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Cross-border cooperation in selected Carpathian countries

Współpraca transgraniczna w wybranych krajach karpaccich

Summary: Cross-border cooperation helps to mitigate the negative effects of the border and overcome the consequences of the location of border areas. The article aims to identify the ways of using the cultural and natural potential in EU Cross-border Cooperation Programmes implemented in the Polish, Slovak, and Ukrainian areas of the Carpathians. The analysis covers the existing data using the method of examining strategic documents of the Programmes: Poland-Slovakia, Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine, and Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, implemented in three programming periods (2004-2020). A quantitative analysis of the projects concerning the use of cultural and natural heritage, which was implemented under the presented Programmes, was also carried out. The research was used to answer the following questions: (1) what kinds of projects with the use of cultural and natural heritage are carried out, (2) are there differences in the ways of using cultural and natural heritage, (3) are there differences between the Programmes implemented in internal and external border regions of the EU. The study made it possible to establish that in the case of all the Programmes, cultural and natural values are considered a strength of the regions and are associated with significant expectations in terms of their use in the development of these areas. At the same time, it is noticed that they are used insufficiently. Activities related to the use of cultural and natural heritage were supported in all the Programmes; however, it was the method of financing that largely determined the taking of action. Traditional (typical) ways of using natural and cultural resources are still dominant.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, project, cultural and natural heritage, the Carpathians

Streszczenie: Współpraca transgraniczna pomaga w łagodzeniu niekorzystnych skutków istnienia granic i w przewyżczeniu następstw położenia terenów przygranicznych. Celem artykułu jest zidentyfikowanie sposobów wykorzystania potencjału kulturowego i przyrodniczego w unijnych programach współpracy transgranicznej wdrażanych w polskiej, słowackiej i ukraińskiej części Karpat. Analizie poddano dane zastane, wykorzystując

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metodę badania dokumentów strategicznych programów Polska-Słowacja, Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina, Węgry-Słowacja-Ukraina i Węgry-Słowacja-Rumunia-Ukraina, realizowanych w trzech okresach programowania (2004-2020). Przeprowadzono także analizę ilościową projektów dotyczących wykorzystania dziedzictwa kulturowego oraz przyrodniczego, które realizowano w ramach przedstawionych programów. Badania posłużyły do uzyskania odpowiedzi na pytania: (1) jakiego rodzaju przedsięwzięcia z wykorzystaniem dziedzictwa kulturowego i przyrodniczego są realizowane, (2) czy istnieją różnice w zakresie sposobów wykorzystania dziedzictwa kulturowego i przyrodniczego, (3) czy istnieją różnice pomiędzy programami wdrażanymi w wewnętrznych oraz zewnętrznych regionach przygranicznych UE. Badanie pozwoliło na ustalenie, iż w przypadku wszystkich programów walory kulturowe i przyrodnicze uważane są za mocną stronę regionów. Związane są z nimi znaczne oczekiwania w zakresie ich wykorzystania w rozwoju tych terenów. Jednocześnie dostrzega się, iż są wykorzystywane w stopniu niedostatecznym. W przypadku wszystkich programów wspierano działania związane z wykorzystaniem dziedzictwa kulturowego i przyrodniczego. To sposób finansowania w dużej mierze determinował jednak podejmowanie działania. W dalszym ciągu dominują tradycyjne (typowe) sposoby wykorzystywania zasobów przyrodniczych i kulturowych.

Słowa kluczowe: współpraca transgraniczna, projekt, dziedzictwo kulturowe i przyrodnicze, Karpaty

Introduction

It is estimated that border regions within the European Union cover 40% of its territory and are inhabited by around 30% of its population¹. The aim of Cross-border Cooperation Programmes implemented in border regions is to support the economic and social development of these areas. These programmes implement the regional policy (also referred to as cohesion policy).

