



Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe (Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej)

Publication details, including instructions for authors:
<http://www.iesw.lublin.pl/rocznik/index.php>

ISSN 1732-1395

European Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes on Polish Borders: Determinants of Cross-Border Effects, Weaknesses and Necessary Changes

Andrzej J. Żuk^a

^a The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Published online: 10 Dec 2018

To cite this article: Andrzej J. Żuk, 'European Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes on Polish Borders: Determinants of Cross-Border Effects, Weaknesses and Necessary Changes', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, Vol. 16, No. 5, 2018, pp. 123-140.

Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe (Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej) is a quarterly, published in Polish and in English, listed in the European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS), Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL), BazEkon and IC Journal Master List (Index Copernicus International). In the most recent Ministry of Science and Higher Education ranking of journals published on the Polish market the Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe received one of the highest scores, i.e. 14 points.

Andrzej J. Żuk

European Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes on Polish Borders: Determinants of Cross-Border Effects, Weaknesses and Necessary Changes

Abstract: European cross-border cooperation programmes (ECCPs) implemented on Polish borders during two completed programming periods (2004-2006 and 2007-2013) had a positive impact on border regions the programmes covered. At the same time, their weaknesses, identified in the subject matter literature, did not allow full use of the potential of cross-border cooperation. The aim of the paper is to show the most important weaknesses of the programmes and to propose ways to overcome them. The first way to do so is to analyse the main determinants of the so-called 'cross-border effects' (CBEs). The second idea is to characterise and evaluate the institutional system of the ECCPs. The third way is to propose a systemic solution to the problems with the ECCPs. It is proposed in the form of a strategic approach to borderlands development. Finally, the weaknesses of the ECCPs are divided into 'technical' and 'chronic' ones, with outlining the appropriate measures for limiting both categories.

Keywords: European cross-border cooperation programme, cross-border effect, border region, regional policy, European integration

Introduction

European cross-border cooperation programmes are EU Cohesion Policy programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and implemented in the border regions of neighbouring European Union (EU) member states. Among various forms of cross-border cooperation, ECCPs are known to be the strongest financially, so that their effects, including cross-border effects, seem relatively the most significant. For this reason, an important issue, and the main objective of the paper, is to point the most important weaknesses of

the programmes and to propose necessary changes that will help increase their effectiveness.

The article concerns the ECCPs with the participation of Poland¹, i.e. programmes implemented jointly by Poland and the EU member states along its internal borders. The article not only pays particular attention to the evaluation of completed ECCPs programmed in 2004-2013², but also to the important changes in regulations relating to the ECCPs implemented in the current programming period (2014-2020). These are especially important when analysed from the perspective of the ex-post evaluation mentioned previously. The study is based on the desk research method which mainly involved a thorough review of the various pieces of the subject matter literature.

The initial part of the paper defines the concept of cross-border effects and names the main factors that shape them. Secondly, the paper characterises the weaknesses of the programmes within these determinants. Then, the paper proposes possible changes in the ECCPs to overcome these weaknesses. The second part of the study specifies the institutional system of the programmes studied, indicating its main weaknesses and postulating necessary changes. The analysis progresses into the characterization of the importance of a strategic approach to the development of borderlands in the context of cross-border cooperation within the framework of ECCPs. The paper concludes by dividing the weaknesses of the ECCPs into two groups and proposing two ways of overcoming them.

1. Cross-border effects and their main determinants

1. European cross-border cooperation programmes influence the socio-economic development of borderlands they cover, without being merely a “financial support for cooperation between regions”³. This is

- 1 Many of the weaknesses discussed and changes proposed apply to other ECCPs in the EU.
- 2 That is: Germany (Meklemburg-Vorpommern-Brandenburg) – Poland (Zachodniopomorskie) 2004-2006 and 2007-2013, Germany (Brandenburg) – Poland (Lubuskie) 2004-2006 and 2007-2013, Poland (Dolnoslaskie) – Germany (Saxony) 2004-2006 and 2007-2013, The Czech Republic – Poland 2004-2006 and 2007-2013, Poland – Slovakia 2004-2006 and 2007-2013, Lithuania – Poland 2007-2013 and South Baltic 2007-2013 (a total of 12 programmes).
- 3 J. Blatter and N. Clement, ‘European Perspectives on Borderlands’, paper presented at European Regional Science Association, Dublin, August 1999, pp. 25-27; S. Ciok, ‘Pogranicze zachodnie Pol-

evidenced by their various positive effects, which are widely discussed in the subject matter literature.⁴ The positive effects of ECCPs are considered cross-border when these programmes finance projects whose products, results or impacts concern areas on both sides of the border. Otherwise, those effects are near-to-border – ECCPs projects affect areas on one side of the border only. CBEs of cooperation within ECCPs are particularly highly desirable, because they usually indicate joint and coordinated actions of beneficiaries from adjacent areas and fairly strong cross-border relations based on prospects of mutual benefits.⁵

The type of beneficiary, the direction of support (selected category of intervention) and the project location are considered the most important factors shaping CBEs of the ECCPs.⁶ Thus, the basic sources of the identified poor cross-border effects of the programmes lie precisely in the main determinants of the CBEs.

