of the continent and so an element of separation, but also a place subject to the common use of marine space. Besides, the concept of a Mediterranean region is related both to a physical and climatic oneness, characterized by common elements but also variable in their manifestation in spatial/temporal terms, and to an absence of oneness in their socio-economic features.

The changes in the perception of such space from oneness to fragmentation can be retraced starting from Reclus who, in 1876, identified the Mediterranean geographic region by stressing its homogeneous character based on the nature of international trade that created a particular kind of identity, up to J. Béthemont (2003), who, on the contrary, stressed the lack of oneness³. A possible compromise between those positions had been represented by the political vision of Europe in the Mediterranean area, induced both by themes of security, already developed in the Cold War period, and development, facilitating a functionalist interpretation of the region.

The lack of an objective reference unit and the initial economic nature of the European Community, indeed, explains the evolution of the relations between Europe and the Southern and South-eastern Mediterranean. As Aliboni says, "*l'esistenza di rapporti collettivi dei paesi europei con quelli a sud ed est del bacino mediterraneo risale alla costituzione della CEE. È con la nascita di quest'ultima che vengono messi in comune i rapporti e gli impegni oltremare di alcuni degli Stati membri (Francia, Belgio, Italia e Paesi Bassi)...in un primo tempo i rapporti coi paesi dell'Africa del Nord e del Medio Oriente si sviluppano individualmente ed empiricamente. Solo nel 1972 la CEE imposta un quadro comune di gestione dei suoi rapporti mediterranei sotto il nome di 'Politica mediterranea globale'*" (Aliboni, 2000, p. 20)⁴. The idea of a Mediterranean region is then announced as well as the development of institutionalized relations with it.

The identification of this region within Europe has been connected to the political objectives that would be structured in the course of time. Interest in the Mediterranean neighbourhood is essential for the European vision of stability and security, dealing with issues related to the principles of balance between opposed geographic areas at a global level.

Initiatives undertaken over the years are generally characterized by discontinuity and their lack of homogeneity, exacerbated by the global geopolitical dynamics and the instability and precariousness of the peace process in the Middle East. A time of awakening of collaborative actions for stability and solidarity in terms of political and economic security came with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), launched in 1995 and known as Barcelona process. This Act started the institutional structuring of an organic and coherent community policy in the area. Within the Partnership, the Association Agreements have a multilateral orientation with the aim of promoting forms of regional cooperation among the Arab states for encouraging international governance. The European experience of integration through subsidiarity also became an objective in the Mediterranean area, in order to reduce the political and economic gap through a process of empowerment of participants. The will was then to make of the Mediterranean region a real expression of shared values. The Barcelona Declaration was signed by twenty-seven partners: the fifteen EU countries, eleven Mediterranean countries - Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey - and the Palestinian National Authority, only eight of these having signed the treaties. Since then the European Union has promoted a series of good practices both at institutional and debate level among partners to promote multilateralism and the construction of the Mediterranean region (Aliboni, 2000, p. 85).

The region has then different interpretative scales, due to the peculiarity of being the space where the interdependencies between sectoral policies become visible, because it is “the territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the state and endowed with political self-government” (AER, 1996). In this sense, it is up to the regions to promote territorial cohesion, in terms of role of the territory in equal potential development and reasonable standards of living (Bennett, 2004). Interdependence leads to the consequent “extra-territorialization” of European policies in Wider Europe (Lavenex, 2004).

The difficult and unstable Middle-Eastern situations, however, mark the up and down relations with Europe. A new impetus, in fact, came from the renewed Neighbourhood Policy. As written in the Communication (COM(2003) 104 final) Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours: “*The Euro-Mediterranean partnership offers a strong policy framework for the EU's relations with Mediterranean countries. Since the Barcelona declaration was adopted in 1995 it has formed the basis for a continuing dialogue and cooperation in spite of the political turmoil in the region. As far as the bilateral dimension of EU relations is concerned, the basic framework is similar for both groups of countries: Association Agreements or Partnership and Cooperation agreements, including political dialogue, are accompanied by national Meda/Tacis programmes and agreements on specific issues (readmission, fisheries etc.). The most important difference is that, in the Mediterranean, an explicit regional dimension encouraging the development of intra-regional initiatives and cooperation in a broad range of sectors is included. This policy of promoting intra-regional cooperation consists of three Chapters defined in the Barcelona Declaration supplementing the bilateral framework: the Political and Security Chapter, Economic and Financial Chapter and Social, Cultural and Human Chapter*”. With the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), a significant boost was given to cooperation and to regional and sub-regional integration among Southern Mediterranean countries through the principle of differentiation. The following statement is indeed present in the document: “*The EU should act to reinforce and unite its existing neighbourhood policy towards these regions around two overarching objectives for the next decade or longer:*

- *To work with the partners to reduce poverty and create an area of shared prosperity and values based on deeper economic integration, intensified political and cultural relations, enhanced cross-border cooperation and shared responsibility for conflict prevention between the EU and its neighbours.*

- *To anchor the EU's offer of concrete benefits and preferential relations within a differentiated framework which responds to progress made by the partner countries in political and economic reform*”.

With the conclusion of the accession processes of the Central and Eastern European states, the Euro-Mediterranean relations were reinserted, therefore, in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy that, as mentioned, was meant to encourage the creation of a security, stability and prosperity zone in the border area of the Union, by signing new Euro-Mediterranean agreements as well as free trade agreements among the EU partners, and also fixed the standards on which collaboration should be based: shared responsibility, differentiation, conditionality. It defines, finally, the areas of collaboration: political reforms, respect for human rights, security, structural economic reforms. The main objective pursued by the ENP was to enable those countries, excluded from accession, to receive the same benefits received from Eastern European countries that joined the Union, thus starting a more intense political, economic and cultural cooperation (Manfra, 2010).

It is the concept of proximity that settles the interest for borders and differentials in the relations with each country, also depending on its physical and socio-economic position, confirming in this pragmatic cooperation the non-existence of a Mediterranean Region because of the divergent interests of the Arab countries. Multilateralism, bilateralism,

regionalism and integration on different scales describe then tricky processes to structure the context of relations outside the Union, with the strategic aim of building a Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (PEMFTA) (Tino, 2012), to be created through cross-border cooperation, implemented by operative structures in which national, regional and local authorities are involved and through multi-annual programming.

In 2007, moreover, forty-three countries signed the founding document of the “Union for the Mediterranean” (UfM)⁵, focused on the development of regional projects and returned to intergovernmental formulae concerning six priorities: de-pollution of the Mediterranean; building of maritime and land highways between the two sides of the Mediterranean; strengthening of civil protection; creation of a Mediterranean solar plan; development of an Euro-Mediterranean University; promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, the operation of UfM has so far been quite limited because of politic-institutional difficulties that have not yet been overcome.

The popular uprisings of the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa in 2010 eventually led to the adoption of a new European Neighbourhood Policy, which emphasizes the promotion of democracy and rights, extolling the principle of differentiation and conditionality in the relations between EU and Mediterranean countries and establishing specific support to civil society organizations. The instruments promoting economic and social cohesion are, therefore, a precondition to the development of territorial cohesion, needed to develop long chains of proximity. The reflection on the “variable geometry”, ensued from the possible regionalization, eventually allows the institutional nature of the particular region considered in this paper to be specified and thus of the authority that it can exert to promote cohesion as a tool for sustainable development. This peculiarity has been taken into account in the evaluation of cross-border cooperation experiences between Turkey and the EU.

5. A SUSPENSION BRIDGE: TURKEY IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SPACE

The long story of relations between the EU and Turkey can be summarized starting from Turkey’s first application for associate membership of the European Economic Community (EEC), in 1959⁶. That was the beginning of a long process that would bring Turkey to be recognized as an EU candidate country in 1999. This occurrence was made possible by a particular geographical feature: the fact that part of Turkey’s territory is inside the European continent⁷. The first association agreement (known as the Ankara Agreement) dates back to 1963. The course was resumed after the first major enlargement of the Union and the emanation of the Single Act: in 1987, indeed, Turkey made an application for full EEC membership. However, it was only in 1999 that the EU Helsinki Council recognized it as an EU candidate country on an equal footing with other candidate countries. The access to negotiation was opened in 2005, but in 2008 the Council adopted a revised Accession Partnership for Turkey. Regular Reports of the Commission registered the progress of the country in fulfilling the criteria defined at Copenhagen in 1993⁸, concerning economic aspects and the acceptance of the Community *acquis*.

The aforementioned facts intertwined with partnership and neighbourhood policies, thus confirming the strategic role of Turkey in connecting three continents and opening the way to particular cooperation scenarios with the Arab world. The long path undertaken and the stalemate in the relations with Turkey can be basically attributed both to the adverse position of France and to the internal problems of “secularization” of the country: party opponents, Kurdish issue, relations with Cyprus, all led to a slowing down of the reforms. However, the interest to encourage and reanimate the integration process is reciprocal, since Europe is particularly attracted by Turkey's strategic position, which opens the way to many possible areas of influence – Balkans, Central Asia, Middle East, Africa – thus strengthening

proximity strategies. In the case of Turkey, on the other hand, it is the cumbersome weight of countries such as Russia, Iran and the Arab countries to push it westwards.