The idea of cooperation going beyond national borders was born in Western Europe in the 1950s². As emphasized by D. Murzyn, European institutions have supported the development of cross-border cooperation since the 1980s³. Article 2 of the so-called Madrid Convention of 1980, indicates that cross-border cooperation is any joint-

- 1 European Committee of the Regions, *Cross-border cooperation: after the biggest setbacks in decades, the time for recovery and improvement has come*, <https://cor.europa.eu/pl/news/Pages/cross-border-cooperation.aspx> [12.05.2022].
- 2 Urząd Statystyczny we Wrocławiu, *Euroregiony na granicach Polski 2007*, Wrocław 2007, p. 16, https://wroclaw.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/wroc/ASSETS_14-19.pdf [12.05.2022].
- 3 D. Murzyn, *Innowacyjność w programach współpracy transgranicznej realizowanych przy udziale polityki spójności UE w Polsce*, [in:] *Wyzwania polityki regionalnej w aspekcie rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego obszarów transgranicznych*, K. Świerczewska-Pietras, M. Pyra (eds.), Białą Podlaska 2015, p. 65.

ly undertaken action aimed at strengthening and further developing neighbourly contacts between communities and territorial authorities of two or more parties as well as the conclusion of agreements and adoption of arrangements necessary to implement such plans⁴. In the European Charter for Border Regions of 1981 (the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions since 1995), it was emphasized that “cross-border cooperation helps to mitigate the adverse effects of the existence of these borders as well as to overcome the effects of the location of border areas on the national outskirts of states and to improve the living conditions of the people who settled there. This cooperation should cover all areas of cultural, social, and economic life, and related infrastructure”. M. Giełda, therefore, points out that “the material scope of territorial cooperation is limited by only one general criterion: carrying out such activities aimed at strengthening and further development of neighbourly contacts between communities and territorial authorities”⁵. In turn, A. Żuk emphasizes that in the 1980s, border areas began to be perceived as areas of synergy, and the state border ceased to be perceived only as an obstacle⁶. In the 1990s, an instrument supporting cross-border cooperation was created – the Community initiative Interreg. Its overall aim was to ensure that borders would not be an obstacle to the sustainable development and integration of Europe⁷. Among other things, as a consequence of enlargement in 2004, the EU redefined its development policy. The so-far economic and social cohesion has been extended to territorial cohesion. The enlargement of the Union changed its geopolitical position and became a premise for modifying the policy to-

- 4 Council of Europe, *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, Madrid 1980.
- 5 M. Giełda, *Współpraca transgraniczna prowadzona w Unii Europejskiej na podstawie programów operacyjnych realizowanych w ramach Europejskiej Współpracy Terytorialnej*, [in:] *Współpraca transgraniczna w administracji publicznej*, R. Kusiak-Winter (ed.), Wrocław 2015, p. 125, https://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/Content/71621/PDF/Wspolpraca_transgraniczna_w_administracji_publicznej.pdf [12.05.2022].
- 6 A. Żuk, *Europejskie programy współpracy transgranicznej Polski z państwami członkowskimi Unii Europejskiej w latach 2004-2013. Analiza finansowania i kierunków wydatkowania*, [in:] *Polska – 10 lat członkostwa Polski w UE*, E. Małuszyńska, G. Mazur, I. Musiałowska (eds.), Poznań 2015, p. 214.
- 7 S. Dotzblasz, A. Raczyk, *Współpraca transgraniczna w Polsce po akcesji do UE*, Warsaw 2010, p. 42.

wards neighbouring countries⁸. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), launched in 2003, aimed to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and to strengthen prosperity, stability, and security⁹. As emphasized by J. Adamiec, the new shape of the regional policy was an attempt to reconcile the need to constantly increase competitiveness with the need to accelerate the growth of the poorest regions, so that the Union could develop sustainably¹⁰. As emphasized by S. Dołzbłasz and A. Raczyk, on an initiative to which little importance was initially attached, Interreg was transformed into one of the three objectives of the cohesion policy¹¹. In turn, the ENP was financed from 2007 under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)¹². For the period 2014-2020, the European Neighbourhood Policy was financed by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)¹³. M. Świstak¹⁴, T. Herodowicz¹⁵, P. Churski¹⁶, D. Rauhut, A. Humer¹⁷, M. Gross, M. Debus¹⁸, J. Szlachta, and J. Zaleski¹⁹ also write on the evolution and