1.1. The type of beneficiary as the determinant of cross-border effects

One of the main problems of the ECCPs programmed in 2004-2013 was an unbalanced legal structure of beneficiaries. The European model

ski w perspektywie integracji europejskiej' [The western borderland of Poland in the perspective of European integration], *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2000, p. 98; K. Tomaszewski, *Regiony w procesie integracji europejskiej* [Regions in the process of European integration], Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer, 2007, pp. 120-121.

- 4 Cf. S. Dołzbłasz and A. Raczyk, *Współpraca transgraniczna w Polsce po akcesji do UE* [Cross-border cooperation in Poland after EU accession], Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer Business, 2010; 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: Wyd. Scholar, 2007; A. Miszczuk, *Uwarunkowania peryferyjności regionu przygranicznego* [Conditions of border region peripherality], Lublin: Norbertinum, 2013; M. Perkmann, 'Building Governance Institutions Across European Borders', *Regional Studies*, vol. 33, no. 7, 1999; L. O'Dowd, 'The Changing Significance of European Borders', in: J. Anderson and L. O'Dowd, T. M. Wilson (eds), *New Borders for a Changing Europe: Cross-Border Cooperation and Governance*, London: F. Cass, 2003.
- 5 Cf. T. Klimczak et al., 'Efekty transgranicznej współpracy polskich regionów w okresie 2004-2006 – Raport końcowy' [The effects of cross-border cooperation of Polish regions in the period 2004-2006 – Final report], Warszawa: MRR, 2010, p. 7; S. Dołzbłasz and A. Raczyk, 'Relationships Between Actors of Transborder Co-Operation. Polish-German Borderland Case Study', *EUROPA XXI*, vol. 20, 2010, p. 124.
- 6 S. Ciok et al., 'Polska–Niemcy. Współpraca i konkurencja na pograniczu' [Poland–Germany. Co-operation and competition in the borderland], *Studia Geograficzne*, vol. 81, Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008, pp. 173-174. Cross-border effects of ECCPs are also conditioned by many other factors, including: the advancement and history of cross-border cooperation, the existence of cross-border relations and ties, or the geographical, social and economic similarity of adjacent areas.

of cross-border cooperation is characterised by the dominance of the public sector, which is mainly represented by territorial self-government units, whereas in the North American model institutionalised cross-border cooperation is based much more on the involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).⁷ Maintaining the structure of beneficiaries – in which public institutions lead by far – while the shares of NGOs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are relatively small, can lead, among others, to over-institutionalisation and over-formalisation of the programmes.⁸ It is important to emphasise that “building sustainable cross-border cooperation structures that effectively respond to local common needs of citizens on both sides of the border must be based on an institutional system representing all groups of interest”⁹

The direct participation of private enterprises as beneficiaries and cooperation between them were very limited in the ECCPs due to formal barriers. Some of them resulted from the programming documents, which in most cases didn't directly exclude the private sector. In fact, they discouraged it due to restrictions on the non-profitability of projects or their focus on creating public goods.¹⁰ The involve-

- 7 M. Huk and 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], *Raport ewaluacyjny*, 2011, http://www.ofim.pl/dokument_do_pobrania/raport_ewaluacyjny.pdf [2014-06-15], pp. 37-38; J. W. Scott, 'European and American Contexts for Cross-border Regionalism', *Regional Studies*, vol. 33, no. 7, 1999, pp. 609-610; 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. 541; S. Dołzbłasz, 'Sieci współpracy transgranicznej na pograniczach Polski' [Cross-border cooperation networks in the Polish borderlands], *Rozprawy Naukowe Instytutu Geografii i Rozwoju Regionalnego*, vol. 40, Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2017, p. 237.
- 8 Cf. Ciok et al., op. cit., pp. 159, 173; S. Dołzbłasz and A. Raczky, 'New Versus Old Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes in the Example of Polish-Czech and Polish-German Border Areas', *EUROPA XXI*, vol. 16, 2007, pp. 160, 162; K. Szmigiel-Rawska et al., 'Raport końcowy z badania: Wpływ polityki spójności na rozwój przygranicznej i ponadnarodowej współpracy terytorialnej polskich regionów w perspektywie 2007-2013' [Final report from the study: The impact of cohesion policy on the development of cross-border and transnational territorial cooperation of Polish regions in the perspective of 2007-2013], 2016, <https://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/media/18792/Raport.pdf> [2017-01-10], pp. 72-73.
- 9 Huk and Molak, op. cit., pp. 37-38.
- 10 Szmigiel-Rawska et al., op. cit., pp. 72-73; Ciok et al., op. cit., pp. 159, 172; K. Mirwaldt and I. McMaster, J. Bachtler, 'Reconsidering Cohesion Policy: The Contested Debate on Territorial Cohesion', *EoRPA Paper* 08/5, March 2009, http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/EoRPA/Documents/EoRPA_08_Papers/EoRPA_08-5.pdf [2015-05-30], p. 31.