This tricky and still uncertain path suggests some reflections on the role that territorial cooperation can play within the integration process: constitution of a unity. Within the wider European strategy, indeed, the inclusive role of the border for stability, security and sustainable development is clearly recognized, with the instrument for achieving these objectives being territorial cooperation, that requires a high level of harmonization and the participation of national and sub-national institutions as well as civil society.

In this framework, the last accession principle was added at the European Council summit held in June 2006, called “absorption capacity”. It was created as “a safety valve for the member states as they can always delay enlargement on the grounds that the EU is not ready to absorb new members” (Christensen, 2009, p. 4). According to the same author, “the principle of absorption capacity has been very prevalent in the discussion over Turkish enlargement which has been considered as a concern for the institutional and socio-economic balance in the EU with its relatively large population, economic impact, and socio-cultural differences” (*ibid.*). This principle preserves the internal efficiency of the system and then its cohesion, by activating precautionary processes and fostering those modifications that are essential for real integration.

The 2007-2013 programming period has been directing this process of diffusion of democratic practices, completely renewing the neighbourhood policy with the introduction of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), governed by the Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006.

6. GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL COOPERATION IN TURKEY

The debate on the prospect of Turkey’s accession has been described in the previous section, highlighting how the EU is looking for a balance between different positions through the principles of differentiation and absorption capacity. Such considerations serve to remind how economic and geographic spaces are intertwined, thus generating repercussions on regional organization. Retracing Turkish history and the evolution of Turkey’s relations with neighbouring countries – which, in turn, have their own political, economic, historical and cultural evolutions – is not the objective of this work⁹. Its aim is rather to understand how territorial cooperation involves the regional level by observing some particularly interesting cases, which show different typologies of cross-border relations involving candidate countries and member states, focussed on themes that highlight the link between the aims of territorial cooperation, cohesion and spatial planning.

It is evident that the inputs of the present objective of territorial cooperation have affected the Turkish centralized system and promoted changes and openings in situations of past tensions. All the basic information, also in this case, has been taken both from European documents and studies of experts in the issue. In particular, the reading of some cases of territorial cooperation such as the one concerning the management of the Meric River Basin (CBC Turkey-Bulgaria on Meric River Floods) has suggested the reflection on those topics that promote the shift from cooperation (external moment) to cohesion (internal moment). In summary, the strong organizational relation between territory and system, that becomes “region” in social and cultural terms, passes through density, efficiency and effective management of infrastructures as well as fixed social capital, which are in their turn affected by geographic determinants (Lo Monaco, 1982).

Considering the vastness of the topic, the attention has been focussed on the IPA instruments that, as aforementioned, include a set of programmes and financial tools, introducing some innovations related to: multi-annual programming; greater involvement of local and regional authorities and local actors; funding of projects instead of territories. The

aim is to create a platform to support processes of shared development. The peculiar feature of territorial cooperation, to be highlighted and enhanced, is its nature of *alter ego* of cohesion, conveying the theme of infrastructural development, peculiar to cohesion funds, toward the possibility of instituting public services, thus creating a link between different systems. In its evolution, the implementation of European strategies with neighbouring countries determined a gradual dilution of the concept of border. In the case of Turkey, this is recognizable in the ongoing territorial cooperation programmes: Bulgaria-Turkey IPA Cross-border Programme and the Greece-Turkey programmes. These programmes show the capacity of regional institutions to set up tables of governance, activating forms of cooperation that are suitable for the objective of diffusion of the EU's identity.

The border between Bulgaria and Turkey extends for 288 km and includes five administrative units: three Bulgarian districts and two Turkish provinces, corresponding to NUTS III level (Eurostat). The capacity to stimulate inter- and intra-institutional dialogues on different scales is proven by the public actors involved: the program was under the responsibility of a Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), acting as financial guarantor; of a Joint Select Committee (JSC) as responsible for the selection of projects; of an institution composed by national, regional and local representatives of the two countries as well as by representatives of the European Commission (Füsün Özerdem, 2011). The Bulgaria-Turkey Cross-border Programme was implemented through the Joint Programming Document (JPD), including strategies, priorities and measures for the period 2004-2006.

Afterwards, as established by Objective 3 of Regulation 1083/2006, the programmes of territorial cooperation have been further elaborated, leading to the approval of projects concerning the promotion of joint actions in the basin of the Meric River (Sezen, Gündüz and Malkarali, 2007). Such projects bring attention to the importance of the environment as an element of global and "absolute" value, that is a value which is not limited to its location, but also having a local value related to the "milieu" created by local culture and economy. Therefore, it presents a "territorial production" for a collective use (extra-territorial) (Conti Puorger, 2005).

Cooperation with Greece, on the other hand, had already begun with the Greece-Turkey INTERREG III/A Community Initiative Programme (2006). It is evident from the programming periods as the former involved countries in the pre-accession phase, while in the latter Greece was already an EU state member. In the case of cooperation between Greece and Turkey, some differences can be highlighted between the two programmes INTERREG III/A (2004-2006) and IPA (2007-2013). The first phase was an important test to prepare Turkey for the adoption of the Community *acquis* concerning the use of structural funds.

The complex evolution of the relations between Greece and Turkey consolidates the idea of the cohesive role played by territorial cooperation. In Rumelili's work (2005) it is stressed that the involvement of civil society and authorities of both countries on the occasion of the earthquakes of 1999 represented a crucial turning point in the relations between these two countries. In all the examined cases, it is also evident the need of the European mediation scale, responsible for two fundamental aspects: financial and legitimation of new political proposals contained in the topics of integration (Rumelili, 2005).

In conclusion, the interest in these forms of cooperation, beyond their economic commitment, lies in their observed capacity for strengthening the mechanisms of integration by stimulating the implementation of regional policies and the consequent institutional capacity of administrating and coordinating them through national planning "conditioned" by the European strategy for the use of funds. With respect to the issues of territorial cooperation and their connection with spatial planning and then with the management and development of public goods, the MIPD 2007-2009 (Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document) pointed out the main priorities of the IPA II for Turkey were as follows: reinforcing cross-border social

and cultural links; technical assistance for joint spatial, economic or environmental planning; small infrastructure for the improvement of the economic potential of the border regions.

To be thorough and to stress once again the importance of territorial links, it must be reminded that Turkey is also an actor in transnational cooperation, governed by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Cross Border Cooperation (ENPI-CBC) in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins. The participation to these two programmes shows Turkey's peculiarity of being a bridge between East and West.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The report of the first round table of the Council of Europe on the European Regional Planning Concept (1979) contains the statement, "The problem of trunk communications as part of a regional planning concept", which reminds that regional planning in the past used to be based on considerations of national defence. Consequently, border regions were areas characterized by weak infrastructural and economic structures, in order to impede rapid communications. The European integration process has reversed this situation.

The matter of balanced development and the role of spatial planning, implicating the importance of local actors and participation, are all issues that were addressed in the long course of European integration and structured within the Cohesion Policy. The theme was symmetrically addressed in relation to the neighbouring states of Europe, so that the instruments of pre-accession and neighbourhood were prepared, thus identifying in terms of territorial cooperation, the cohesive capacity to extend beyond European borders a space of peace and stability. This course mainly involved those countries that were interested and compatible with the integration process. The peculiarity of the Turkish territory was the impossibility of southern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries to share the same integration aims. A solution to overcome these obstacles in perpetuating and extending territorial cooperation policies is to reduce the difference between inclusion and integration. The course is conveyed, indeed, from the principle of conditionality that is transformed into differentiation (incentive-based approach - Join (2012) 14 final).

The work is obviously not exhaustive given the vastness of the issues addressed and it is primarily meant to contribute to reordering the complex relations between cohesion – region – differences (distances) – proximity. The possible development of further research concerns the double objective that Europe wants to achieve through these programmes: creating integration and building cooperation networks that open new scenarios for Europe as an international actor through a strong link with Turkey. Another important point concerning planning and development of networks and Turkey would be cooperation on energy, a topic that has deliberately not been addressed here, because it adds further complexity to the search for the driving forces of territorial cooperation.

The work, that has emphasized the link between cohesion and territorial cooperation, can be placed into the strand of research identified in the typology of the Mystical Knights (Doucet, 2006); it aims at stressing some points of interest for the development of European policies in this field, essentially concerning the public nature of utilities and how the common use can fuzzi the limits of frontiers, thus creating a new law from the custom of use. Cicerone's words are particularly fitting in this case: "*populus est omnis hominum coetus, quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris e consensus et utilitatis comunione sociatus*" (De Repubblica, I, 25).