- 8 D. Guzal-Dec, *Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa – ewolucja i współczesne wyzwania wobec rozwoju euroregionów na zewnętrznych granicach UE (w Polsce)*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Szkoły Głównej Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego w Warszawie. Problemy Rolnictwa Światowego" 2016, vol. 3, no. 16(31), pp. 88.
- 9 European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy. What is it?*, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy_en, [in:] *European Neighbourhood Policy: Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej*, M. Pietraś, K. Stachurska-Szczesiak, J. Miśgiewicz (eds.), Lublin 2012.
- 10 J. Adamiec, *Polityka regionalna Unii Europejskiej*, "Studia BAS" 2017, no. 1(49), pp. 70-72.
- 11 S. Dołzbłasz, A. Raczyk, *Projekty współpracy transgranicznej na zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych granicach Unii Europejskiej – przykład Polski*, "Studia Regionalne i Lokalne" 2011, vol. 45, no. 3, p. 59.
- 12 In the years 1991-2006, cooperation with partner countries was financed under Technical Assistance for the Central Independent States (TACIS): A. Raszkowski, *Program TACIS w państwach postsowieckich*, "Ekonomia" 2011, no. 16, p. 437.
- 13 Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32014R0232&from=PL> [12.05.2022].
- 14 M. Świstak, *Polityka regionalna Unii Europejskiej jako polityka publiczna: wobec potrzeby optymalizacji działania publicznego*, Cracow 2019.
- 15 T. Herodowicz, *Znaczenie polityki regionalnej Unii Europejskiej w kształtowaniu środowiskowego wymiaru rozwoju zrównoważonego w Polsce*, Poznań 2020.
- 16 P. Churski, *Podejście zorientowane terytorialnie (place-based policy) – teoria i praktyka polityki regionalnej*, "Rozwój Regionalny i Polityka Regionalna" 2018, no. 41, pp. 31-50.
- 17 D. Rauhut, A. Humer, *EU Cohesion Policy and spatial economic growth: Trajectories in economic thought*, "European Planning Studies" 2022, no. 28(11), pp. 2116-2133.
- 18 M. Gross, M. Debus, M. Does, *EU regional policy increase parties' support for European integration?*, "West European Politics" 2018, no. 41(3), pp. 594-614.
- 19 J. Szlachta, J. Zaleski, *Wyzwania polskiej polityki regionalnej w kontekście polityki spójności UE po roku 2020*, "Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu" 2017, no. 498, pp. 336-350.

changes of the EU regional policy. Currently, the Cohesion Policy is the EU's main investment policy²⁰ and the subject literature emphasizes the role of cross-border cooperation in the development of border areas²¹. At the same time, however, as M. Pietraś points out, the result of the EU strategy of a "Europe of projects", for which he considered actions, inter alia, within the framework of the ENP and the Eastern Partnership, is its contribution to perpetuating the "rift" in the political, economic, and social space of Central and Eastern Europe²².

The study aims to identify the ways of using the cultural and natural potential under the EU Cross-border Cooperation Programmes implemented in the Polish (part of the Śląskie, Małopolskie, and Podkarpackie voivodships), Slovak (Prešov, Žilina, and part of Košice regions) and Ukrainian parts of the Carpathians (Lviv, Zakarpattia, and Ivano-Frankivsk oblasts). The Cross-border Cooperation Programmes implemented in the indicated areas, from three financial perspectives, i.e., 2004-2006, 2007-2013, and 2014-2020, were analysed. A quantitative analysis of projects concerning the use of cultural and natural heritage, which were implemented in the Carpathian borderland under the presented Programmes, was also carried out, however, the analysis did not include microprojects and umbrella projects. With the resulting assumptions, 167 projects were identified. The article is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What kind of ventures with the use of cultural and natural heritage are carried out in the Slovak, Polish, and Ukrainian areas of the Carpathians as part of Cross-border Cooperation Programmes,
2. Are there any differences in the ways of using cultural and natural heritage in the subsequent financial perspectives,
3. Are there any noticeable differences between the Programmes implemented in the internal and external border regions of the EU.

20 European Commission, *The EU's main investment policy*, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en [18.11.2022].

21 M. Buczek-Kowalik, T. Mitura, *Cross-border cooperation on the Polish-Slovak Borderland – examples of joint tourism initiatives*, "Folia Geographica" 2018, no. 60(2), p. 63.

22 M. Pietraś, *Podziały przestrzeni Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, "Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2019, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 13.