ment of the private sector, which is crucial to economic cooperation in borderlands, is highly desirable as these entities foster the spread of knowledge and innovation in neighbouring border areas.¹¹ This in turn strengthens development processes. In order to increase private sector investments in the 2014-2020 programmes, the role of financial engineering instruments under the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) has been emphasised stronger than before.¹²

The increasing role of the small projects funds (SPFs) under the ECCPs helped SMEs and NGOs to take part in the programmes, which allowed to activate local communities and to support grassroots initiatives. At the same time, it should be noted that due to the difficulties in directing SPFs projects to strategic issues and measuring their effects, they weren't the main component of the programmes. The choice to fund any of them should be duly diligent.¹³ The more strategic-oriented were the so-called 'flagship projects,' big and high priority projects, supported due to their importance for the entire cross-border area, and therefore with a strong cross-border dimension. The need to finance the flagship projects was associated with the necessity to counterbalance the project-led approach in the programmes, which did not favour game-changing interventions and truly innovative projects. Additionally, the implementation of the flagship projects somehow replaced the lack of a strategic dimension of the programmes, understood as "a clear framework with clearly identified results in line with the objectives set and a clearly defined intervention logic combining inputs, outputs, results and impact of programmes".¹⁴

- 11 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], October 2012, https://www.ewt.20072013.gov.pl/Wiadomosci/Documents/ekspertyza_EWT_po_2013.pdf [2015-09-13], pp. 7, 281; A. Raczyk and 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, p. 126.
- 12 Cf. especially: Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, L 298/1, 26 October 2012, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex:32012R0966> [2015-04-08].
- 13 Cf. Kozak et al., op. cit., pp. 8, 295; Klimczak et al., op. cit., p. 185.
- 14 Cf. Panteia, 'INTERREG III Community Initiative (2000-2006) Ex-Post Evaluation. Final Report', May 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2006/interreg_final_report_23062010.pdf [2015-05-14], p. 67; Kozak et al., op. cit., s. 8; OECD, 'Regions and

Bearing in mind the above considerations, the actions that would increase the effectiveness of the ECCPs seem to be¹⁵:

- to create a system of incentives which would encourage the entities which are not part of self-government administration to participate in the programmes;
- to enable private enterprises, and other entities not yet discussed, to be involved in the early stages of creating the ECCPs, that is when their strategies and priorities are being determined, per principle of partnership; the enterprises in question are knowledgeable about the investment needs of the support areas; their expertise covers also the formal and organisational obstacles that limit their participation in the programmes, and hinder the implementation of co-financed projects;
- to introduce the mechanisms for financing the projects covered by public aid; this is particularly important for companies cooperating with the research and development sector (R&D);
- to allocate a part of the programmes' funds for financing joint systemic projects available for neighbouring regional self-government authorities being on both sides of the border; it would allow the gradual development of strategies and structures for cooperation towards a jointly managed cross-border region, and future allocation of part of the support for crucial investment projects, including joint infrastructure projects; greater involvement of regional self-government authorities in the implementation of the ECCPs would ensure a proper status of cooperation, increase its sustainability, and give it a strategic dimension;
- to maintain the leading role of territorial self-governments as the most important entities of cross-border cooperation by strengthening the importance of economic organisations (including local and regional organisations supporting economic development, entrepreneurship, or the labour market) in co-

Innovation: Collaborating across Borders', *OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation*, OECD Publishing, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264205307-en> [2015-05-28], p. 83.

15 Kozak et al., op. cit., pp. 275-277; Raczyk and Dołzbłasz, Leśniak-Johann, op. cit., p. 297; Szmigieli-Rawska et al., op. cit., pp. 9, 98, 128; Klimczak et al., op. cit., pp. 11-13, 181; ESPON, '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/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/TERCO/Final_Report/TERCO_FR_MainReport_Dec2012.pdf [2015-05-29], p. 50.

operation with networks at the local level and continuing to build links between administration and scientific entities at regional level.

