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### **Towards cross-border integration of border regions in the European Union: the conception of cross-border region**

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Andrzej J. Żuk

# Towards cross-border integration of border regions in the European Union: the conception of cross-border region

**Abstract:** Integration processes in the European Union (EU) do not only concern the member states, but also their regions, including areas bordering other EU countries. The aim of the paper is to present the conception of cross-border region (CBR), which refers to the processes of cross-border integration (CBI) of EU border regions. CBR is considered from three points of view. Firstly, its institutional dimension is presented, emphasising the special importance of cross-border multi-level governance through its organisational structure in the form of cross-border management institution (CBMI). Secondly, the relational dimension of CBR, which includes relations, ties and cross-border networks, is analysed. Thirdly, the economic dimension of CBR is introduced, showing possible strategies for its development of exo- and endogenous character. Special attention is paid to various types of pro-innovation policies in CBRs. At the end, the meaning of the CBR conception is presented and the main conditions for creating CBRs in the EU borderlands are indicated, the most important being the future of the European integration project.

**Keywords:** cross-border region, cross-border integration, border region, regional policy, European Union

## Introduction

Integration processes in the EU are multi-faceted (see Figure 1). It is possible to distinguish the integration at the state level (international) and integration at the level of regions of different EU member states (interregional), including the integration of border regions (cross-border). The progress of international integration is essentially understood as the expansion of integration (enlargement of the EU) or the deepening of integration (further advancement). Integration processes,

conditioned politically, institutionally, legally, socially, economically and spatially, interpenetrate and influence the nature of cross-border cooperation.

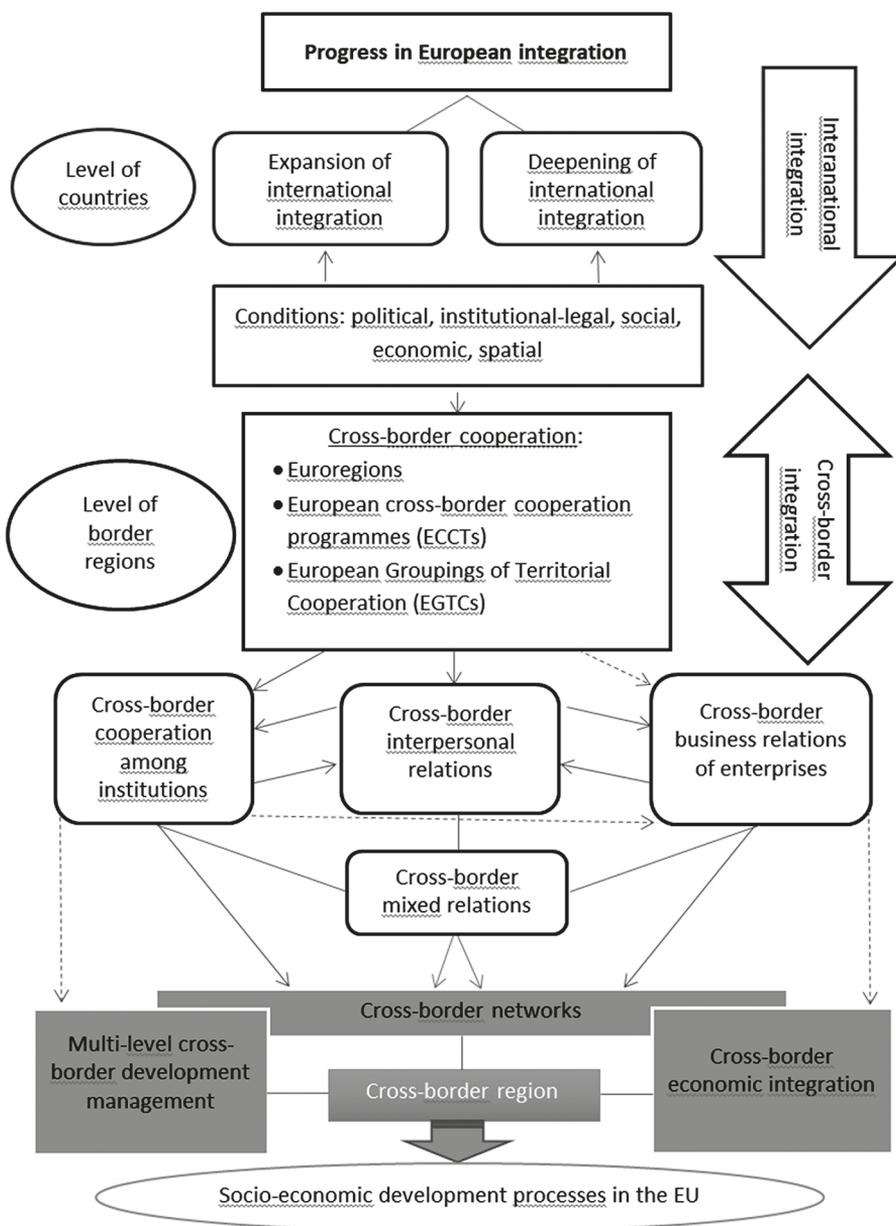
The occurrence of CBI is possible only in the case of the ongoing international integration process, i.e. at the internal EU borders. In the context of the internal border (open, permeable) none of the conditions should be an obstacle to integration processes, but it can be a stimulator. While in the case of cooperation at the external border (closed, poorly permeable), the lack of EU membership causes problems within each group of conditions – cross-border cooperation does not have sufficient support from political forces, markets, institutions, society and its territorial dimension is limited. As a result, cross-border cooperation within the EU member states is supposed to lead to deeper integration of border areas. On the other hand, cross-border cooperation at the EU's external borders is guided by the logic of expanding integration. It aims to civilise relations with the EU's external environment and to have good neighbourly relations, which prepare the ground for lively cooperation in the event of EU enlargement and change from external borders into internal ones.