1. The area covered by the implementation of Cross-border Cooperation Programmes in selected Carpathian countries and its advantages

When comparing the area covered by the researched Cooperation Programmes, it should be noted that it has changed in the subsequent financial perspectives. The most noticeable changes took place in the 2007-2013 perspective. In the first financial perspective, by far the largest area was covered by the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Interreg III A/Tacis CBC Programme (188,000 km²), and the smallest by the Interreg IIIA Poland-Slovakia Programme (36,000 km²). The Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme covered the following sub-regions on the Polish side: Białystok-Suwałki, Łomża, Białskopodlaski, Chełmsko-Zamość, Lublin Rzeszów-Tarnobrzeg, Krosno-Przemyśl, Ostrołęka-Siedlce, on the Belarusian side: Grodno and Brest oblasts and part of the Minsk oblast, and on the Ukrainian side, the Volyn, Lviv, and Zakarpattia oblasts²³. This area was also inhabited by the largest number of people (13.9 million). The smallest number of people lived in the Poland-Slovakia Programme area (4.2 million people). On the Polish side were the following subregions: Bielsko-Biała, Nowosądecki, and Krośnieńsko-Przemyski, while in the Slovakian regions: Prešov and Žilina²⁴. In turn, the area covered by the Interreg III Neighbourhood Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine was 83,182 km² and was inhabited by over 10 million people²⁵. In the next programming period, the programme implementation in the Polish-Slovak border area was extended to the following poviats: Pszczyna, Oświęcim, Rzeszów, and the city of Rzeszów, thus increasing its area to 38,096 km²⁶. The area for implementing the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine was significantly increased, mainly on the Ukrainian and Belarusian sides. In Belarus, it included the following oblasts: Grodno, Brest, seven

23 Program Sąsiedztwa Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina Interreg III A/Tacis CBC 2004-2006 (PL-BY-UA 2004-2006), p. 7.

24 Interreg III A Polska-Republika Słowacka. Program Inicjatywy Wspólnotowej na lata 2004-2006 (PL-SK 2004-2006), p. 5.

25 European Commission, *INTERREG III Neighbourhood Programme Hungary-Slovak Republic-Ukraine*, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2000-2006/european/interreg-iii-neighbourhood-programme-hungary-slovak-republic-ukraine [12.05.2022] (HU-SK-UA 2004-2006).

26 Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej Rzeczpospolita Polska-Republika Słowacka 2007-2013 (PL-SK 2007-2013), pp. 5, 15.

districts of the Minsk oblast, and Gomel oblast, while in Ukraine: the Lviv, Volyn, Zakarpattia oblasts and the adjacent regions: Ternopil, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk. The surface area increased by nearly 70% (to 316.3 thousand km²)²⁷. The last of the Programmes also underwent major changes as the implementation area was also extended to Romania. The area of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine included the following territorial units: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (Hungary), Košický and Prešovský (Slovakia), Maramures, Satu-Mare, and Suceava (Romania), Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivska, and Chernivetska (Ukraine). Suceava and Chernivetska were included based on special rules. The programme area was inhabited by 8 million people²⁸. In total, the area of the three analysed Programmes covered 437.4 thousand km² and was inhabited by approx. 34 million people. In the next programming period, the changes were much smaller and mainly concerned the Polish-Slovak borderland. The area of Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia implementation was increased to 47.01 thousand km² by, inter alia, Myślenice powiat and Spiska Nowa Wieś powiat in the Koszyce country²⁹. In total, the area covered by the three Programmes was over 45% larger than in the first programming period.

Defining the goals and thematic areas of support was always preceded by an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the regions covered by the Programmes. A characteristic feature of the analysed area is that for all the Programmes, in each programming period, cultural and natural potential was indicated as a strength. In the first programming period, in the case of the Polish-Slovak borderland, attention was paid to the richness of historical and cultural heritage, a large number of architectural, urban, and landscape monuments, the most important of which are on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The unique value of the natural environment, protected areas of international importance, and attractiveness were also

27 Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina 2007-2013 (PL-BY-UA 2007-2013), p. 6.

28 Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013. Joint Operational Programme (HU-SK-RO-UA 2007-2013), p. 9.