1.2. The direction of support as the determinant of cross-border effects

The wide group of beneficiaries of the programme translates into a larger number of financed directions of intervention which means a greater representation of 'soft' projects. The diversity of the set of implemented projects in a programme also depends on the level of economic development on both sides of the border. In the less developed border regions there is a high concentration of infrastructure investments due to the large investment needs.¹⁶ The additional argument for increased infrastructure investments is a large divergence in its equipment on both sides of the border, which has been especially visible on the Polish-German border. In this case it is necessary to create the so called 'material basis for cooperation', and to eliminate differences in the spatial development level. The improvement of the existing transport and communal infrastructure is seen as a prerequisite for the establishment and development of cross-border relations.¹⁷

The excessive concentration of the ECCPs on financing 'hard' projects led to phenomena unfavorable for the development of cross-border cooperation. Firstly, some local and regional authorities perceived the programmes as a chance to finance always unmet infrastructural needs of the border area communes, instead of focusing on meeting the needs of a cross-border nature. Therefore, it is postulated that such investments should not be an end in itself, but should support non-infrastructure investment objectives, such as the development of human capital or the development of local communities. Secondly, it resulted in a lack of funds for projects that could not only affect the socio-economic development of cooperating border regions, but also could contribute to the emergence and development of cross-border

16 Raczyk and Dołzbłasz, Leśniak-Johann, op. cit., p. 297; Mirwaldt and McMaster, Bachtler, op. cit., p. 38.

17 Cf. Panteia, op. cit., p. 55; Ciok et al., op. cit., p. 158; 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: Wyd. Scholar, 2007, p. 251.

relations. The need was recognised, as the material basis for cooperation was created, of gradual shifting of funds from infrastructure investments to support: development of human resources, cooperation of economic entities (including SMEs), R&D, spatial planning, adaptation and development of agricultural or degraded areas, and reduction of barriers to access the labour market on the other side of the border.¹⁸

In the case of the more developed border regions, a significant stream of activities is also associated with a common strategic framework in the field of environmental protection, spatial development, integrated and sustainable transport, tourist activities and provision of basic services.¹⁹ These regions are characterised on average by a greater depth of cooperation at the project level, i.e. a greater variety of projects and degree of experimentation within their framework, which may indicate a greater innovativeness of the implemented activities. Indeed, when the pre-conditions for the development of cross-border cooperation are fulfilled, it is possible to support the increase of cross-border competitiveness through innovation and R&D, connection of intangible or transport networks and to finance the integration of the cross-border labour market and the management of cross-border water resources and flood control.²⁰

The concentration of support in the programmes can also be considered in terms of the diversity of funded priorities and domains, i.e. from the point of view of thematic concentration. One of the weaknesses of ECCPs implemented under INTERREG IIIA (2004-2006) on the Polish borders was the scattering of resources due to financing a large number of priorities, as a consequence of a very wide dispersion of intervention directions in all European cohesion policy programmes. Such a capacious thematic structure of the programmes favoured the emergence of the demand model for shaping cooperation – the beneficiaries' demand for specific types of projects largely

18 Cf. Ciok et al., op. cit., p. 158; S. Dolzblasz and A. Raczyk, 'The Role of the Integrating Factor in the Shaping of Transborder Cooperation', *Quaestiones Geographicae*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2010, p. 69; Klimczak et al., op. cit., p. 87.

19 Mirwaldt and McMaster, Bachtler, op. cit., p. 38.

20 Cf. Panteia, op. cit., pp. 14, 17; ADE, 'Ex-post Evaluation of Cohesion Policy Programmes 2007-2013, Focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) – Final Report: Main Report', July 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp11_final_report.pdf [2016-10-10], p. 55.

determined the nature and effects of the ECCPs.²¹ The demand-side approach prevailed also in the next financial perspective, and one of the main weaknesses of the programmes implemented during 2007-2013 period, apart from a relatively small budget, limited coordination with other EU programmes, lack of knowledge transfers and difficulties in guaranteeing sustainability of effects, was still scattered resources due to financing a wide range of possible types of activities.²² It was not until the current ETC financing period that the thematic concentration was expressed explicitly as one of the programmes objectives²³, which created the possibility of building the supply model for shaping cooperation, in which the main strategic directions of intervention and potential programmes effects (including cross-border effects) are more often determined at the programming stage.

1.3. The location of beneficiaries as the determinant of cross-border effects

The project location affects cross-border effects of the project directly, depending on the proximity to the border (on average, the closer the project is to the border, the greater the effects), and indirectly, because of its importance to the direction of support (e.g. there are different types of projects implemented in urban and rural areas).²⁴ As the type of beneficiary has an impact on the project location²⁵, a better inclusion of entities located close to the border, especially those from rural areas and other areas poorly involved in cooperation, in the implementation of cross-border cooperation projects, seems to be an important postulate in this context.