Europe – especially in these areas – has the possibility to mediate and convey the legitimization of the new law, in accordance with its modern vision. This feature belongs to the history of Europe, where rights and ethics are filled with Jewish-Christian roots. This is a comparative advantage that the Union should protect, because it orients (in a double sense) all policies, also including in them the spatial justice issues (Young, 1990). Territorial

cohesion is not only the integration of policies with territorial impacts, but also a promotion of joint planning of public services in cross-border areas, which can be achieved through territorial cooperation.

The experiences of territorial cooperation have shown the importance of the transfer of know-how and exchange of experiences implemented in decentralized cooperation and regional partnerships, in order to increase cohesion. Participation and the diffusion of democratic principles seem to be the way to bypass state powers, encouraging those bottom-up processes of secularization that can represent the common basis for the rule of law and which can support those issues already identified in the six initiatives of the Union for the Mediterranean, such as development of infrastructural networks, sustainable and local development. Territorial chains, therefore, materialize that non-continuous set of components that form an identity beyond geographical belonging. At the same time, the scale of the supranational organism is necessary, as a guarantor structure for strengthening the dialogue initiated in this area.

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Notes

¹ For a chronological reconstruction: Interact (2010) 20 years of territorial cooperation; Policy Department-Structural and Cohesion Policies (2007) Follow-up of the territorial Agenda and Leipzig Charter: Towards a European Action Programme for Spatial development and territorial cohesion; Association of European Border Region (2000) Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation-Third Edition.

² Between 1987 and 1992 a first reform of the structural funds began and five new Regulations were emanated: the framework Regulation (EEC) No 2052/88; a coordination Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88; an application Regulation for each of the three funds: Council Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88 (ERDF); Council Regulation (EEC) No 4255/88 (ESF); Council Regulation (EEC) No 4256/88 (EAGGF Guidance Section). Afterwards, the Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds; and, in addition, specific regulations for each fund. Finally, it is important to remind: Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC); Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument; Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Instruments (IPA).

³ For a reconstruction of this topic, see Fichera (2011).

⁴ “The existence of collective relations between European and South/Eastern Mediterranean countries dates back to the establishment of EEC, when the overseas relations and commitments of some member states (France, Belgium, Italy and Netherlands) were put in common. [...] At first relations with North African and Middle Eastern countries develops gradually and empirically. Only in 1972 the EEC establishes a common framework for the management of its Mediterranean relations under the name of Global Mediterranean Policy” (author's translation).

⁵ The UfM includes the 27 EU member states plus the European Commission, 11 Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Monaco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey) and 4 the Adriatic/Western Balkan countries (Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro), for a total of 44 members. Libya has refused to join the UfM.

⁶ Main references and chronologic reconstructions: Atila, E. 2000. *Turkey in the enlargement process: from Luxembourg to Helsinki*. Ankara: Centre for European Studies; International Crisis Group (23 February 2009) The EU-Turkey-Cyprus Triangle: Setting the Stage, by Hugh Pope (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5939&l=1>); International Crisis Group (15 December 2008) Turkey and Europe; The Decisive Year Ahead, Europe Report No. 197 (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=5949>); International Crisis Group (17 August 2007) Turkey and Europe: The Way Ahead, Europe Report No. 184. (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=5947>); Müftüler-Bac, M. and McLaren, L. 2003. Enlargement Preferences and Policy-Making in the European Union: Impacts on Turkey. *Journal of European Integration*, 25(1): 17-30; Öniş, Z. 2000. Luxembourg, Helsinki and Beyond: Towards an Interpretation of Recent Turkey-EU Relations. *Government and Opposition*, 35(4): 463-483; ZEI EU-Turkey-Monitor, published by Centre for European Integration Studies (University of Bonn) (http://www.zei.de/zei_english/publikation/publ_turkey_monitor.htm).

⁷ However this feature can also be read in a negative sense: the non-total belonging of Turkey to the European continent.

⁸ As written in the Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council in Copenhagen (21-22 June 1993): “Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership, adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union”.

⁹ For an overview on this topic, see Ahat (2009).

OPEN BORDERS WITH UNCOORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT: THE CASE OF THE SLOVENIAN-ITALIAN BORDER

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Abstract:

Within the programme of cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Italy, a project called TRADOMO was proposed and approved. Its aim is to improve sustainable access and mobility in the cross-border programme area. Within the framework of this project, we prepared a study on public transport proposing the steps, based on an analysis of the current situation, to improve the system of transport connections in public transport with regard to the needs of the passengers in the cross-border area. The study was made in the towns of Gorizia/Gorica and Muggia/Milje close by the Slovenian-Italian border. With the state border drawn after the Second World War these two towns were cut off from their hinterlands. Proceeding from the analyses of the revitalized traffic flows, we propose a new common organization of public transport in which municipalities on both sides of the state border would participate.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, public passenger transport, Slovenia, Italy

1. INTRODUCTION

The land border between Slovenia and Italy is more than 200 km long. National roads cross it at nineteen points, and the railway at two. In contrast to increasing personal transport, cross-border public transport stagnates or even decreases. Slovenia and Italy are no longer directly connected by means of railway passenger transport, and regional, or local, bus transport crosses the border at only four points. On all the cross-border bus routes there are altogether twenty-seven both-way rides per working day (these include only the routes which connect places along the border both in Slovenia and Italy, excluded are all longer international transit routes that do not stop at places along the border). This poor level of cross-border passenger transport is typical not only of Slovenia but also of some other state borders within the European Union, and applies in particular to the borders between the new and the old EU members (Ahrens and Schöne 2008).

Within the Programme of Cross-Border Cooperation Slovenia-Italy 2007–2013, which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and from national funds, a project called TRADOMO has been set up, with the main goal to improve sustainable accessibility and mobility within the cross-border programme area. Within this project a study of the possible improvements to public transport in two border areas was undertaken, i.e. the Muggia/Milje peninsula and the town areas of Gorizia and Nova Gorica. The two chosen areas were cut off from one another by the state border after World War II. A border between Zones A and B of the Free Territory of Trieste was drawn up approximately across the middle of the Muggia/Milje peninsula. Nowadays, the peninsula is divided between Slovenia and

Italy by a slightly different course of the state border (Kristen, 1990). After World War II, the city of Gorizia/Gorica was cut off from its hinterland by the state border. The city fell to Italy, while the greater part of its hinterland fell to Slovenia, or then Yugoslavia. Therefore, to meet a functional market role, a new town was built on the Yugoslav (Slovenian) side, called Nova Gorica. The result was twin towns both located by the border: Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica in Slovenia.

The problems of relationships between the two towns and social and functional cross-border integration are analysed in detail by Bufon (1996). In Slovenia, several analyses of public transport and plans for future development have been made in the past few years within the framework of several projects (Tibaut et al. 2010; Zavodnik Lamovšek, Čeh and Košir, 2010; Kozina, 2010; Bole et al., 2012; Gabrovec and Razpotnik Visković, 2012; Gregorc and Krivec, 2012), but no attention whatsoever has been paid to cross-border passenger transport in professional literature. Likewise, this topic was rarely dealt with within the European context (Ahrens and Schöne, 2008; Juschelka, 1996; Krug, Meinhard 2003).

2. AN ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY AND THE EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK

Initially, the available sources of population mobility in the two studied areas were analysed. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia collects data on cross-border commuters. The Slovenian Roads Agency provided annual data on the average daily flow of vehicles on the sections of national roads running towards the Italian border, and some data was also obtained from bus operators. Several field observations were done, such as the counting of passengers at border points and on buses, as well as interviews with bus passengers and with people living along the border. In the past few years, data has also been collected within other similar projects (Gabrovec and Bole, 2009; Progetto 2013).

This paper presents some key findings required for both of these areas, in order to prepare proposals for new cross-border bus connections based on demands and needs. Only bus transport is discussed in this research, since there is no railway infrastructure on the Muggia peninsula, while the course of railway in Gorizia cannot provide efficient cross-border city transport.

2.1. The Muggia/Milje peninsula

According to the 2011 register-based census, conducted by Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 286 inhabitants of the Koper/Capodistria municipality work in Italy, and according to the data in the Statistical Register of Employment, 82 residents of Italy work in Koper. In view of undeclared work, this information understates the real workforce flows; however, for public transport organization the volume is very low. Besides, there is a lack of precise information on how many of these commuters work, or live respectively, in Muggia. The elementary school, with teaching in Italian, at Hrvatini/Crevatini in Slovenia (Fig. 1) is attended by local pupils and also those from the Muggia municipality in Italy. Since the school only has a 5-year programme, the pupils continue their education in Koper, at the Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio elementary school with Italian as the language of instruction. In the 2012/13 school year, there were three pupils from Italy in the fifth class, twelve in the fourth, and eleven in the third at the Hrvatini school. From the 6th through the 9th year at the central school in Koper, that same school year were only five pupils from Italy who had begun their schooling at Hrvatini. Due to the greater number of pupils from Italy in the lower years at Hrvatini, it is likely that eight pupils will need to commute to the Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio elementary school in Koper in the school year 2013/14, and as many as seventeen in

the 2014/15 school year, which makes a solid ground for organizing bus transport from Muggia to Koper.