29 Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Interreg V-A Polska-Słowacja 2014-2020 (PL-SK 2014-2020), p. 4.

emphasized³⁰. Similarly, in the case of the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, the presence of unpolluted areas of great landscape and environmental value was indicated, some of which are on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Attention was also paid to the international biosphere reserve of the Eastern Carpathians, as a large part of this area is the so-called Green Lungs of Europe³¹.

In the following financial perspective, in the case of the Polish-Slovak borderland, the unique values of the natural environment and landscape, protected areas of international importance and attractiveness (national and landscape parks, NATURA 2000 areas), the richness and diversity of the culture, traditions, and folklore, including handicraft traditions, were indicated as well as the need for sustaining them³². On the other hand, in the case of the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, in addition to the previously indicated values, the following were also emphasized: high biological diversity, especially in forest and wetland ecosystems, numerous places with medicinal value, and shared historical and cultural heritage³³. For the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine area, high natural, cultural, and landscape values, numerous health resorts, and the fact that the inhabitants of the separate regions are linked by common cultural heritage and common religious traditions³⁴.

In the third financial perspective, in the case of the Polish-Slovak borderland, apart from the duplication of the previously indicated values, it was emphasized that these resources are not used innovatively. They are most often used to provide simple tourist services (hotel and catering services or the sale of souvenirs). It was argued that relatively few complex and advanced services in the field of recreation could be enumerated³⁵. In the case of the regions included in the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, essentially similar elements of the natural and cultural potential were indicated³⁶. As for the Hungary-Slova-

30 PL-SK 2004-2006, p. 14.

31 PL-BY-UA 2004-2006, p. 15.

32 PL-SK 2007-2013, p. 23.

33 PL-BY-UA 2007-2013, pp. 15-16.

34 HU-SK-RO-UA 2007-2013, pp. 10, 94.

35 PL-SK 2014-2020, pp. 7-8.

36 Program Współpracy Transgranicznej EIS Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina 2014-2020 (PL-BY-UA 2014-2020), p. 23.

nia-Romania-Ukraina implementation area, attention was paid to cultural sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, known and popular religious sites that could be used in the development of tourism in the region and can help attract tourists to the less known but worthwhile visiting places³⁷.

2. Objectives and thematic areas of cross-border cooperation

The aim of the Programme implemented in the Polish-Slovak border area in the first perspective was defined as supporting the integrated and sustainable economic, social, and cultural development of the Polish-Slovak border areas³⁸. For the Neighbourhood Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Interreg III A / Tacis CBC, the strategic goal was defined as the improvement of living standards and the socio-economic integration of neighbouring regions³⁹. In turn, for Interreg III Neighbourhood Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine, the strategic global objective of the Programme was to strengthen the level of economic and social integration of the cross-border region⁴⁰.

In the subsequent programming period, the main objective of the Programme Poland-Slovakia was, among others, to contribute to the development of cooperation in the field of improving the condition of cross-border infrastructure, leading to spatial integration of the area and increasing its accessibility and attractiveness for residents, investors, and tourists, promoting cooperation for sustainable socio-economic, cultural and environmental development in the Polish-Slovak border region⁴¹. The main goal of the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, taking into account the conclusions of the social and economic analysis, was to support cross-border development processes⁴². In the case of the Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Roma-

37 Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (HU-SK-RO-UA 2014-2020), pp. 17, 29.

38 Interreg III A Polska-Republika Słowacka. Uzupełnienie Programu, p. 3.

39 Program Sąsiedztwa Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina Interreg III A/Tacis CBC 2004-2006. Uzupełnienie Programu, pp. 6-7.

40 HU-SK-UA 2004-2006.

41 PL-SK 2007-2013, p. 39.

42 PL-BY-UA 2007-2013, p. 20.

nia-Ukraine, the main goal was concentrated on intensifying and deepening the cooperation in an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable way between the Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivska, and Chernivetska regions of Ukraine, and eligible and adjacent areas of Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia⁴³.