From Figure 1. it also follows that cross-border integration processes have an impact on international integration processes. The reference can be found in the simultaneous economic convergence at the level of the member states observed in the EU and the divergence at the level of regions within these countries, which is detrimental to the harmonious development of the EU and means, among others, regionally uneven distribution of benefits from international integration.<sup>1</sup> Cross-border integration processes taking place mostly between economically peripheral border regions, undoubtedly serve regional convergence and thus are beneficial from the point of view of socio-economic development of the entire EU.

Cross-border cooperation has three main institutional-legal forms: the European cross-border cooperation programme (ECCP)<sup>2</sup>, the

- 1 Cf. R. Baldwin, Ch. Wyplosz, *The Economics of European Integration*, Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education, 2006, pp. 232-233; A. Cieślak, 'Location of Foreign Firms and National Border Effects: The Case of Poland', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, vol. 96, no. 3, 2005, p. 288.
- 2 ECCPs are EU Cohesion Policy programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and implemented in the border regions of neighbouring EU member states.

Figure 1. Socio-economic development of EU border regions in the conception of CBR



Explanation: arrows indicate impact (when dotted it is weak), lines indicate connection or division.  
Source: Author's own elaboration.

Euroregion and the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The practice of cross-border cooperation shows that none of them, occurring together with others or separately, automatically lead to cross-border integration of border regions. Cross-border cooperation leads to the creation of cross-border networks of relations: between institutions, interpersonal, mixed (e.g. institution-enterprise) and, to a much lesser extent, business relations of enterprises (see Figure 1). However, it rarely translates into CBI and multi-level cross-border development management, as evidenced by cross-border cooperation at the Polish borders.

The aim of the paper is to present the conception of cross-border region as a proposal of a strategic approach to shaping the processes of socio-economic development in the EU borderlands. The first part defines the concept of CBR, emphasising the crucial importance of CBI processes. Subsequently, the main dimensions of CBR: institutional, relational and economic are characterised, which together with the definition of CBR form the CBR conception. At the end, the importance of the conception is outlined, including the main conditions of creating CBRs in the EU borderlands.

## 1 The essence of the cross-border region

The concept of CBR is widely used in the subject matter literature, although not always defined and rarely treated in-depth and comprehensively.<sup>3</sup> In this work, CBR is understood as clearly territo-

- 3 Cf. T. Borys, *Obszary transgraniczne w statystyce regionalnej* [Cross-border areas in regional statistics], Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1999, p. 224; W. Gorzym-Wilkowski, 'Region transgraniczny na tle podstawowych pojęć geograficznych – próba syntezy' [Cross-border region against the background of basic geographical concepts – an attempt synthesis], *Przegląd Geograficzny*, vol. 77, no. 2, 2005, pp. 240-248; K. Krok, 'Współpraca przygraniczna jako czynnik rozwoju lokalnego' [Cross-border cooperation as a factor of local development], in: G. Gorzelak (ed.), *Polska regionalna i lokalna w świetle badań EUROREG-u* [Regional and local Poland in the light of EUROREG research], Warszawa: Scholar, 2007, p. 213; A. Miszczyk, *Uwarunkowania peryferyjności regionu przygranicznego* [Conditions of border region peripherality], Lublin: Norbertinum, 2013, pp. 59-60; D. Newman, 'Borders and Bordering: Towards an Interdisciplinary Dialogue', *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2006, pp. 180-181; OECD, 'Regions and Innovation: Collaborating across Borders', *OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation*, OECD Publishing, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264205307-en> [2015-05-28], pp. 16, 19-22; M. Perkmann, 'Cross-Border Co-operation as Policy Entrepreneurship: Explaining the Variable Success of European Cross-Border Regions', *CSGR Working Paper*, vol. 166, no. 5, Warwick 2005, p. 19; Z. Rykiel,

rially defined area crossed by at least one state border in which CBI processes take place and institutionalised cross-border cooperation is carried out, in particular by a jointly established CBMI, and it is based on a strategic approach to the development of integrating areas.

The CBR so defined, firstly, is of international and neighbouring character, consisting of administrative units located nearby and on both sides of at least one state border. Secondly, advanced cross-border cooperation conducted within its framework is institutionalised and strategically oriented. And thirdly, the processes of CBI are necessary for its emergence and development, which means that the creation of CBR is indirectly conditioned by the processes of international integration. Integration at country level leads to a change in the functions of state borders, due to the decrease in their formalisation and the increase in their permeability. Under the influence of cross-border cooperation and the initiation of CBI processes, state borders from “dividing” (barriers) become “connecting borders” (bridges). The progress and effects of integration at the international level have a positive impact on the further deepening of cross-border cooperation, which would culminate in the creation of CBRs. This would lead to further intensification of CBI,<sup>4</sup> fostering the boost of socio-economic development in the integrating border regions (see the lower part of Figure 1).