Figure 1 shows the existing public bus transportation network. It is obvious at first sight that there are no cross-border connections in the discussed area. The termini of both Slovenian and Italian bus routes lie close to border crossings, or border points; in certain cases (Cerei, Lazaret), turning round areas for buses are located next to the border. Changing from the Slovenian to the Italian bus system is only feasible at Lazaret (Figure 1, point 1), where the distance between the two stops is 300 metres, while other trans-shipment distances range between 700 metres and 2 kilometres where changing buses could be possible.

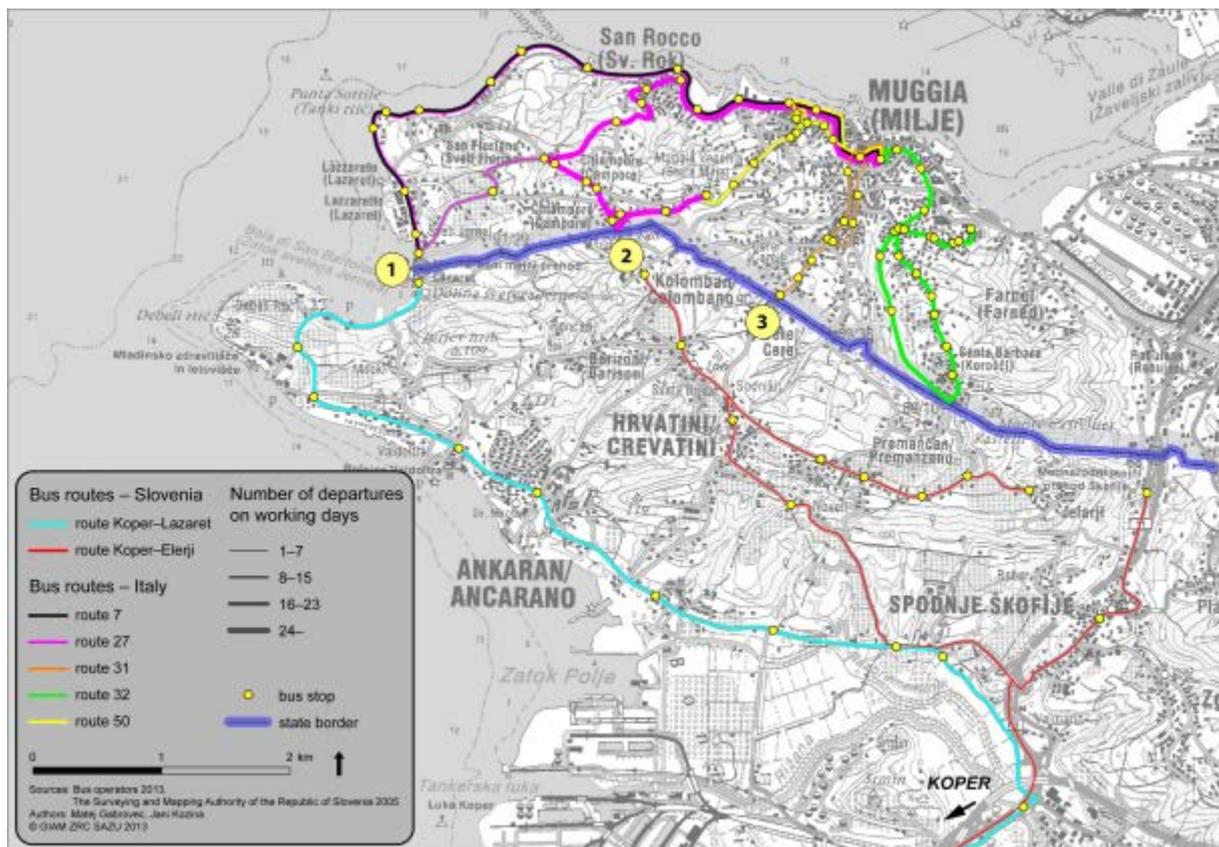


Figure1: The network of bus routes on the Muggia/Milje peninsula

2.2. Gorizia and Nova Gorica

The network of city bus routes is uncoordinated even in the case of the twin cities Gorizia and Nova Gorica, since there are no contact points where direct changing would be feasible; in all cases a few hundred metres walking must be done. However, there is an international city route which connects the two main railway and bus stations of the two the cities. This route is alternately carried out by one bus operator from each country; these two operators are only licensed to transport international passengers, so they are not allowed to transport passengers inside a single state alone.

In order to determine travel behaviour and passenger structure on the international bus route, a survey was conducted by geography students of the Faculty of Humanities Koper, University of Primorska, on 22 March 2013 among people travelling on the route. All passengers on morning rides, between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m., were interviewed. A total of thirty questionnaires were completed, while some of those interviewed refused to cooperate. One third of the interviewed persons were resident in Italy, one third in Nova Gorica, and one third in other settlements of the Nova Gorica municipality or some other Slovenian municipalities.

Most passengers were retired persons, they represented two thirds of all passengers. Only one person stated schooling as their travel purpose, while the others mainly mentioned supply, and leisure or other activities. Only three of the surveyed passengers travelled on a daily basis, whereas the rest used the route several times a week or periodically. They were also asked whether they had a possibility of using a car or whether public transport was their only option. Eight out of thirty passengers declared that they had a driving licence and a car available. They were also asked to suggest possible timetable changes to improve their situation. The most frequent answer was a wish for an increased frequency of rides and for the introduction of Sunday rides; in addition, they also proposed the pre-sale of tickets to shorten the time of ticket purchase on a bus, and a connection between the Qlandia shopping centre and Šempeter.

The Slovenian Roads Agency data shows intense cross-border car transportation. At the border point Rožna Dolina (Slovenia; Gorizia via Vittorio Veneto in Italy) alone, the average daily car frequency in 2012 amounted to 9,343 vehicles. There are several border crossings in the area of the city of Gorizia, so that the total cross-border frequency is two times higher by rough estimation. On the other hand, according to the data of the bus operators (Avrigo, Nova Gorica and ATP Gorizia), 18,453 passengers were transported on the international city route in the year 2012. The proportion of cross-border passengers who used public transport does not even reach 1%. If the service became more attractive, which mainly means a higher frequency, the potential for considerably increasing the number of passengers is great.

3. PROPOSAL FOR NEW CROSS-BORDER BUS ROUTES

According to Ahrens and Schöne, (2008), the bus networks of two states can be coordinated in three ways. One solution is to organize a transport node by the border. This solution offers two options: passengers cross the border on foot and walk a short distance from one station to the other, or a joint station is organized in one of the two states. Another solution is to extend a national bus route across the border to the nearest bigger settlement in the other state where passengers can change bus. A third solution is to establish a continuous line from one state to the other. This is the most reasonable choice but it is economically justified only if cabotage is allowed. It means that the bus operator, irrespective of the country of its domicile, has the right to transport passengers in both neighbouring countries.

To make changes in form of new cross-border connections, two stages are proposed in the above-mentioned project. The first stage (2014-5) primarily consists of the optimization of the existing routes through organizing transport interchanges, coordination of timetables and extension of certain national routes across the border. This is feasible within the scope of the existing concession contracts with bus operators. The second stage (2015 onwards) requires closer cooperation with local authorities on both sides of the border, who are required to reach adequate concession agreements. It would be reasonable to start this in 2015, concurrently with the granting of new concessions in Slovenia to bus operating companies and the establishment of an integrated public transport system. In this stage the networks of the two countries would actually be connected, while Slovenian and Italian bus operators would be entitled to cabotage.

In making such plans it would be necessary to observe the provisions of Slovenian, Italian and also EU legislation. In compliance with the *Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 on common rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services* cabotage is conceded to “regular services, performed by a carrier not resident in the host Member State in the course of a regular international service in accordance with this Regulation with the exception of

transport services meeting the needs of an urban centre or conurbation, or transport needs between it and the surrounding areas. Cabotage operations shall not be performed independently of such international service.” (Article 15c).

According to this provision, within international transport the Italian bus operator shall not transport passengers inside Koper or between Koper and neighbouring settlements, and, in turn, the Slovenian bus operator shall not transport passengers inside Muggia or between Muggia and surrounding settlements in the municipality. However, Regulation 1073 specifies in Article 25 that “*Member States may conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements on the further liberalisation of the services covered by this Regulation, in particular as regards the authorisation system and the simplification or abolition of control documents, especially in border regions*”.