Apart from the institutional eligibility of beneficiaries, which was mentioned above, the territorial eligibility of beneficiaries, meaning

21 Klimczak et al., op. cit., p. 8.

22 ADE, op. cit., p. 118, 122; J. Szlachta, 'Wyzwania przed europejską polityką spójności' [Challenges for the European cohesion policy], in: J. Stacewicz (ed.), *Polityka gospodarcza w poszukiwaniu nowego paradygmatu* [Economic policy in search of a new paradigm], *Prace i Materiały Instytutu Rozwoju Gospodarczego SGH*, vol. 92, Warszawa: Wyd. Szkoły Głównej Handlowej w Warszawie, 2013, p. 224.

23 Cf. art. 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, L 347/259, 20 December 2013, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1299> [2015-06-27].

24 Cf. Ciok et al., op. cit., p. 173.

25 Loc. cit., p. 174.

the possibility for institutions to participate in a given cross-border cooperation programme due to the location of their headquarters, is also an important issue. In the ECCPs with the participation of Poland, the principle was adopted that “beneficiaries of the programmes must first have their registered office on the territory of support, although such a reservation was not based on Community law”.²⁶ Withdrawal from this rule, while maintaining and emphasising the condition for the implementation of projects only in the area of support²⁷ and of the cross-border nature, could, firstly, compensate for the recent resignation from delimitation of adjacent areas to eligible areas. Secondly, it would enable the transfer of knowledge and know-how from strong growth centers located outside the support area, which would lead to the extension of the types and quantitative scope of beneficiaries of the programmes and could result in the implementation of innovative projects with higher CBEs. Thirdly, it would be a certain partial solution to the problem of disproportion of the area of support to the disadvantage of the German side in the Poland-Saxony programme. Fourthly, it would be an alternative to proposals to designate support areas not based on the NUTS system, but taking into account groups of specific areas (e.g. tourist areas), problems (e.g. environmental protection areas) or other functional areas²⁸, which may lead to fragmentation and, consequently, to weakening of the importance of cross-border cooperation. And fifthly, it would be a kind of ‘compensation’ for the fact that “geographical areas of intervention financed by the European Territorial Cooperation funds are often defined according to logic based on common problems, not common opportunities”.²⁹

26 Kozak et al., *op. cit.*, s. 50-51. It was only within the framework of the current ETC that the provisions on territorial eligibility for the lead beneficiaries and the sole beneficiaries were introduced, allowing under certain conditions the participation in the programmes entities from outside the support area (Cf. art. 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, *op. cit.*).

27 The provisions concerning ETC in 2014-2020 allow, under certain conditions, the approval of the managing authority for the implementation of the whole or part of the project outside the eligible area (Cf. art. 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, *op. cit.*). It seems that this does not serve to build strong cross-border relations in borderlands, especially since cross-border effects creation is not one of these conditions.

28 Cf. ESPON, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 52.

29 OECD, *op. cit.*, p. 83. In general, it is noted that ECCPs are mainly oriented towards common challenges, while to a much lesser extent they focus on creating new opportunities related to the complementarity of resources on both sides of the border by establishing “supply chain linkages [...] and complementarities in business functions among regions” (ADE, *op. cit.*, p. 91).

2. The institutional system of the programmes

Cross-border effects of the ECCPs implemented at Polish borders are also influenced by the institutional system of the programmes, which basically has had a threefold character:

- common implementation institutions – entities specifically appointed to implement the programmes, whose members are representatives from both sides of the border (currently the monitoring committee, the steering committee and the joint secretariat);
- separate implementation institutions – entities selected for the implementation of the programmes and being part of another institutional structure in one of the neighbouring countries (e.g. Ministry of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland performing in 2007-2013 period as the managing authority in the Poland-Slovakia programme);
- joint cooperation institutions – joint entities of cross-border cooperation entrusted with some role in the implementation of the ECCPs (currently Euroregions and potentially European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation – EGTCs).

The first group of institutions is characterised by a basic and inherent weakness which is the temporariness of functioning and a certain degree of complexity that can negatively affect the optimal functioning of the programmes.³⁰ The role of the second group should be different – instead of being e.g. managing authorities, they should be a part of a multi-level governance structures in the borderlands. Euroregions, which are involved in the implementation of the ECCPs through management of SPFs, have some serious and well-known weaknesses, including relatively small financial resources, lack of legal personality and inability to make binding decisions.³¹ In addition

30 Cf. G. Cotella, 'The Importance of the Operational Dimension in Cross-Border Initiatives: Italy Looks South-East', *EUROPA XXI*, vol. 16, 2007, p. 149.