Thus, the CBI processes play a special role in the CBR concept.<sup>5</sup> Integration is “merging, the process of creating a whole from parts [...] so that these parts [...] are inseparably connected with the whole – they form its integral parts”. Thus, CBI, in general sense, can be defined as the process of creating CBR from border regions situated on

*Rozwój regionów stykowych w teorii i badaniach empirycznych* [Development of regions of contact in theory and empirical research], Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich – PAN, 1991, pp. 60-61; R. Suchocka, ‘Współpraca transgraniczna – nowy model stosunków interetnicznych’ [Cross-border cooperation – a new model of inter-ethnic relations], in: J. Leszkowicz-Baczyński (ed.), *Transgraniczność w perspektywie socjologicznej. Kontynuacje i wyzwania – T. 1* [Cross-borderness in the sociological perspective. Continuations and challenges – Vol. 1], Zielona Góra: Lubuskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2001, pp. 242-243; K. Szmigiel-Rawska and S. Dołzbłasz, *Trwałość współpracy przygranicznej* [Durability of cross-border cooperation], Warszawa: CeDeWu, 2012, pp. 10, 47, 103-104.

4 Cf. J. Ładysz, ‘Gospodarka przestrzenna jako dziedzina współpracy transgranicznej’ [Spatial economy as an area of cross-border cooperation], in: S. Korenik, J. Słodczyk (eds), *Podstawy gospodarki przestrzennej – wybrane aspekty* [Basics of spatial management – selected aspects], Wrocław: Wyd. AE we Wrocławiu, 2005, pp. 203-204; Borys, op. cit., p. 77.

5 Rykiel, op. cit., p. 55.

different sides of at least one state border, and then as a process of deepening the integration of the CBR. According to the above definition of the CBR, CBI is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of CBR. The key is also the advancement of cross-border cooperation, which is the fundamental determinant of the advancement of CBI, just as the advancement of cooperation between states is the basis for the advancement of international integration.

In a detailed sense, CBI takes various forms, including being considered as:

cross-border economic integration (CBEI) – means the process of formation (market-driven) and construction (policy-driven) of the common cross-border market of goods, services and factors of production, where the state border is not a barrier to their flow;<sup>6</sup>

cross-border social integration (CBSI) – it is a “process of saturating the social space with various types of ties”; in other approach, it is “fusion and harmonisation of elements of the social community, understood as the intensity and frequency of contacts between members of a given community and as acceptance within it of common values, norms and assessments”; the integration “is not a process of homogenisation, unification in the sphere of values, but a process of getting to know each other and agreeing on value systems and learning to tolerate differences”;<sup>7</sup>

cross-border territorial (spatial) integration (CBTI) – it is a cross-border process whose constitutive elements are: “development of specific, geographically defined production systems, such as industrial areas, industrial clusters and innovation systems”; it is also a cooperation within the “creation of a network of cities, transport corridors [...] development zones and ecological corridors”; it leads to increasing intensity of flows within the integrating territorial units in relation to external flows.<sup>8</sup>

The above considerations constitute the basis for specific dimensions of in-depth reflection on the CBR: institutional, relational and

6 Cf. Perkmann, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

7 Cf. Suchocka, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Rykiel, *op. cit.*, p. 55-57.

8 Cf. J. Zaucha et al., *Terytorialny wymiar wzrostu i rozwoju* [Territorial dimension of growth and development], Warszawa: Difin, 2015, pp. 20-22.

economic. Many issues within their framework are of a spatial nature and refer to the presented aspects of CBTI.

## 2. The institutional dimension of the cross-border region

The institutional dimension of the CBR can be determined using the conception of cross-border governance (CBG). CBG can be defined as “establishing, and keeping, a set of incentives, norms and organisations that are set up to coordinate and create policies across political boundaries”<sup>9</sup> The CBG conception is based on three pillars:<sup>10</sup>

1. political-managerial – the most important are the processes and mechanisms of making joint decisions; the multi-level governance (MLG) model is mainly considered;
2. institutional-organisational – it includes legal, institutional and organisational aspects of cross-border cooperation;
3. symbolic-cognitive – concerns cross-border relations, creation of cross-border community, emergence of cross-border identity.

The multifaceted nature of cross-border management means that in practice one can talk about a given cross-border governance system.<sup>11</sup>

MLG, also referred to as territorial dialogue<sup>12</sup>, is “a system of continuous negotiations between authorities at several territorial levels:

- 9 OECD, ‘OECD Territorial Review. Vienna-Bratislava Austria/Slovak Republic’, *OECD Report*, 2003, after: K.-L. Lepik, ‘Cross-Border Cooperation Institutional Organisation and Its Role in Regional Development’, Thesis of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Tallinn: Estonian Business School, 2010, [www.digar.ee/arhiiv/en/download/120068](http://www.digar.ee/arhiiv/en/download/120068) [2014-08-14], p. 18.
- 10 Cf. J. Jańczak, ‘Cross-border governance jako koncepcja zarządzania miastem podzielonym. Efektywność w warunkach członkostwa w UE’ [Cross-border governance as a conception of divided city management. Efficiency in terms of EU membership], in: J. Jańczak, M. Musiał-Karg (eds), *Pogranicze polsko-niemieckie po 2004 roku. Nowa jakość sąsiedztwa?* [Polish-German borderland after 2004. New neighborhood quality?], Toruń: Wyd. Adam Marszałek, 2009, pp. 221-222.
- 11 Cf. EGTC working group, ‘Handbook on the governance of cross-border conurbations’, May 2010, [http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Egtc/outputs\\_media/Handbook\\_CBGovernance\\_EGTC\\_URBACT\\_May\\_2010.pdf](http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/Projects/Egtc/outputs_media/Handbook_CBGovernance_EGTC_URBACT_May_2010.pdf) [2015-07-14], p. 16.
- 12 Jańczak, op. cit., pp. 218-219; J. Blatter, ‘From “Spaces of Place” to “Spaces of Flows”? Territorial and Functional Governance in Cross-Border Regions in Europe and North America’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2004, p. 530; Zaucha et al., op. cit., p. 301; ESPON(b), ‘TERCO: European Territorial Co-operation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life – Final Report-Scientific Report (Part I)’, January 2013, [http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/TERCO/Final\\_Report/TERCO\\_FR\\_ScientificReport\\_Part\\_I\\_Dec2012.pdf](http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/TERCO/Final_Report/TERCO_FR_ScientificReport_Part_I_Dec2012.pdf) [2015-05-29], pp. 27-28.