It is advisable that the competent Slovenian and Italian transport authorities reach an appropriate agreement to make a firm basis for the planning of coordinated public bus transport in the border area of Koper and Muggia as well as Gorizia and Nova Gorica after 2015. Cooperation between the bodies of the two countries has already been made possible by the 1993 Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Italian Republic on mutual regulation of international road passenger and freight transport. The concept of such routes is presented below, in the outline of the second stage of the cross-border public transport planning.

The aim of the proposed agreement is to connect the public transport systems of the two countries. Essentially, the plan envisages better possibilities of cross-border travel without bus operators having to do a considerable extra mileage. New cross-border connections are planned for those border crossings where vehicle counts have shown a sufficiently large flow of people, while new transport interchanges or turning round areas are envisaged on that side of the border where a more suitable infrastructure already exists. No construction work is required by the plan; all the proposed extended bus lines will operate on the existing turning round areas or bus termini. Each new international line is planned so as to interlink the two existing national lines. Slovenian and Italian operators will extend their bus lines across the border and continue to transport local passengers in both the countries at the existing fares. The itineraries and timetables of the new line will be adjusted to the needs of students and cross-border migrants who are likely to constitute the majority of cross-border passengers.

Proceeding from the above-described analysis and the stated starting-points three steps for the first stage of development on the Muggia peninsula are envisaged: i) the introduction of a joint transport interchange or turning area at Lazaret (Fig. 1, Point 1); ii) an extension of the Italian route no. 31 to Hrvatini (Fig 1, Point 3); and iii) the introduction of a new international route from Koper to Muggia via Hrvatini, which would cross the state border at Chiampore/Čampore (Fig. 1, Point 2). The timetable would be adjusted to suit the schedule of the Pier Paolo Vergerio il Vecchio elementary school in Koper.

For the second stage, feasible after 2015, mutual planning of public transport between Muggia and Koper is suggested, so that most of the routes would connect the two towns. However, a precondition for routes to follow such a course is a coordinated granting of concessions on both the Slovenian and Italian sides of the border, which means that an agreement should be reached in advance between the conceding entities on both sides of the border, i.e. between Slovenia on the one side and Friuli-Venezia Giulia on the other, as well as between the municipalities of Koper and Muggia. In order to achieve common connecting routes, the bus fleet should also be standardized. The spine of the public transport system on the Muggia peninsula would consist of three routes: a) Koper/Capodistria – Kolomban/Colombano – Chiampore/Čampore – Muggia/Milje; b) Koper/Capodistria – Cerei/Cerej – Muggia/Milje; c) Koper/Capodistria – Ankarano/Ancarano – Lazaret/Lazzaretto

– Muggia/Milje. The system would naturally be complemented by adjusted existing routes. Likewise, in the area of Gorizia and Nova Gorica is not reasonable to propose a significant increase in the frequency of cross-border city bus rides in the first stage, nor is it economically justified if bus operators do not have permission for cabotage. Therefore, in the case of the Muggia peninsula, only minimum changes were proposed in the courses of the existing lines, which provide, with a minor financial investment, significantly better cross-border connections.

Therefore, the following steps are envisaged for the second stage: a) the organization of a cross-border transport interchange at the Nova Gorica railway station which adjoins the state border; b) an extension of the Italian bus routes nos. 3 and 5 to Šempeter pri Gorici; and c) an increase in the frequency of the international city transport route and alteration to its course. Passengers' preferences, obtained by means of the above-mentioned survey, were taken into consideration in the planning of a new course. For the second stage, three cross-border bus routes should be planned in addition to the already existing but partly altered city routes. A new route to connect southern suburbs of Gorizia, via the centres of the two cities and past both main railway- and bus stations, with Solkan north of Nova Gorica (Fig. 2) will be the spine of public transport.

The proposed itinerary extends the most frequented Italian line into Slovenia, where it runs along the partly altered route of one of the Slovenian lines. The joint line continues to provide the same service as before to all local passengers within Slovenia and within Italy, and also significantly improves cross-border connection, without additional financial investment. Moreover, it connects the Nova Gorica railway station with the network of bus routes in both countries and thus improves accessibility to the two cities from the Slovenian hinterland by train.

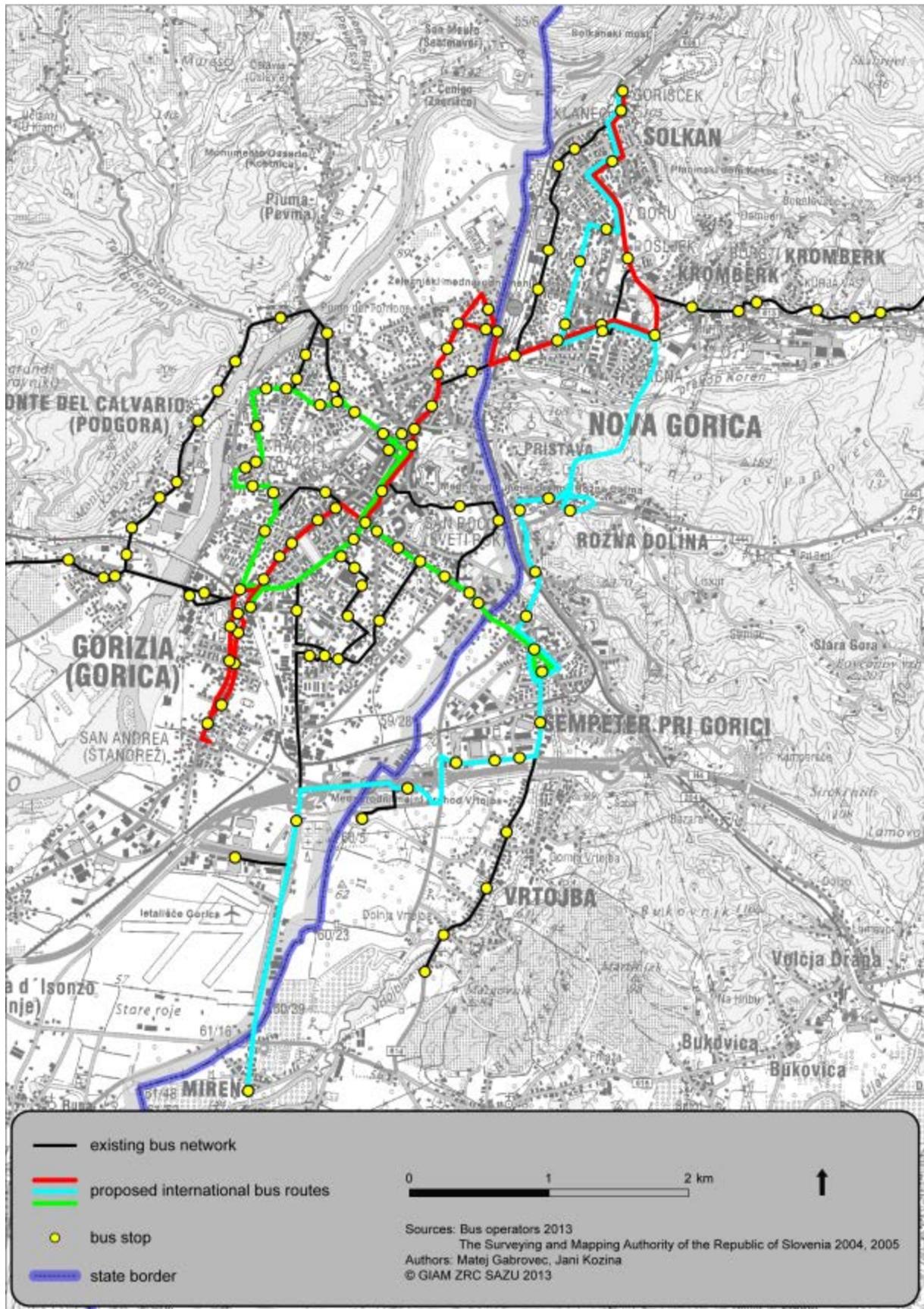


Figure 2: Proposed new international bus routes within the area of Gorizia/Gorica and Nova Gorica

4. CONCLUSION

In developed countries, the fare revenue from bus operations usually covers about half of any operating costs (Codeluppi, 2013). The majority of regional and local bus routes are operated under the terms of concession contracts between bus operators on the one side, and local communities or the state on the other. Public transport is defined in most countries as public service and therefore subsidized by the local or the state authorities. Since cross-border passenger transport is not defined as public service, and consequently not subsidized, it cannot compete with private transport. Since the number of people in the European Union who commute to work or school across state borders is increasing, it would be important to provide them with suitable public transport.

The CONPASS project has demonstrated how poorly developed local cross-border passenger transport is within the European Union (Krug, Meinhard 2003; Meinhard, Winder 2003). Unfortunately, the principle of free movement of people within the European Union cannot be fully realized without effective cross-border passenger transport. If passenger transport is not provided, then those European citizens who cannot afford personal transport due to social conditions or their health or other reasons, have no chance of enjoying the rights of mobility, employment or performing other services in a neighbouring country. A higher percentage of bus users in border regions would lead to reduced environmental impacts and would reduce the external costs of transport. The organization of quality cross-border public transport is only possible through close cooperation of competent authorities on either side of the border who would jointly plan, organize and finance it.