31 Other significant weaknesses include low effectiveness in stimulating cross-border economic relations and major difficulties in coordinating within their framework strategies for economic development of adjacent territories (M. Perkmann, 'Euroregions: Institutional Entrepreneurship in the European Union', in: M. Perkmann and N.-L. Sum (eds), *Globalization, Regionalization and Cross-Border Regions*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 109). Another big drawback of Euroregions is their factual role as "agencies implementing external funds", thus "their activity cannot be assessed as conducive to shaping a cross-border region managed by local authorities" (K. Szmi-

to the above-mentioned groups of institutions, the local and regional authorities play an important role in cross-border cooperation within the programmes, exercising their authority in the support areas, and their representatives are part of the monitoring committees.

The institutional system of the ECCPs on the examined borders of Poland is, therefore, not integrated around the organisation representing the interests of the borderlands, but is dispersed. Enabling the creation of EGTCs, due to their legal personality and potential role as managing authorities³², should be seen as a step towards an integration of the institutional structure. From the point of view of long-term cross-border integration processes the system is, moreover, not durable and focused on operational rather than strategic activities. The sustainability of the system and greater stability of cross-border social relations would ensure the existence of the organisation representing interests of the borderlands, functioning on the principle of network governance.³³ However, the integrated governance of the programmes first requires a fundamental change in thinking about cross-border cooperation – its aim cannot be solely the efficient spending of EU funds from ECCPs, but it should be based on strategic approach to the development of borderlands, striving to create functionally integrated cross-border areas.

3. The importance of the strategic approach to the development of borderlands

Issues related to the directions of the programmes' interventions, the types of entities involved, the territorial dimension of support and the institutional system of the ECCPs, which were discussed above, should be parts of strategies for the development of the borderlands. This would allow for better project choices, potentially maximising CBEs of the programmes. The strategic approach would also make it possible to set the hierarchy of priorities in the programmes, instead of adjusting the division of financial allocation to the demand of po-

guel-Rawska and S. Dołzbłasz, *Trwałość współpracy przygranicznej* [Durability of cross-border cooperation], Warszawa: CeDeWu, 2012, p. 106).

32 Cf. art. 22 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, op. cit.

33 Cf. Szmigiel-Rawska and Dołzbłasz, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

tential beneficiaries to ensure absorption of funds. Moreover, it would be the basis for coordinated actions between the interregional policy of states, intraregional policy in regions and cohesion policy funds that finance various programmes, which concern border regions. Coordination between these programmes is also very important, e.g. ECCPs in relation to regional operational programmes.³⁴

The strategies for the development of support areas should be a part of the ECCPs' programming documents, which would help to eliminate some serious shortcomings of cross-border cooperation. First of all, the strategy would be a response to the weakness of regional and local authorities' associated with their perception of long-term strategic issues in the cross-border dimension.³⁵ Secondly, it would provide a clear reference point for the implemented actions, so that a better overall cross-border cooperation would not be the main objective of the programmes.³⁶ Thirdly, the relatively low level of cross-border cooperation financing could be changed by direct increase of the scale of this funding.³⁷ Another solution is to combine ECCPs with programmes with larger budgets.³⁸ It's worth noting that, in view of the uncertainty of future EU funding and its scale, the strategies could become a bridge for cross-border cooperation to the reality of cohesion policy marginalisation in the EU. Fourthly, the strategic approach would be a concrete answer to the dependence of cross-border cooperation on the EU funds, as long as it helps to develop the concepts of alternative funding sources. Currently, due to the financial weakness of regional self-governments, the development of cross-border cooperation at the level of regional authorities is so heavily dependent

34 Szmigiel-Rawska et al., op. cit., p. 8.

35 R. Knippschild, 'Cross-Border Cooperation as a Tool for Urban Development in Border Regions?', *Europa XXI*, vol. 13, 2005, p. 124.

36 Among the cross-border cooperation programmes implemented in the EU in the years 2007-2013, in the case of nearly 90%, it was stated that the pursuit of cross-border cooperation was an end in itself (Cf. ADE, op. cit., pp. 20, 70).

37 In a well-known report by F. Barca, an increase from approx. 2.5% to 3-4% in the share of the territorial cooperation in the cohesion policy funds was proposed (F. Barca, 'An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy, A Place-Based Approach to Meeting European Union Challenges and Expectations', *Independent Report Prepared at the Request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy*, April 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/regi/dv/barca_report_/barca_report_en.pdf [2014-12-05], p. 193).