transnational, national, regional and local, as a result of a broad institution-building process and decision-making relocation that once transferred centralised state functions to a transnational level (upwards), or to the regional/local level (down).<sup>13</sup> MLG is therefore “a peculiar clashing of opinions and views of various participants in the decision game”, which is also “a way of shaping development policy together (i.e. in the course of an authentic debate) by formal or informal entities feeling accountable for the development of an area/region that is part of a larger territory”.<sup>14</sup>

MLG has a number of advantages from the point of view of the functioning of CBR. Firstly, it excludes the complete autonomy of the lower levels of state administration in shaping the policy of CBR, which means adhering to these issues the principle of sovereignty of the countries involved.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, it is in line with the ongoing cross-border cooperation, which is the basis for territorial dialogue, because it implies cooperation and partnership.<sup>16</sup> Thirdly, MLG “allows to take into account the administrative diversity in Europe and the unequal competences of individual regions in the member states of the EU”.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it mitigates the institutional and organisational distance and increases the coherence in this respect in borderlands. Fourthly, it aims to “use local potentials so that it would be compatible with the broader strategic development plan adopted at the supra-local level, e.g. national or regional”.<sup>18</sup> Fifthly, as a result of MLG cross-border cities may emerge.<sup>19</sup>

At the level of the EU, the legal framework for MLG in the cross-border dimension are in fact the rules on EGTC.<sup>20</sup> EGTC is perceived

13 G. Marks, *Structural policy and multi-level governance in the EC*, in: A. Cafruny, G. Rosenthal (eds), *The state of the European community. Vol. 2, The Maastricht debates and beyond*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder 1993, after: ESPON(b), op. cit., pp. 27-28.

14 Zaucha et al., op. cit., pp. 315, 321.

15 Cf. K. Tomaszewski, *Regiony w procesie integracji europejskiej* [Regions in the process of European integration], Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer, 2007, p. 104.

16 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 129.

17 Loc. cit.

18 Zaucha et al., op. cit., p. 321.

19 Jańczak, op. cit., p. 220. Cross-border city can be defined as a divided city (through which the state border passes), which is jointly managed on the principle of MLG by the city authorities, selected in individual countries, with the participation of representatives of regional authorities.

20 Cf. ESPON(a), ‘TERCO: European Territorial Co-operation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life – Final Report: Main Report’, January 2013, <http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/>

as a platform for cooperation between territorial units from various levels of government and as a means of transmitting certain competences of national and self-government authorities to supranational organisational structures.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the creation of EGTC in practice does not necessarily mean the creation of a MLG structure in which entities from various levels of public authority are involved as members of the grouping.<sup>22</sup> EGTCs, although legally regulated under the cohesion policy package, are not limited to supporting ECCPs.<sup>23</sup> Their universalism and relatively strong legal framework makes them capable of playing a significant role in the creation and development of CBRs. In this respect, they have a stronger position than Euroregional structures that do not have legal personality and are not regulated under EU law.

EGTCs and Euroregions can be seen as the cross-border territorial partnership bodies (CTPBs), i.e. “cooperation structures of at least two partners representing one or more of the three sectors (public, private or non-governmental) from different countries, that together implement long-term goals for specific region”.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, organisations from one country that establish cross-border cooperation relations can be described as cross-border cooperation institutions (CBCIs). They are mainly local government units and their dependent organisations as well as economic and non-governmental organisations.

CBCIs are the necessary elements of the institutional-organisational pillar in the conception of CBG, which defines the institutional dimension of the CBR. However, the organisational structure of MLG,

Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/TERCO/Final\_Report/TERCO\_FR\_MainReport\_Dec2012.pdf [2015-05-29], pp. 50-51; E. Nadalutti, 'Does the "European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation" Promote Multi-level Governance within the European Union?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2013, pp. 756-759.

21 Cf. T. Chilla, E. Evrard, C. Schultz, 'On the territoriality of Cross-Border Cooperation: "Institutional Mapping" in Multi-Level Context', *European Planning Studies*, vol. 20, no. 6, 2012, pp. 964-965.

22 ESPON(a), op. cit., p. 44.

23 M. Dziembała, 'Europejskie ugrupowanie współpracy terytorialnej jako instrument wspierający ponadnarodową współpracę regionów' [European grouping of territorial cooperation as an instrument supporting transnational cooperation of regions], in: E. Małuszyńska, I. Musiałkowska, G. Mazur (eds), *Unia Europejska 10 lat po największym rozszerzeniu. Perspektywa nowych państw członkowskich* [The European Union 10 years after the largest enlargement. The prospect of new Member States], Poznań: Wyd. UE w Poznaniu, 2015, pp. 270-273, 279-280.