In the last of the examined programming periods, 11 thematic objectives (TO) were defined. They were related to the priorities of Europe 2020: the European Union strategy for growth and employment⁴⁴. Pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013, at least 80% of the allocation of funds for each Cross-border Programme should concentrate on up to four thematic objectives as set out in Art. 9 of Regulation No 1303/2013. The main goal of the Programme Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia was to promote international cooperation and strengthen the integration of the Polish-Slovak border⁴⁵. The following were selected for the Programme: preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (OT 6), promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure (OT 7), investing in education, training, and vocational training for skills and life-long learning (OT 10)⁴⁶. On the other hand, Document programming for EU support to ENI Cross-Border Cooperation (2014-2020) lists 10 thematic objectives, out of which the participating countries could choose four⁴⁷. For the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, the following were selected: promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage (OT 3), improvement of accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems (OT 7), common challenges in the field of safety and security (OT 8), promotion of border management border security and mobility (OT 10)⁴⁸. In the case of the Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, the following were selected: local

43 HU-SK-RO-UA 2007-2013, p. 7.

44 Europe 2020: the European Union strategy for growth and employment.

45 M. Makowiecka, M. Reichel, *Ocena współpracy terytorialnej Polski i Słowacji w kontekście realizowanych programów operacyjnych współpracy transgranicznej*, "Studia Ekonomiczne. Gospodarka. Społeczeństwo. Środowisko" 2019, no. 1(3), p. 17.

46 PL-SK 2014-2020, pp. 14-18.

47 Document programming for UE support to ENI Cross-Border Cooperation (2014-2020).

48 PL-BY-UA 2014-2020, p. 9.

culture and preservation of historical heritage (TO₃), environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation (TO₆), accessibility to the regions, development of sustainable and climate-proof transport and communication networks and systems (TO₇), common challenges in the field of safety and security (TO₈)⁴⁹.

The presented objectives were reflected in the thematic areas expressed through priorities and activities. Considerable needs in the field of infrastructure modernization and the broadly understood improvement of the quality of life in border regions resulted in the fact that the objectives and thematic areas of support in the first periods of programming were similar. Evaluation studies of the Programmes from that period confirmed that the impact of Cross-border Cooperation Programmes was visible mainly on a local scale⁵⁰. In the case of subsequent programming periods, they were gradually narrowed down and made more concrete.

For all the Programmes, support areas related to the use of cultural and natural heritage were planned, directly or indirectly, in all three financial periods. In the years 2004-2006 under the Programme Poland-Slovakia, it was Priority 2. Socio-economic development, Measure 2.2. Protection of natural and cultural heritage, and in the case of the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Priority 1. Increasing the competitiveness of border regions by modernizing and expanding cross-border infrastructure: Measure 1.3 Development of business-related infrastructure and tourism (since sustainable tourism development in this area should also focus on the one hand on the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage and on the other hand on preventing the destruction of protected areas by tourists). In turn, under the Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine, it was Priority 1. Cross-border social and economic cooperation: development of human resources, networking, protection of natural and cultural

49 HU-SK-RO-UA 2014-2020, pp. 17-21.

50 D. Celioska-Janowicz et al., *Zmiany sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej obszaru wsparcia Programu Sądziectwa Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina INTERREG IIIA/TACIS CBC 2004-2006 w latach 2004-2008/2009. Raport na zamówienie Ministerstwa Rozwoju Regionalnego*, Warsaw 2010, p. 34, https://www.euroreg.uw.edu.pl/dane/web_euroreg_publications_files/2447/celioska-janowicz2010-zmiany_sytuacji_spoeczno-gospodarczej_obszaru_wsparcia_programu_ssiedztwa_polska-biaoru-ukraina_int.pdf [12.05.2022].

heritage, and support for local initiatives (micro-project facility)⁵¹. The situation was similar in the subsequent financial perspective under the Programme Poland-Slovakia; Priority axis 2. Social and economic development, Theme 2: Protection of cultural and natural heritage, and under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme, Priority 2. Improving the quality of life, Measure 2.1. Environmental protection in the border area, while in the case of the Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, Priority 1: Promote economic and social development, Measure 1.1 Harmonized development of tourism⁵². In the 2014-2020 financial perspective under the Programme Poland-Slovakia, it was Priority axis 1. Protection and development of the natural and cultural heritage of the border area, and in the Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Objective 1. Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage, Measure 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history, and 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage. Within the framework of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine, it was Thematic objective 3. Promotion of local culture and preservation of historical heritage: Priority 1: Promoting local culture and historical heritage along with tourism functions⁵³.