38 Cf. ESPON, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

on EU funding that it is indicated that the lack of this funding would cause a situation whereby cross-border activities of voivodships return as far as to the “cooperation pattern implemented in the foreign promotion and international cooperation departments based on partnership agreements”³⁹

The creation of development strategies for borderlands is in line with the issue-based approach to development promoted in the EU, which is the result of a tailor-made regional policy, i.e. based on real and potential needs, challenges and functional relationships. Such a long-term policy regarding formal and informal cross-border cooperation should in particular support: creation of favourable general conditions for cooperation, broadening the group of cooperation entities and integration of border regions. Common strategic and planning documents would help to define the most important undertakings and directions of borderlands development, as well as strengthen the strategic approach to border regions management.⁴⁰

Conclusions

The weaknesses of cross-border cooperation under the ECCPs are twofold. Some of them could be called ‘technical’, because their leveling requires changes within the elements of the existing ECCPs legal framework, as a result of the evolution of this framework. Such changes, to some extent introduced in the current programming period, include⁴¹:

- strengthening thematic concentration to prevent the dispersed interventions of the programmes;
- better definition of the cross-border cooperation objectives, to prevent the phenomenon of ‘cooperation for cooperation’ and increase the percentage of projects with cross-border effects;
- better integration of ECCPs with European, national and regional strategies to make programmes one of the tools to achieve strategic goals for the development of border regions;

39 Szmigiel-Rawska et al., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

40 Cf. ESPON, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Dołzbłasz and Raczyk, ‘New’, p. 164; Kozak et al., *op. cit.*, p. 143.

41 Cf. ADE, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

- encouraging the exchange of experiences between regions, including with respect to the establishment and functioning of EGTCs, to improve mutual learning and knowledge transfer processes;
- paying special attention to the good articulation of intervention logic at the programming stage and to strengthening the orientation on results in the programmes to raise their effectiveness.

Other weaknesses could be described as ‘chronic’, because they do not only concern the ECCPs but the cross-border cooperation in general (e.g. the problem with the institutional system of the ECCPs) and therefore require comprehensive measures that would take into account the whole system of cross-border cooperation on the borderlands. Shaping a system of cross-border cooperation requires a strategic and multidimensional approach, thus going beyond the ECCPs itself, an example of which is the conception of cross-border region.⁴²

References

- ADE, ‘Ex-post Evaluation of Cohesion Policy Programmes 2007-2013, Focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) – *Final Report: Main Report*’, July 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp11_final_report.pdf [2016-10-10].
- Barca, F., ‘An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy, A Place-Based Approach to Meeting European Union Challenges and Expectations’, *Independent Report Prepared at the Request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy*, April 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/regi/dv/barca_report_/barca_report_en.pdf [2014-12-05].
- Blatter, J., ‘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, pp. 530-548.

42 The outline of the conception of cross-border region is presented in: A. Żuk, *Znaczenie europejskich programów współpracy transgranicznej Polski z państwami członkowskimi Unii Europejskiej* [The importance of European cross-border cooperation programmes on Polish borders with the European Union member states], niepublikowana rozprawa doktorska [unpublished doctoral dissertation], Warszawa: Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, 2017, pp. 209-251.

- Blatter, J. and N. Clement, 'European Perspectives on Borderlands', paper presented at European Regional Science Association conference, Dublin, August 1999.
- Ciok, S., 'Pogranicze zachodnie Polski w perspektywie integracji europejskiej' [The western borderland of Poland in the perspective of European integration], *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2000, pp. 91-104.
- Ciok, S. et al., 'Polska–Niemcy. Współpraca i konkurencja na pograniczu' [Poland–Germany. Cooperation and competition in the borderland], *Studia Geograficzne*, vol. 81, Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008.
- Cotella, G., 'The Importance of the Operational Dimension in Cross-Border Initiatives: Italy Looks South-East', *EUROPA XXI*, vol. 16, 2007, pp. 131-152.
- Dołzblasz, S., 'Sieci współpracy transgranicznej na pograniczach Polski' [Cross-border cooperation networks in the Polish borderlands], *Rozprawy Naukowe Instytutu Geografii i Rozwoju Regionalnego*, vol. 40, Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2017.
- Dołzblasz, S. and A. Raczyk, 'New Versus Old Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes in the Example of Polish-Czech and Polish-German Border Areas', *EUROPA XXI*, vol. 16, 2007, pp. 153-165.
- Dołzblasz, S. and A. Raczyk, 'Relationships Between Actors of Transborder Co-operation. Polish-German Borderland Case Study', *EUROPA XXI*, vol. 20, 2010, pp. 119-129.
- Dołzblasz, S. and A. Raczyk, 'The Role of the Integrating Factor in the Shaping of Transborder Cooperation', *Quaestiones Geographicae*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2010, pp. 65-73.
- Dołzblasz, S. and A. Raczyk, *Współpraca transgraniczna w Polsce po akcesji do UE* [Cross-border cooperation in Poland after EU accession], Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer Business, 2010.
- ESPON, '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/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/TERCO/Final_Report/TERCO_FR_MainReport_Dec2012.pdf [2015-05-29].
- Huk, M. and 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 cross-border areas], *Raport ewaluacyjny*, 2011, http://www.ofim.pl/dokument_do_pobrania/raport_ewaluacyjny.pdf [2014-06-15].
- Klimczak, T. et al., 'Efekty transgranicznej współpracy polskich regionów w okresie 2004-2006 – Raport końcowy' [The effects of cross-border cooperation of Polish regions in the period 2004-2006 – Final report], Warszawa: MRR, 2010.
- Knippschild, R., 'Cross-Border Cooperation as a Tool for Urban Development in Border Regions?', *Europa XXI*, vol. 13, 2005, pp. 123-128.