24 Cf. Szmigiel-Rawska and Dołzbłasz, op. cit., p. 39.

here referred to as the CBMI, is of key importance to the CBR. The main characteristics of the CBMI that would enable the development of cross-border partnership and proper management of cross-border cooperation are the following:<sup>25</sup>

- organisational independence and clear specialisation in issues concerning the CBR;
- financial independence, so as not to be reduced to an institution implementing EU funds; the possibility of being the managing authority of one of the ECCPs strengthens the role of the CBMI and increases opportunities to influence the CBR, without at the same time completely defining the scope of initiatives undertaken or its significance for CBI processes;
- assigning it a key role in the CBR as an organisation outlining its development strategy;
- its perception by public authorities as competent and having a specific mandate to act;
- due to the decision-making competence, it is necessary to operate on the basis of the parity principle between partners;
- perceiving it not in terms of a new level of territorial administration, but as an institution increasing the effectiveness of cross-border cooperation through a strategic approach and enabling the meeting, exchange of experiences and initiation of joint action between entities from both sides of the border;
- the need for broad involvement of various types of cross-border cooperation partners: from all levels of public authority (type I governance) within the MLG structure; suitable for the specificity of cross-border cooperation, other administrative units making public decisions, such as: government agencies, cham-

25 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 22, 103-104, 115; M. Perkmann, 'The emergence and governance of Euroregions: the case of the EUREGIO on the Dutch-German border', paper presented at the workshop: Euroregions: experiences and lessons, Institut Universitari d'Estudis Europeus, University of Barcelona, 15-16 December 2005, <https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspacejspui/bitstream/2134/743/3/EUREGIO.pdf> [2015-02-15], pp. 19-20; OECD, *op. cit.*, p. 22; A. Mikołajczyk, K. Łokucijewski, 'Prawne i instytucjonalne uwarunkowania współpracy sieciowej' [Legal and institutional conditions for network cooperation], in: J. Lenzion, W. Toczyski (eds), *Współpraca sieciowa w rozwoju regionu metropolitalnego. Studia nad rozwojem i zarządzaniem w regionach metropolitalnych Europy* [Network cooperation in the development of the metropolitan region. Studies on development and management in the metropolitan regions of Europe], Gdynia: Instytut Studiów Europejskich, 2002, pp.70-71.

bers of commerce and industry, public-private associations (type II governance); entities of non-governmental and private sectors;

- due to the long-term nature of the activity, it is necessary to function as a permanent structure of cooperation with specific tasks within the CBR and towards the members of the CBMI, which disseminates knowledge and good practices regarding advanced cross-border cooperation;
- the operation of the CBMI is based on a common strategy defining the most important common needs and interests, goals, cooperation plans and potential mutual benefits, whose distribution is as even as possible on both sides of the border; the CBMI ensures that strategic plans translate into operational activities;
- the CBMI would base its activity on EU law and/or international agreements concluded between the countries concerned.

Legal aspects of the institutional-organisational pillar of the conception of CBG also apply to other conditions of cross-border cooperation within the CBR. Among them, regulations referring to cross-border public-private partnerships (CPPP) are perceived as particularly pro-development. Creating a specific mechanism for cross-border cooperation between the public and private sectors seems particularly important in the context of the current low share of private enterprises in the cross-border cooperation and the weakness of cross-border business relations.<sup>26</sup>

### **3. Relational dimension of the cross-border region**

The presented conception of CBG has also the symbolic-cognitive pillar, which mainly concerns cross-border relations. This topic is an area of interpenetration of the institutional and the relational dimensions of the CBR.

Cross-border relations arise between entities located in the borderland on both sides of the state border, e.g. within CBR. Due to the type of entities between which they are formed, they can be divided

26 Cf. M. Huk, M. Molak, 'Badanie ewaluacyjne polityki spójności w wymiarze terytorialnym – tworzenie funkcjonalnych obszarów transgranicznych' [Evaluation study of the territorial dimension of the cohesion policy – creation of functional crossborder areas], *Evaluation report*, 2011, [http://www.ofim.pl/dokument\\_do\\_pobrania/raport\\_ewaluacyjny.pdf](http://www.ofim.pl/dokument_do_pobrania/raport_ewaluacyjny.pdf) [2014-06-15], p. 46.

into: homogeneous and mixed (see Figure 1). Cross-border homogeneous relations include relations between entities of the same type, including relations of CBCIs, business relations of enterprises and interpersonal relations. Mixed relations occur between entities of at least two different types.

Cross-border relations in terms of their character are basically divided into cooperation relations and competition relations. The relations of cross-border cooperation are the domain of public sector institutions, while the relations of cross-border competition occur mainly between private sector entities.<sup>27</sup> From the point of view of the processes of socio-economic development of the CBR, business (economic) relations, which are the sphere of interpenetration of the relational and the economic dimensions of the CBR, are of particular importance. Economic relations mainly consist of regular transactions between two different companies, i.e. transfers of goods or services based on a written or unwritten agreement between these entities.<sup>28</sup> The nature and intensity of these relations are the main determinants of the level of regional economic integration across the border.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the pursuit of an “integrated cross-border economy” is particularly supported by cross-border cooperation between regional companies.<sup>30</sup>

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the dominant paradigm of policy towards cross-border relations changed. Initially, they were seen as “problematic interdependencies” and defined as “negative external factors that spill over national borders”. Coordinated spatial planning and financial compensations were seen as means to overcome them. In the 1990s, transboundary synergistic relations were recognised as the basis for the development of borderlands. Thus, the main focus

27 Cf. A. Raczyk, S. Dołzbłasz, M. Leśniak-Johann, *Relacje współpracy i konkurencji na pograniczu polsko-niemieckim* [Relationships of cooperation and competition in the Polish-German borderlands], Wrocław: Gaskor, 2012, pp. 83, 96.

