

FROM ANALYSES TO INTERVENTIONS:

Innovative approach
to fostering cross-border
cooperation between
Slovakia and Ukraine



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Report

From analyses to interventions: Innovative approach to fostering cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine

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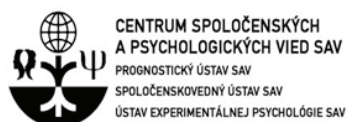


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1 SLOVAK-UKRAINIAN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction and background

Cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine is of crucial importance for both countries. Numerous international bilateral agreements are constituting standard framework for development of bilateral relations. Nevertheless, real life experience and examples from other countries reveal that while the role of official relations at national governmental level is the fundamental backbone of cross-border cooperation, there must also exist the counterpart at the micro level of border regions. The micro level of cross-border regions and localities is not only equally important, but also a necessary component for effective and successful cross border initiatives. Consequently, the transnational and bilateral structures at the national level can be balanced at local levels and get successfully delivered in daily practice and actions.

The analysis of current situation, which is subject of this report, indicates that the cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine is currently being delivered at ad hoc level of individual, only rarely inter-connected projects, cooperating institutions and individual relationships. Strengthening and institutionalising cooperation remains the key challenge for future development of cross-border cooperation.

Current cross-border cooperation is a very powerful and, importantly, a constructive resource for development of the international relations system. Active cooperation has a positive effect on solving the problems of participating cross-border regions, creates conditions for accelerated growth of welfare, directs partner countries policy towards equalizing level of life between more developed and depressed and peripheral regions.

This is confirmed by development of cross-border cooperation in the geopolitical area of the Carpathians. European Union enlargement has opened entirely new opportunities for its expansion and deepening.

However, analysis of the issues of cross-border cooperation dynamics (hereinafter - CBC) in this important part of Europe shows that its management requires significant optimization. In particular, currently there is an urgent need for using such efficient management tools as a support in:

- Macro policy coordination;
- State economic incentives;
- Bilateral and multilateral financial cooperation.

What are the reasons behind the newly constituted demand for CBC support tools?

1. As is known, in the early 90s of the last century the first in Central and Eastern Europe Euroregion was set up, denoted as the Carpathian Euroregion. During a decade of its existence this association of border cooperation of neighbouring regions of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine had been developing very well and was even considered as a reference for the European CBC.

Over time, however, and especially at the beginning of this century, the initiative began to fade. It is regrettable for one of the authors of these lines to state this because he was one of the initiators of the Carpathian Euroregion and the first Chairman of the Council of this organization from Ukraine. The current deep crisis of this international structure can be evidenced by the fact that the joint authority of heads of border regions members of the Carpathian Euroregion – its Council – in fact ceased to exist.

But we know that the Carpathian Euroregion was set up by the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the member countries by signing the relevant Declaration. Therefore, it would seem that in the present

crisis of the Euroregion these macro-policy guarantors should be intervening to help him overcome existing transformational development obstacles. But very strange is the fact that since its inception in 1993, not one ministerial meeting devoted to its problems took place.

So, which support and coordination by governments for this very important regional organization one can speak about (except for the ceremonial mentioning of the importance of its existence, coming out easily every now and then at official meetings)?

2. Currently there exists and institute of intergovernmental commissions on cross-border cooperation. However, experience shows that their activity is quite bureaucratic and lacks efficiency. For example, the latest annual (2016) meeting of the Ukrainian-Slovak Commission resulted in no joint protocol agreed.

In addition, commissions deal with CBC issues only at the bilateral level, which is not a sufficient framework for solving complex, multi-stakeholder problems of the region.

3. Governments on both sides of the new Eastern border seem to be active in CBC programs. But a careful study of the real situation reveals that in fact they perform rather go-between and regulatory functions in the allocation of funds coming from the budget of the European Union and other countries of the continent according to special platforms (European Union ENPI and ENI, Norwegian financial mechanism, etc.) They can in some way participate in their co-financing if this is conditioned by the donor.

In terms of their own bilateral or multilateral intergovernmental CBC programs with appropriate funding, at the new Eastern border in the Carpathian area they are unfortunately non-existent. This negatively affects activities in case the CBC structures are not able to get a financial backing from the European funds. The fate of the Carpathian Euroregion is a dramatic confirmation of such a set-up. Apparently, cross-border cooperation in the area of the Carpathians in general, and Ukrainian-Slovak CBC, in particular, lacks effective tools of macropolitical coordination and support. Meanwhile, such tools in Europe exist, and there is an extensive experience accumulated over time of their practice. One particular example can be found in the North of our continent.

During research and analytical work on this project we have identified cooperation of northern countries as the best practice example. Norway and Sweden are systematically developing cooperation with Russia in the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC, BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL). We map the functioning of this organisation, and the results which such a structure produces in practice. As we want to know which elements and forms of cooperation from this region could be applied to the conditions of Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation, we will present structural and contextual analysis of best practice examples (BAEC), as well as the current extent, structure and focus of cooperation between bordering regions of Easter Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Region. Conclusions to this report will then contain recommendations on how to foster the practice of cross-border cooperation.