- Kozak, M. 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], October 2012, https://www.ewt.2007-2013.gov.pl/Wiadomosci/Documents/ekspertyza_EWT_po_2013.pdf [2015-09-13].
- Krok, K., '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: Wyd. Scholar, 2007, pp. 212-235.
- Mirwaldt, K. and I. McMaster, J. Bachtler, 'Reconsidering Cohesion Policy: The Contested Debate on Territorial Cohesion', *EoRPA Paper 08/5*, March 2009, http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/Eorpa/Documents/EoRPA_08_Papers/EoRPA_08-5.pdf [2015-05-30].
- Miszczuk, A., *Uwarunkowania peryferyjności regionu przygranicznego* [Conditions of border region peripherality], Lublin: Norbertinum, 2013.
- O'Dowd, L., 'The Changing Significance of European Borders', in: J. Anderson and L. O'Dowd, T. M. Wilson (eds), *New Borders for a Changing Europe: Cross-Border Cooperation and Governance*, London: F. Cass, 2003, pp. 13-36.
- 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].
- Olejniczak, K., '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: Wyd. Scholar, 2007, pp. 236-258.
- Panteia, 'INTERREG III Community Initiative (2000-2006) Ex-Post Evaluation. Final Report', May 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2006/interreg_final_report_23062010.pdf [2015-05-14].
- Perkmann, M., 'Euroregions: Institutional Entrepreneurship in the European Union', in: M. Perkmann and N.-L. Sum (eds), *Globalization, Regionalization and Cross-Border Regions*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 103-124.
- Perkmann, M., 'Building Governance Institutions Across European Borders', *Regional Studies*, vol. 33, no. 7, 1999, pp. 657-667.
- Raczyk, A. and 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.
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the

- European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, L 347/259, 20 December 2013.
- Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002, L 298/1, 26 October 2012.
- Scott, J. W., 'European and American Contexts for Cross-border Regionalism', *Regional Studies*, vol. 33, no. 7, 1999, pp. 605-617.
- Szlachta, J., 'Wyzwania przed europejską polityką spójności' [Challenges for the European cohesion policy], in: J. Stacewicz (ed.), *Polityka gospodarcza w poszukiwaniu nowego paradygmatu* [Economic policy in search of a new paradigm], *Prace i Materiały Instytutu Rozwoju Gospodarczego SGH*, vol. 92, Warszawa: Wyd. Szkoły Głównej Handlowej w Warszawie, 2013, pp. 213-239.
- Szmigiel-Rawska, K. and S. Dołzbłasz, *Trwałość współpracy przygranicznej* [Durability of cross-border cooperation], Warszawa: CeDeWu, 2012.
- Szmigiel-Rawska, K. et al., 'Raport końcowy z badania: Wpływ polityki spójności na rozwój przygranicznej i ponadnarodowej współpracy terytorialnej polskich regionów w perspektywie 2007-2013' [Final report from the study: The impact of cohesion policy on the development of cross-border and transnational territorial cooperation of Polish regions in the perspective of 2007-2013], 2016, <https://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/media/18792/Raport.pdf> [2017-01-10].
- Tomaszewski, K., *Regiony w procesie integracji europejskiej* [Regions in the process of European integration], Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer, 2007.
- Żuk, A., *Znaczenie europejskich programów współpracy transgranicznej Polski z państwami członkowskimi Unii Europejskiej* [The importance of European cross-border cooperation programmes on Polish borders with the European Union Member States], niepublikowana rozprawa doktorska [unpublished doctoral dissertation], Warszawa: Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, 2017.