28 Cf. H. van Houtum, ‘The Development of Cross-Border Economic Relations’, Amsterdam: ThelaThesis Publishers, 1998, <http://repository.uibn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/170151/170151.pdf?sequence=1> [2015-06-04], pp. 10, 53.

29 S. Krätke, ‘Regional Integration or Fragmentation? The German-Polish Border Region in a New Europe’, *Regional Studies*, vol. 33, no. 7, 1999, p. 632.

30 S. Krätke, ‘Cross-Border Co-operation in the German-Polish Border Area’, in: M. van Geenhuizen, R. Ratti (eds), *Gaining Advantage from Open Borders. An Active Space Approach to Regional Development*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001, p. 220.

of the development policy of border regions was directed at cross-border networking.<sup>31</sup>

Cross-border networks are basically complex and internally related systems of nodes and ties in the borderlands and across the state borders, including within CBRs.<sup>32</sup> The nodes are entities that establish multidirectional, lasting cross-border relations in the form of ties and institutions that stimulate or mediate in building cross-border ties. Clusters of nodes in cross-border networks are mainly border cities, including divided cities, where many entities belonging to cross-border networks usually operate.

In other terms, the nodes of cross-border networks (in the form of social structures) are the constituent elements of society that form, through social interactions, relations and ties. Such an understanding of cross-border networks allows us to look at CBRs as structures of cross-border social relations and ties, the design of which forms part of the border management strategy.<sup>33</sup> Cross-border social networks support the creation of trust relationships that, together with the acceptance and support of the society, are factors that increase the efficiency of cross-border management and support CBSI processes.<sup>34</sup>

From the point of view of the benefits for participating in networks entities, close-knit networks influence the creation of a stable environment and enable quick response to the changing demand on the cross-border market. Cross-border networking of business relations<sup>35</sup> can also lead to a cost-effective and efficient spatial division of employment within CBR. The development of network economy<sup>36</sup> leads

31 J. Blatter, N. Clement, 'European Perspectives on Borderlands', paper presented at European Regional Science Association conference, Dublin, August 1999, pp. 18-19.

32 Cf. A. Strihan, 'A Network-based Approach to Regional Borders: The Case of Belgium', *Regional Studies*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2008, p. 543.

33 Cf. loc. cit., pp. 540-542.

34 Cf. Houtum, op. cit., pp. 70-71; K. Mirwaldt, 'The Small Projects Fund and Social Capital Formation in the Polish-German Border Region: An Initial Appraisal', *Regional Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2012, pp. 263-264.

35 In other words, cross-border economic networks, which can be defined as a "set of relationships between actors (entrepreneur, factory, enterprise, organisation, state government, supranational institution and industrial district or regions as collective actors) who are participants in the economic game" (T. Strykiewicz, 'Sieciowa organizacja gospodarki a rozwój regionalny', *Biuletyn KPZK PAN*, vol. 219, 2005, p. 41).

36 Network economy is "a whole set of production, financial, innovative and cultural linkages" occurring both within regions and between individual regions (R. Capellin, 'The European Enlarge-

to an increase in the development potential of cross-border areas cooperating with each other,<sup>37</sup> and is also an important element of the economic dimension of the CBR.

## 4. The economic dimension of the cross-border region

● The economic dimension of the CBR is created by factors of CBEI, which include, among others, previously discussed elements of the institutional and relational dimensions of the CBR; in particular: cross-border enterprises and business support institutions, as well as cross-border business relations and networks. CBEI-friendly factors should be defined and supported in a given CBR by establishing and implementing a strategy for its socio-economic development. Cross-border cooperation in CBR will allow for increase of its competitiveness, if it is consciously shaped for the benefit of all the integrating regions in the medium or long term. This requires “coordination and multilateral and multifaceted cooperation of all interested partners”, so that cross-border cooperation will not be treated as a way to solve immediate problems, but as a durable and consciously used instrument of economic development of the regions bordering with foreign national economic space”.<sup>38</sup>

The CBR development strategy may contain two basic approaches: negative and positive. The negative approach is about identifying the main development problems based on the analysis of weaknesses and threats to development and the negative impact of the state border (actual and potential negative conditions). Whereas the positive approach is about revealing the directions and ways of CBR development, taking into account negative conditions and the analysis of strengths and development opportunities (actual and potential positive conditions). The CBR development strategy should also include

ment and the Guidelines of a New European Regional Policy’, ARL (manuscript), Hanover 2002, after: loc. cit., p. 42).

37 Cf. Houtum, op. cit., p. 10; Krok, op. cit., p. 213.

38 K. Kuciński, ‘Współpraca transgraniczna jako przesłanka konkurencyjności regionów’ [Cross-border cooperation as an indicator of regional competitiveness], in: J. Kitowski (ed.), *Czynniki i bariery regionalnej współpracy transgranicznej – próba syntezy* [Factors and barriers to regional cross-border cooperation – an attempt to synthesise], Rzeszów: Filia UMCS w Rzeszowie, 1998, pp. 19, 24.

a historical perspective to show the roots of socio-economic development in the CBR area, in line with the concept of path dependency<sup>39</sup> in socio-economic development.