On 4 March 2022, due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the European Commission suspended cooperation with the Russian Federation and Belarus under the ENI and Interreg Baltic Sea Region programmes⁵⁴.

3. Use of natural and cultural heritage in projects

Of all the projects co-financed within the three financial perspectives (2004-2006, 2007-2013, and 2014-2020), programmes were selected that concerned the use of cultural and natural heritage and were implemented in the Polish-Slovak-Ukrainian Carpathi-

51 PL-BY-UA 2004-2006, pp. 29-34; PL-SK 2004-2006, pp. 21-27; HU-SK-UA 2004-2006.

52 PL-SK 2007-2013, pp. 39-58; PL-BY-UA 2007-2013, pp. 20-33; HU-SK-RO-UA 2007-2013, pp. 38-47.

53 PL-SK 2014-2020, pp. 21-50; PL-BY-UA 2014-2020, pp. 10-15; HU-SK-RO-UA 2014-2020, pp. 17-22.

54 European Commission, *Commission suspends cross-border cooperation and transnational cooperation with Russia and Belarus*, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1526 [12.05.2022].

an borderland under Cross-border Programmes: Poland-Slovakia, Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine, then Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine. With these assumptions, 167 projects were identified and then subjected to analysis that included only the so-called regular projects: 32 (2004-2006), 80 (2007-2013), and 55 (2014-2022). The study did not cover microprojects, i.e., projects with an essentially smaller budget and shorter implementation period. The largest number of selected projects was carried out in the Polish-Slovak borderland (92), followed by the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland (44), and the least in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland (31)⁵⁵. In most of the analysed projects, the leading partners were organizations from EU countries, i.e., Poland or Slovakia. The beneficiaries (lead partners and partners) of over 55% of the projects were local government units, followed by non-governmental organizations (nearly 25%). Nearly 70% of the projects were investment projects. Most of such projects were implemented in the Polish-Slovak border area (nearly 90% of all projects under the Programme Poland-Slovakia). The smallest number of projects with an investment component was implemented in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. In the case of the Slovak-Ukrainian border area, every second project was of an investment nature. The investment projects concerned, for example, the renovation of museum spaces, the revitalization of historical and cultural sites, the restoration of historical monuments, the construction and renovation of tourist routes and paths, the creation of cultural centres, and the modernization of other cultural facilities. The organization of training sessions and conferences was a relatively popular activity under the analysed projects; every third project included training sessions, and every fifth – also the organising of conferences. The largest number of projects with a training component was identified under the Programmes implemented in the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland, and then under the Programmes Poland-Belarus-Ukraine. Apparently, fewer such projects were implemented under the Programmes Poland-Slovakia (only every fifth project). Promotional ac-

55 The study was carried out as part of the task "Development of the institutional potential of the "Pro Carpathia" Association by supporting missionary activities for the Carpathians", financed by the National Freedom Institute from the funds of the Civil Society Organisations Development Programme for 2018-2030.

tivities were equally popular, including the organization of study visits, artistic events promoting the cultural or natural potential of the borderland, creating thematic web portals, promotional films, or promoting tourist values through information boards. Every third project also included an edition of a publication.

Conclusion

The study made it possible to establish that in the case of all Programmes, natural and cultural values are considered a strength of the regions. Significant expectations are thus related to their use for development. At the same time, it is noted that they are used insufficiently. For all the Programmes, a thematic support area related to the use of cultural and natural heritage has been planned. At the same time, it can be seen that projects with an investment component dominate, and this may be due to several reasons; first of all, the studied projects, as a rule, were characterized by quite significant budgets (larger than microprojects). Thus, their size determined the financial possibilities of the partners. Only public institutions, which are less interested in soft activities, could afford to participate in larger projects (and thus also make a larger contribution). In addition, the method of financing the projects (reimbursement / pre-financing) determined the undertaking of activities within their framework. The implementation of projects financed based on reimbursement is more accessible to public institutions than, for example, to non-governmental organizations, which in turn translates into the type of topics undertaken. It was especially visible in the case of projects implemented in the Polish-Slovak border area, where the principle of reimbursement of incurred costs applies (90% of projects included an investment component). It should also be noted that traditional (typical) methods of using natural and cultural resources still dominate among the implemented projects.

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