The European White Paper (2011) on transport discusses the organization of effective transport over intermediate distances and European transport corridors on the one hand, and clean urban transport and commuting on the other. It makes no mention of local cross-border transport, which has been constantly increasing ever since European borders were opened. In general, local cross-border passenger transport is poor or in some cases completely absent. This is often the result of legal obstacles and different national legislation. Numerous political-geographical studies dealt with cross-border flows and the problems of border areas (Prescott, 1965; Bufon, 1996; Schneider-Sliwa, 2008), and transport- and demographic-geographers have often dealt with urban influential areas and daily mobility, which often extends beyond the state borders (Knowles, Shaw, Docherty, 2008; Bole, 2011). It would be reasonable to complement strategic documents on European transport on the basis of these studies' results, and to include the necessity for effective and sustainable local cross-border transport. A possibility for solving the issue of local cross-border transport is offered within the framework of Euroregions and Eurodistricts. The Eurodistrict Basel is a good example of joint planning practice (Trinational Eurodistrict Basel, 2013).

This paper has illustrated some possibilities for joint public transport planning in two areas on different sides of the Slovenian-Italian border. It mainly analyses the daily travel needs of students and pensioners who constitute the greatest proportion of existing passenger transport users in the area. To improve this assessment, it would be also sensible to gather more detailed information on daily cross-border commuters for work and to adjust the public transport to this group of passengers. The way of connecting the networks of passenger transport in the two studied neighbouring countries could also be applied, in the adjusted form, to other state borders within the European Union.

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THE EU AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION: BREAKING DOWN BOUNDARIES!

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Abstract

This paper explores EU processes of integrating humanitarian institutions, organizations and actors across Europe; their impact on humanitarian space and actors outside the Union, and the dynamics of such on EU states such as Ireland. With the creation of the EEC/EU it has consistently promoted eradication of internal boundaries, and fostered dynamics of building EU relationships with third party states; reinventing maps of Europe and perceptions. Programs and projects have been established that aim at strategically influencing various contexts outside EU territory in which the Union seeks to be involved as an entity; for instance in the sphere of humanitarian space with ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Office) and EUROPEAID. New interconnections between inner and outer spheres of the Union have been built impacting on people and places. This is creating and reinforcing transnational partnerships at various levels, including EU and national administrations, associations, NGOs and citizens. Geographers are contributing to these processes.

Keywords: *Humanitarian, Action, EU, ECHO.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Analysing human-physical environmental relationships, Geography is fundamental to humanitarian space and action. The main categories of humanitarian disasters include: Natural, Human-made, Technological, and Complex, with the latter being combinations of the former three. A major problematic is how perspectives on humanitarian action must be made more explicit in Geography in education, training and media.

In order to analyse EU processes of integrating humanitarian institutions, organizations and actors across Europe and their impact on humanitarian space and actors outside the Union, along with the dynamics of such on EU states such as Ireland, cogniscence must be taken of processes that the EU has promoted in eradicating internal boundaries and fostering relationships with third party states outside EU territory. Essentially, the conceptual framework of this paper defines humanitarian action and crises; the humanitarian action responses of governments, agencies and citizens as exemplified by EU/ECHO; EU dynamics in relation to centripetal - centrifugal forces integrating humanitarian institutions, organizations and actors; contrastive case study material for a donor state like Ireland and recipient country, Haiti; and possible geographical and map networks.

1.1 Basic concepts

Humanitarianism is a belief in the duty to help human beings, a philosophical belief holding that it is a human being's duty to improve the lives of others. A humanitarian crisis or disaster is an event or series of events, which represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security, or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area. Armed conflict, epidemics, famine, and natural and technological disasters and other major emergencies may all involve or lead to a humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian assistance is action taken by governments, agencies or citizens aimed at saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity of people in need. This is driven by principles of humanitarianism, impartiality, neutrality and independence. It covers both humanitarian action and assistance, the former being the protection of civilians and provision of vital services by aid agencies during and after disasters, while the latter pertains to the provision of funding or in-kind services (including logistics or transport) in response to humanitarian crises usually through humanitarian agencies or government of the affected country.

1.2 Categorizing humanitarian crises

There is no simple categorization of humanitarian crises. Different communities and agencies tend to have definitions related to the concrete situations they face. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) list categories which include different types of natural disasters, technological disasters (i.e. hazardous material spills, Chernobyl-type of nuclear accidents, chemical explosions) and long-term man-made disasters related to civil strife, civil war and international war. Internationally, the humanitarian response sector has tended to distinguish between natural disasters and complex emergencies, which are related to armed conflict and wars. Examples of humanitarian crises range from the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake (Asian tsunami) to Hurricane Katrina that hit New Orleans (2005), the Rwanda genocide (1994), and ongoing Syrian civil war which started in 2011 (See <http://www.ifrc.org/index.asp?navid=01>).

In summary, the main categories of humanitarian disasters include:

(a) Natural e.g. earthquakes in the Pacific Rim, Himalayas region, and Haiti; droughts in the Sahel states including Mali, Niger, Chad, and Sudan; floods in Bangladesh, Burma, and Angola; tsunami affecting Japan and Sri Lanka. Here emphasis is on physical geographical and ecological processes (Rahman et al., 2011; Alam et al., 2010; Middleton, 2013).

(b) Human-made e.g. political and war including inter-state and civil wars, and combinations thereof as in Africa's Great Lakes Region over the past 20 years; corrupt regimes and massive human rights abuses as in the DRC and Sudan. The salient analytical conceptual tool here is political geography and geopolitics (MacGinty et al., 2009, Collins, 2010; Alamgir et al., 2009; Middleton, 2013).

(c) Technological disasters include nuclear accidents such as that in Chernobyl in Ukraine (1986) and chemical explosions as happened at the Union Carbide Plant in Bhopal, India (1984). In this category, economic geography and planning are key factors.

(d) Complex: (a + b) natural and human-made disasters e.g. longstanding armed conflict in Aceh, Indonesia and in Sri Lanka coinciding with the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004); massive flooding in Burma and the non-cooperation of the dictatorial regime there refusing international aid in 2008; (a + c) a combination of natural and technological as with the earthquake, resultant tsunami and impact on the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan in 2011; (a + b + c) Nuclear weapons, developing countries, non-democratic regimes, and the location factor and possible future humanitarian scenarios in North Korea, Iran and Pakistan.

The level of humanitarian crisis is dependent on the specific hazard, the level of vulnerability of the population and the specific risks involved (Fordham et al., 2009). The impact of any humanitarian disaster is directly proportional to level of vulnerability of population concerned. Using contrastive UN HDI (Human Development Index) figures for the USA, Japan, Italy, Turkey, Chile, Bangladesh, Burma, Somalia we can see the very different levels of response in each of these countries to the humanitarian

disasters which have occurred there in the past 20 years e.g. the impact of Hurricane Sandy on the USA including New York and responses to the emergency (2012), in contrast to the effects on states such as Haiti (Collins, 2009 (a)). Over 80% of humanitarian disasters take place in developing countries, the vast majority of which are former European colonies. In 1975 there were 78 recorded disasters in world, in contrast to 385 in 2012, with some 70-80 million people being threatened each year.

In order to get snapshots of how the industrialized states are placed in relation to countries most affected by humanitarian disasters it is useful to use comparative data from the UN HDI (UNDP, 2013) which is based on life expectancy, education and income indices - levels of human development for 192 countries: Norway: 1, USA: 3, Ireland: 7, France: 20 and UK: 26 in contrast to Mali: 182 and Niger: 186. Concerning the Democracy Index compiled by the EIU which uses 60 indicators grouped into 5 categories, North America comes in at 8.6, EU/Europe at 8.4, Latin America and Caribbean at 6.4. This contrasts with Sub-Saharan Africa = 4.3 and MENA (Middle East North Africa) at 3.7 (2012). With reference to the Corruption Perception Index (re: Transparency International), in its 2012 index of 176 countries, with a rank range of 1 to 100, the cleanest were Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, with Ireland in 25th place and the lowest being Afghanistan, North Korea and Somalia.

2. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSES TO HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES?

Humanitarian work aims to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. Humanitarian action strives to protect people's livelihoods and help affected communities and countries cope with refugees and displaced people. Responding effectively requires expert analysis of the situation, and the ability to work with all the necessary partners (local, national and international) to ensure aid is delivered to those most in need (Collins, 2009 (c)).

Humanitarian action is based on the principles of humanitarianism, impartiality, neutrality and independence, with the action for the protection of civilians, and provision of vital services by agencies; assistance comes in the form of funding and in-kind services via humanitarian agencies or host government.