Directions and ways of CBR development can be based on two opposite approaches to the socio-economic development of regions: exogenous and endogenous. In practice, “successful development is based on the optimal use of all available resources”<sup>40</sup>, therefore the CBR development strategy could explicitly or implicitly refer to both approaches, with endogenous development being of fundamental importance.

The exogenous development of a given CBR means development based on investments and financial support from outside the CBR. In this case, the CBR development strategy would focus on attracting investors from outside, and the main sources of financing cross-border cooperation would be seen in external financing, including EU funds. In this context, the implementation of ECCP within the CBR, managed by the CBMI, would be key. Striving to attract external investors could be reflected in the strategy by emphasising the importance of business location factors and in plans to create the cross-border special economic zone (CSEZ).<sup>41</sup>

Development impulses from the outside, which also include domestic public aid and external demand for products produced in the CBR, may be particularly important in a situation where the endogenous potential of the CBR is inadequate or not adequate enough in relation to business location factors that are changing when moving from a resource-intensive to a knowledge-based economy. The traditional location criteria are primarily: the availability and richness of individual resources, including production factors, and the lowest cost of their acquisition, employment or use. New location factors include:

39 Cf. Houtum, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

40 M. Kozak et al., ‘Ekspertyza pt. Wyzwania i cele dla programów współpracy transgranicznej z udziałem Polski po 2013 roku’ [Expertise: Challenges and goals for cross-border cooperation programmes with Poland’s participation after 2013], październik 2012, [https://www.ewt.20072013.gov.pl/Wiadomosci/Documents/ekspertyza\\_EWT\\_po\\_2013.pdf](https://www.ewt.20072013.gov.pl/Wiadomosci/Documents/ekspertyza_EWT_po_2013.pdf) [2015-09-13], pp. 26-27.

41 Cf. K. Starzyk, ‘Ekonomia polityczna transgranicznej współpracy gospodarczej’ [Political economy of cross-border economic cooperation], in: K. Starzyk (ed.), *Gospodarstwo Polskie w warunkach transformacji, integracji z Unią Europejską, globalizacji* [The economic neighborhood of Poland in the conditions of transformation, integration with the European Union, globalisation], Warszawa: Semper, 2005, pp. 45-46.

quality of human and social capital, presence of knowledge-generating institutions (mainly research and development units and universities) that constitute the business environment or special institutional and organisational conditions conducive to innovation (e.g. cross-border innovation clusters).<sup>42</sup>

It should be emphasised that “the erroneous belief is that the only condition for development of a given spatial unit is the external support”, which is an important development factor, but in general “better results can be achieved based on own growth factors, because they are sustainable, and primarily intraregionally oriented”.<sup>43</sup> The endogenous potential of the CBR, that is the CBR own potential (accumulated or achievable) constituting the basis of its development opportunities, consists of partial potentials, including: economic, social, natural, institutional or innovative.<sup>44</sup> Endogenous partial potentials are more often referred to as endogenous development factors.

The endogenous development factors are divided into “hard” and “soft”. In the era of globalisation of the world economy, the role of “soft” development factors is growing. They are widely perceived as “the most important factors of economic development determining the level of competitiveness of a given regional economic system”.<sup>45</sup> These factors are considered necessary not only for self-sustained development, but also for the effective use of exogenous impulses (EU funds, non-CBR investments).<sup>46</sup> The new paradigm of development (the information economy paradigm or the post-Fordist paradigm of economy) is char-

42 Cf. Miszczuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132; B. Gruchman et al., ‘Korzyści lokalizacji i kooperacji przedsiębiorstw na pograniczu polsko-niemieckim’ [Benefits of location and cooperation of enterprises on the Polish-German Border], in: R. Barczyk (ed.), *Rozwój gospodarczy i rozwój przedsiębiorstw na pograniczu polsko-niemieckim w procesie integracji Polski z Unią Europejską* [Economic development and development of enterprises on the Polish-German border in the process of Poland’s integration with the European Union], Poznań: Wyd. AE w Poznaniu, 2003, p. 158.

43 Kuciński, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

44 Cf. *loc. cit.*, p. 19; Zaucha et al., *op. cit.*, p. 277.

45 K. Falkowski, ‘Czynniki i ograniczenia konkurencyjnego rozwoju regionów przygranicznych. Ujęcie teoretyczne’ [Factors and limitations of competitive development of border regions. Theoretical approach], in: E. Teichmann (ed.), *Wschodnie pogranicze rozszerzonej Unii Europejskiej* [Eastern borderland of the enlarged European Union], Warszawa: Wyd. SGH, 2006, pp. 29-30.

46 Cf. K. Olejniczak, ‘Rola Programu Współpracy Przygranicznej PHARE w rozwoju lokalnym województw zachodnich’ [The role of the PHARE Cross-Border Cooperation Programme in the local development of Western voivodships], in: G. Gorzelak (ed.), *Polska regionalna i lokalna w świetle badań EUROREG-u* [Regional and local Poland in the light of EUROREG research], Warszawa: Scholar, 2007, p. 238.

acterised by building the region's competitiveness with the use of "soft" endogenous factors (especially knowledge and innovation). Whereas the role of "hard" factors was underlined in the earlier paradigm of development (the paradigm of industrial economy or Fordist paradigm of economy), which was based on the center-periphery relations, access to production factors and their efficient use as well as physical accessibility and transport costs.<sup>47</sup> The growing importance of "soft" endogenous development factors means that the region, which is often characterised by double peripherality (on the one hand geographical, and on the other, economic, social or political)<sup>48</sup>, has the opportunity to make a development leap, because "in the course of its civilisation development does not have to go through successive stages of development; it is possible to move directly from agrarian civilisation to information civilisation, bypassing the industrial phase".<sup>49</sup> Of particular importance in this respect is support for the emergence of innovation and knowledge-based economy within the CBR.

Recognising the potential of the cross-border dimension of innovation is an example of a new approach to cross-border cooperation guided by opportunities, in contrast to the traditional approach focusing on barriers and ways to overcome them. This new approach takes into account the potential of CBRs for innovation-driven growth, and sees the objective of cross-border cooperation in the creation of "the cross-border innovation-based growth pole".<sup>50</sup>

In each border region there are specific innovation opportunities that depend on many factors, including innovation support policy and institutional arrangements. As part of pro-innovation policy, partial or complex solutions can be supported. Examples of pro-innovation partial instruments or actions that can be implemented in CBRs, due to the thematic area, are:<sup>51</sup>

47 Ibid., p. 237; Kozak et al., op. cit., pp. 27-28; Krok, op.cit., pp. 212-213.

48 Newman, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

49 Cf. A. Olechnicka, *Regiony peryferyjne w gospodarce informacyjnej* [Outermost regions in the information economy], Warszawa: Scholar, 2004, pp. 67-68.

50 Cf. OECD, op. cit., pp. 17-18; Lepik, op. cit., p. 11.

51 Cf. OECD, op. cit., pp. 137-141; Lepik, op. cit., p. 10; P. Pachura, 'Analiza potencjału budowy efektywnych struktur transgranicznych sieci innowacyjnych na przykładzie województwa śląskiego i regionów Czech i Słowacji' [Analysis of the potential of building effective structures of cross-border innovative networks on the example of the Śląskie Voivodship and regions of the Czech

- development strategy and policy: mapping of clusters or value chains, technological foresight, benchmarking, joint-branding of the CBR;
- R&D support: joint public research programmes, common research infrastructure and sharing of access to research facilities, private research and development funding programmes, “triple helix” between the public, private and scientific sectors;
- technology transfer and innovation support: consultancy in innovation provided by specialised intermediary institutions, consultancy for spin-off start-ups and in knowledge-intensive areas, scientific or technological parks and incubators, cluster or network initiatives;
- human capital: joint university or other programmes at the higher education level; plans to attract, retain or mobilise talents; help in finding a place on the cross-border labour market;
- other: joint implementation of public procurement in highly innovative areas; awarding prizes for innovation.

Along with the progress of CBI processes in the CBR, with more and more mature and multifaceted cross-border cooperation, circumstances are created that favour more comprehensive solutions in the cross-border innovation policy. Initially, such pro-innovation initiatives may be related to the designation of and direction development policy on “functional cross-border area for innovation”, an area not necessarily coinciding with administrative boundaries, which “is characterised by a high density of internal interactions in areas related to Innovation”.<sup>52</sup> Subsequently, in favourable circumstances, an even more comprehensive solution could be created in the form of cross-border regional innovation system (CRIS).<sup>53</sup> In the realm of emerging globalised economy based on knowledge, the long-term competitive

Republic and Slovakia], Częstochowa 2009, [http://www.archiwum.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Documents/2\\_059.pdf](http://www.archiwum.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Documents/2_059.pdf) [2015-05-19], pp. 57-83.

52 OECD, op. cit., pp. 17-19, 48.

53 Cf. M. Trippel, ‘Developing Cross-Border Regional Innovation Systems: Key Factors and Challenges’, *Tijdschrift voor Ecomische en Sociale Geografie*, vol. 101, no. 2, 2010, pp. 151-157; K.-J. Lundquist, M. Trippel, ‘Distance, Proximity and Types of Cross-border Innovation Systems: A Conceptual Analysis’, *Regional Studies*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2013, p. 454; Krätke, op. cit., p. 632.

strength of CBRs is seen in their ability to create an integrated innovation system.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusions

The presented CBR conception, which is a proposal to deepen integration processes in the EU at the regional level, should be considered bearing in mind several issues.

First of all, it is basically an outline of the theoretical concept of CBR, emphasising mainly economic issues of an institutional nature. Detailed and comprehensive solutions, tailored to the specific CBR, would contain documents establishing the CBR and the strategy for its development. Undertaking this kind of deep cross-border cooperation would be preceded by a cost-benefit analysis in terms of the political, economic and social consequences of CBR creation. Secondly, it seems that close cross-border cooperation within CBR requires further advancement of cooperation between EU member states. It could take the form of enhanced cooperation for those wishing to undertake it, with the European Commission legislative support and based on the achievements of cross-border EGTCs. Thirdly, a fundamental reform of the functioning of ECCPs is needed. They should play an important role in the institutional structure of CBRs and subordinate to CBMIs, which implement the CBR development strategy. Fourthly, the prerequisite for CBI within CBR is the openness of borders, a favourable climate for cooperation in the EU and a high level of trust between member states. For this reason, the future success of the European integration project is crucial, in the context of internal disintegration threats, external challenges (in particular including those related to migration) and the direction of future political, institutional and socio-economic reforms of the EU.

54 Cf. Lundquist, Trippel, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-452.

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