2.1 The Sphere Project

The Sphere Project Charter was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Sphere is based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance (http://www.sphereproject.org/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,200/lang,english/). Concerning disaster management, the IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) plays a crucial role (see <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/index.asp>).

Responses come from community and group organisations at local, regional and national scales as well as those at international levels. Governments, agencies and citizens are involved. These include top-down or governmental organisations range from the government ministries of India to Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs with Irish Aid, the UK – DIFD, and USAID, to inter-governmental organisations such as the UNHCR – UN High Commission for Refugees, and OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO), formerly known as the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, is the European Commission's department for overseas humanitarian aid and civil protection. The bottom-up or non-governmental organisations include NGOs such as ICRC (Red Cross/Crescent), Save the Children, Trocaire, Oxfam, Concern, Goal, MSF.

2.2 ECHO – Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection DG

The EU as a whole is the world's largest donor to humanitarian aid and emergency action. The EU member states and institutions contribute over 50% of official global humanitarian aid. ECHO was founded in 1992 and has provided €14 billion to victims of conflict and disasters in 140 countries. In 2010, ECHO got its first dedicated EU Commissioner for international cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response appointed.

ECHO has been active in supporting & financing humanitarian assistance to populations in Italy, Greece & Turkey struck by natural disasters over the past two decades. Concerning ECHO activities, it has more than 300 people working in its HQ in Brussels and over 400 in 44 field offices in 38 countries. ECHO works on a needs-based approach and cooperates with over 200 partners including 14 UN agencies, 191 NGOs and international organisations along with the ICRC and International Organisation for Migration (ECHO, 2012). The principal objective of ECHO is to provide an integrated rapid response in emergency situations. In order to help ensure this ECHO maintains a database with its lists of experts in all areas ranging from logistics, to public health, geopolitics/geography, anthropology, humanitarian international law, education and so forth. With reference to humanitarian action education, ECHO has supported the NOHA Network Faculty as model for European research with seven EU inter-university joint Master and Doctoral degrees programmes linked to six Erasmus Mundus partner HEIs and over 100 NGOs. Among the obligatory module in the NOHA master's programme is Geopolitics, while Geography stands as an optional module, and surprising GIS and its application to humanitarian emergencies is not include in the prescribed syllabus (see http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm and Shiroshita, et al., 2009).

In a 2012 Report based on the Eurobarometer survey of European citizens attitudes to humanitarian action the following issues were addressed: (1) an awareness of humanitarian aid, (2) the importance of EU humanitarian aid, (3) support for EU funding humanitarian aid despite the economic crisis, (4) common or national approaches to humanitarian aid, (5) knowledge and information on EU humanitarian aid and (6) attitudes towards a European voluntary aid corps. The main results were that 88% of those surveyed considered it important for EU to fund humanitarian action in comparison to 79% in 2010 and 84% agreed that the EU should continue to fund humanitarian aid in spite of the economic crisis. Additionally 71% believed humanitarian aid provided by EU is more efficient than when provided by each Member State separately action in comparison to 58% in 2010.

Based on its collective and multilateral principles, ECHO works closely with UN institutions and has been a leading voice in relation to the evolution of a people-centred international humanitarian law especially since the 1990s, and the evolving principle of the Responsibility to Protect commonly referred to as the R2P. According to the UN Charter, Chapter 1 upholds the non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states by other states; whereas Chapter 7 states that there is a responsibility to intervene in the internal affairs of a state if there is a risk of destabilization of other countries due to what is happening in the affected state e.g. civil strife spilling over into neighbouring states. During the Cold War era (1947-91) emphasis in international was framed in the context of inter-state strife, while as of the end of the Superpower Cold War conflict was found more within rather than between states, especially in terms of humanitarian abuse as witnessed with the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s.

Dictatorial and non-democratic regimes responsible for massive human rights abuses against their own citizens were finding it more difficult to hide behind the principles enshrined in UN Charter Chapter 1, without the complicity of the once Superpowers who protected them within the respective discourses of Cold War narratives as witnessed with the Apartheid regime in South Africa, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chile, Venezuela, Burma and so forth. Simultaneously, with increasing globalization the concepts of good global governance and International Humanitarian Law adapting became very much part of the international discourse and agenda.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has been constantly promoting centripetal forces among EU member states, but with more limited success than other EU integration policies. CFSP decisions require unanimity among member states, but once agreed, certain aspects can be further decided by qualified majority voting. Here it must be noted that there are currently five neutral states within the

EU – Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden whose populations closely monitor CFSP which could impact on their neutrality. In reality, the CFSP sees NATO as responsible for the territorial defence of Europe and peace-making. However, since 1999, the EU is responsible for implementing missions, such as peace-keeping and policing of treaties. This NATO-EU relationship has become somewhat blurred since the Balkan wars of the 1990s, and especially that of Kosovo and the NATO bombing in 1998, which brought the war there to an end. Supporters of this action presented this NATO intervention as a Humanitarian War.

UN and also NATO activities such as that in Kosovo help illustrate that the collective security principle has often failed as witnessed in the Syrian Civil War which started in 2011. A central problem in the UN system is that the UN power structures suitable in 1945 were developed within the geopolitical parameters of that era by the victors of World War Two; in the UN Security Council, the Permanent 5 (USA, Russia and China, France and UK) have the power of veto – meaning that whatever resolutions the UN General assembly put to the Council, this can be prevented from becoming international law by any one of the Permanent 5, and of course by the very nature of geopolitics, states vote for what is in their own best interests. In contrast to the Security Council, approximately 115 states in the General Assembly are former colonies very defensive of their sovereign rights due to their varying colonial experiences. Due to the increase in the number of failed states such as Somalia since 1991, there is an increasing trend for regional state interventions as in Africa where the UN and EU have supported African Union states in humanitarian interventions in West African and Great Lake countries. This UN - EU experience was most evident during the Libyan Revolution (2011) and removal of the Gaddafi Regime, in contrast to the lack of a clear EU policy in relation to the Syria Civil war (2011 onwards).

Due to the inherent nature of the EU and European construction project, EU member state governments are obliged to juxtapose international geopolitics, the mandate of their citizens for humanitarian action but also the power of their electorates in supporting some humanitarian operations and not others, and the effects that this may have on re-election in democracies. As a result of the increasing role of live media in humanitarian crises, and the digital revolution as witnessed with the Arab Spring, the EU's ECHO faces multiple layers of centrifugal forces. While everyone agrees that 'something must be done in humanitarian emergencies' – there is less agreement on how this should be done. Populations affected by humanitarian disasters literally do not have the time for the delay in ECHO responses.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND R2P

The state system is based on the concept of sovereignty or supreme political authority within a territory. From a historical perspective this can be understood along three dimensions: the holder of sovereignty, the absoluteness of sovereignty, and the internal and external dimensions of sovereignty. The state is the political institution in which sovereignty is embodied. This construct has its origins in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) giving rise to the modern state system throughout the world. Historically states have had to share aspects of their sovereignty in order to achieve good relations with other states, avoid conflict, develop trade and so forth. This is exemplified with the creation of the UN in 1945, and the European integration project starting in 1951, enabling the growth and strengthening of laws and practices, including those relating to the protection of human rights¹.

According to the UN Secretary General: "*every sovereign government ... 'responsibility to protect' its citizens and those within its jurisdiction from genocide, mass killing, and massive and sustained human rights violations.*" – UNSG Report (2005).

¹ See for example <http://geography.about.com/cs/politicalgeog/a/statenation.htm> and <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/>

It is the responsibility to protect people from genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. According to the UN Secretary General: *“This responsibility lies, first and foremost, with each individual State, whose primary raison d’être and duty is to protect its population. But if national authorities are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens, then the responsibility shifts to the international community to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other methods to help protect the human rights and well-being of civilian populations. When such methods appear insufficient, the Security Council may out of necessity decide to take action under the Charter of the United Nations, including enforcement action, if so required.”* (UN Report of Secretary general: *In Larger Freedom*, IV. Freedom to live in dignity, Sep. 2005).

The UN Secretary General called for the following to be addressed:

- i) The rule of law: The international community should embrace the “responsibility to protect”, as a basis for collective action against genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. All treaties relating to the protection of civilians should be ratified and implemented. Steps should be taken to strengthen cooperation with the International Criminal Court and other international or mixed war crimes tribunals, and to strengthen the International Court of Justice. The Secretary-General also intends to strengthen the Secretariat’s capacity to assist national efforts to re-establish the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict societies.
- ii) Human rights: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be strengthened with more resources and staff, and should play a more active role in the deliberations of the Security Council and of the proposed Peace-building Commission. The human rights treaty bodies of the UN system should also be rendered more effective and responsive and
- iii) Democracy: A Democracy Fund should be created at the UN to provide assistance to countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democracy².

In 2006, during the evolution of the R2P concept as a principle, possibly becoming law in the future, the UN Security Council formalized their support for the R2P and in 2009, the UN Secretary-General released a report called *Implementing the Responsibility to Protect* providing the General Assembly with an impetus for the R2P debate; some 94 member states spoke and most supported the R2P principle. The debate highlighted the i) need for regional organizations like the African Union to play a strong role in implementing R2P; ii) the need for stronger early warning mechanisms in the UN; and necessity to clarify the roles UN bodies would play in implementing R2P. The first resolution referencing R2P was then adopted by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/63/308). While the R2P has proved controversial in several human-made disasters such as it being invoked by Russia in relation to Georgia in 2008 (without the consent of the UN Security Council) and the US and UK after their invasion of Iraq (2003), the issue of natural disasters and R2P came to the forefront in 2008 when France wanted the R2P principle to be applied in Burma when Cyclone Nargis devastated areas of the country, and the military junta there refused access to foreign aid workers. Due to the controversy generated, many states have rejected that the R2P be applicable to natural disasters.

4. HOW DOES IRELAND RESPOND TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION?

The Irish state responds to humanitarian aid and action through bilateral and multilateral programs, and NGOs through Irish Aid, ECHO and the UN. Irish Aid is active in over 40 countries, and has direct

² See for instance <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/summary.html>; <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/sg-statement.html> and <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap4.htm>.

partner state programs in Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Timor Leste, Vietnam and others (Irish Aid, 2012). As a neutral state, Ireland also uses its defense forces in relation to UN and multilateral R2P missions. Since 1958 Ireland has been involved in over 51 UN Peacekeeping missions. In 1993, a UNTSI (UN Training School) was established in Ireland based with the Irish Defense Forces. This became more significant with the EU Treaty of Amsterdam and CFSP (1997), and the 1999 NATO PfP (Partnership for Peace) and Petersberg Tasks, where humanitarian aid and a role for the military was being promoted by the centripetal forces generated by the EU and ECHO.

According to the Irish Defence White Paper (2000): “*Humanitarian aid tasks go hand-in-hand with military tasks in many crisis situations.....*” & with the creation of the EU battle groups (2006), government sources stated that these were: “*to stop ... unrest in many locations ... deteriorating into ... crises... Irish soldiers may be ordered to participate in HA missions.*” Also Irish Defence Force officers have been seconded to the UN Relief and Works Agency and NGOs including Goal, Concern and ICRC.

Over the past 20 years there has been a certain merging of Defence Force and humanitarian roles as also witnessed in many EU states like Ireland, Poland, Netherlands and Sweden. Most Defence Force policies in Ireland now contain reference to humanitarian aid, and with the Defence Forces ‘*cooperating*’ with military other organizations including those of the EU and NATO; legitimating their actions with reference to humanitarian action. Strong arguments are made for Defence Force/NGO synergy in order to enhance humanitarian aid delivery. Irish defence forces deliver humanitarian aid in multilateral contexts in Afghanistan and Iraq; the use of Irish forces abroad is governed by the Triple lock system whereby defence force involvement abroad requires authorization of the upper and lower houses of Government and that of the UN Security Council, but notably not that of any EU institution. This is different to leader states in the EU such as France and the UK with different military traditions and their constitutional regulation.

Dóchas is an umbrella organization for 35 Irish NGOs and receives funding from the Irish public and government exchequer. Among the most known NGOs are Trócaire, which supports the R2P within the UN/multilateral mandate context only. Concern whose mandate is to respond “*to extreme poverty ... due to disaster or long-term economic and social factors*” also supports the R2P in a more restricted manner, and GOAL with over 150 staff alongside 2,000 local staff in humanitarian aid in fourteen countries, Goal’s mandate states that their “*Programs (are) aimed at the poor and those suffering effects of war &/or natural disaster.*”

The Irish state through direct funding and personnel, and through UN organs and ECHO, and NGOs has supported Haiti over the past years, the most recent disaster being the 2010 earthquake, flooding and cholera outbreak. With a population of just over 10 million and an area of 27,750 sq. km, Ireland holds certain identification with smaller states. Haiti’s vulnerability is evident by looking at its UN HDI, 161st out of 187 countries. Some 50% of deaths in Haiti are HIV/AIDS related with estimates of infection being 2.2% for the adult population (WHO 2012). In Haiti’s 200-year history, it has witnessed 32 coups. Indexes suggest that corrupt is high, and democracy low and the literacy rate is 49% of the population.

The EU/ECHO Responses to the Haiti disaster are illustrated by an evaluation of ECHO’s global response to the situation³. Here there is an astonishing top-down / bottom-up plethora of humanitarian aid networks illustrating that ECHO is linked to all scales, NGOs (e.g. Haitian and Irish), and UN institutions (e.g. WHO, FAO). Concerning the use of GIS and ESRI input into relief for Haiti⁴.

5. CONCLUSIONS

³ see <http://www.urd.org/Evaluation-of-DG-ECHO-s-response> and http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2012/AR2013_geo_fiche_Haiti.pdf

⁴ see http://www.esri.com/industries/aid-development/~/_media/Files/Pdfs/library/casestudies/haiti-relief.pdf

Since the inception of the European construction project in the 1950s, EU authorities and institutions have faced the challenge of creating sustainable centripetal forces binding different states and nations together, and drawing on their existing capacities and cultures. In the context of development experiences, this has been very varied between EU states, while in relation to promoting development in the Less Developed Countries and in delivering humanitarian action, the historical records and cultures vary greatly ranging from the former colonial maritime states of Belgium, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and UK, and land empires such as Germany and Austria to colonies such as Ireland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. These multiple experiences were compounded by the ideological parameters and narratives of the Soviet perspectives that imbued Central and East European states, in contrast to that of the liberal democracies in the Western countries of the Union. Of course due to economic, geopolitical, linguistic and cultural shared historical heritage, the former colonial states in the Union had developed special economic and political relationships with their former colonies in the wake of national independence.

With the implosion of the Soviet empire (1991), the post Cold War responses to geopolitical contexts and humanitarian spaces changed rapidly within the EU, and outside Europe. The global power system was now left with only one Superpower, the USA, and the EU was afforded greater economic and political opportunities in the former Soviet satellite states due to their geographical contiguity, and wider possibilities for presenting itself and its image on the world stage as a unified global leader. Significantly the EU created ECHO in 1992, and in 2010 the first dedicated EU Commissioner for international cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response was appointed. The problematic for the Commissioner lies in balancing the centripetal and centrifugal forces in integrating humanitarian institutions, organizations and actors within the Union, and the Union's relationships with third party countries, institutions, organizations and actors.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) created in 1997, while constantly promoting centripetal forces among EU member states, has had more limited success than other EU integration policies as was evidenced during the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Since 1999, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has become a significant part of the CFSP. The EU itself has limited military capability, member states are responsible for their own territorial defence and a majority of EU members are also members of NATO, which is responsible for the defence of Europe. In this context, nonetheless all EU states closely liaise on security issues. In relation to external humanmade humanitarian crises, greater meaningful unified EU action is needed on the global stage as witnessed in the prolonged Syrian War (2011-). Issues of peace enforcement became more significant with the EU Treaty of Amsterdam and CFSP (1997), and the 1999 NATO PfP (Partnership for Peace) and Petersburg Tasks, and creation of EU Battle Groups for humanitarian aid and action, and protection of civilian humanitarian workers. All this must be interpreted alongside the evolving principle of the UN Responsibility to Protect (R2P) which may become international humanitarian law within the next decade along with globalization forces.

EU initiated processes in relation to shared humanitarian actions among its member states have been illustrated by the case study of Ireland above which may well exemplify the ECHO centripetal processes to greater advantage than the narratives of more powerful EU states such as the UK and France, the former having a history of promoting the relationship with the USA and Atlanticism in the international arena, in contrast to France and more European perspectives. Similarly, the Haiti case study was used to illustrate the humanitarian reach of the EU states and ECHO in a globalising humanitarian space.

While most people agree that development aid and humanitarian action in crisis situations is imperative, where dispute arises is in the type of aid and action, the financing of this and the interpretations of the geopolitical contexts. This is exemplified in its approaches to humanitarian action by the UN and especially the Security Council's five permanent members. The contrasting approaches and use of the veto power by Russia and China is often in sharp contrast to EU member states UK and France, and the USA, despite the ending of the Cold War over two decades ago. This has been sharply witnessed during the humanitarian disasters in Darfur - Sudan (2003-2010) and Syria (2011-).

Future research in relation to ECHO time-space integrating processes, and humanitarian space, assistance, and networks is imperative in order for ECHO to fulfil its objectives and mandate in promoting the European construction project and the EU's role on the international stage. With specific

reference to humanitarian assistance, the holistic range of the geographers' competencies and skills need to be further enhanced by the possibilities offered by digital media and GIS, as too often technicians lack the geographical competencies vital in the sphere of humanitarian assistance (Smith, 2013; Verjee, 2007).

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