1.2 Slovak-Ukrainian cross border area: recent developments

Slovakia was accepted as a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004. Since 21 December 2007, it has also been a member of the Schengen area and since 1 January 2009, it has become the 16th member of the European Monetary Union - the Eurozone, thus completing the process of Slovakia's integration into the European Union. Between 2000 and 2005, Slovakia recorded significant positive trends in the performance of economy. In 2004 (the year of Slovakia's entry into the EU), Slovakia achieved 5.5% GDP growth, 6% growth in 2005, 6.3% growth in 2007. In these years, Slovakia achieved almost double the EU average in GDP growth. These positive trends, although at lower absolute and relative values, continue and in 2012, GDP per capita expressed in purchasing power parity was 75% of EU value. In Košice region, GDP recorded a slight upward trend, with a slight decrease in 2009. In 2014, GDP per one capita in Košice Region was € 16,521.3 (in the PPS)¹, with an average of € 21,078.3 in the Slovak Republic. Compared to 2008, GDP per capita increased by 8.3% in the Košice region, while the average for the Slovak Republic increased by 14%.

GDP growth is the result of an increase in aggregate productive factors brought about by increased inflows of foreign direct investment and the activity of resulting suppliers, with strong representation in the automotive industry.

Simultaneously with these positive trends in selected sectors of industry, there are undergoing structural changes with adverse effect on some traditional industries, especially agriculture, food, textile, shoemaking and wood processing industry, which causes a significant differentiation of the economic level of Slovakia's regions to the detriment of eastern and southern Slovakia. Unfortunately, similar negative trends are also recorded by neighbouring countries of Hungary and Ukraine. This naturally results in the possibilities for cooperation and the search for appropriate forms of tackling common problems in cross-border areas. A negative phenomenon, appearing particularly after 2008, is the rising unemployment rate (also characteristic of the border regions of Hungary and Ukraine), which in 2009 reached 12% in Slovakia, compared to 8.9% in the EU. The negative trend of unemployment growth continued until 2012, when it reached 14%, followed by a gradual decline and in 2016 the unemployment rate decreased to 8.76%.

In Košice region, there is still high long-term unemployment. At the end of 2015, 37,167 unemployed persons were registered as unemployed for over 12 months, i.e. 58.4% of the total number of job seekers. According to VZPS², there were 27,000 unemployed persons registered in Košice region by the end of 2015, i.e. 54.7% of the total number of unemployed. (T1)

Despite the positive economic trends, regional disparities continue to deepen, as well as the stagnation of the region of eastern Slovakia (also north-eastern Hungary and western Ukraine), resulting in significant negative effects and distortions in the overall social structure and quality of life of the affected population. The solution to stop the negative trends in the Slovak Republic as well as in Hungary and Ukraine is the broad sectoral and territorial diversification of business activities for the benefit of the sectors with higher labour demands. In areas where the conditions for the development of science, research and innovation are already in place, it is necessary to use the brain potential for the benefit of economic development in cross-border territory more effectively. The border areas of the Košice Region, the counties of Borsod – Abaúj - Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and the Zakarpattye region are also marked by significant differences in economic indicators in inner state comparison, which has become one of the biggest problems of the aforementioned territories. Mitigating these differences is also a major challenge for economic and regional policy.

The economy of Košice Region has undergone a relatively successful transformation, taking advantage of the many comparative advantages that the region, especially the city of Košice has at

¹ Parity of purchasing power

² Labour force survey in the Slovak Republic (VZPS, labour force survey - LFS)

their disposal. There has been a significant change in the structure of economy in favour of services, strengthening of the position of certain sectors, in particular automotive, electrical, chemical, information technology, including those that are more demanding in terms of technology and quality of human resources, or significant internationalization. The decisive economic potential of Košice Region is centred in the city of Košice, the other districts except for Spišská Nová Ves and Michalovce are characterized by persistent insufficient spatial and sectoral diversification, which is reflected in high unemployment rate, with negative trends in the number of the long-term unemployed. Despite the development of economy, Košice also faces problems in stability of development and the consequences of the economic crisis, thus weakening its impact on the economy of other parts of the region.

The strategic results of the region have been contributed by strategic investors established in the region, especially in Košice, Michalovce and Spišská Nová Ves. These activities, in addition to the basic objective, the creation of new job opportunities, also bring on the effects known as "*spillover effects*"³ which in addition to economic results are also positively reflected in the social development and education process.

In the cross-border area, an industrial park founded on the property of the village of Kechnec, located 18 km from Kosice, 0.5 km from the border with Hungary spreading over 332 hectares, is a major force of development. It was founded in 1996 and opened in October 2003. It employs around 2,500 people and indicates significant positive changes in the broad spectrum of social care and public life of the municipality and the surrounding area (health centre, cultural and social centre, social services, housing).

The development of comprehensive development plans and activities for their implementation on both sides of the border is an option that, along with adequate methods of involving all participants in the territory, means another dimension in achieving positive trends in economic and social development. Successful preparation and implementation requires the creation of institutional background, or changing the content, forms and methods of existing institutions. The EU counts on the support of cross-border cooperation - the newly established European Territorial Cooperation Associations (e.g. EGTC)⁴ are a higher institutional form and can cover both planning and implementation activities that can prove the merits of cross-border solutions to economic, environmental and social problems to ensure better living conditions of the inhabitants of the territories concerned. It is extremely important to create or develop forms supporting entrepreneurship in this territory and continue with changes in the entire system of education, retraining in accordance with labour market conditions.⁵

³ Direct foreign investments and spillover effects. Available on the Internet: <https://euractiv.sk/analyzy/ekonomika-a-euro/priame-zahranicne-investicie-a-efekty-spillovers/>

This specific effect of direct foreign investments is referred to as "spillover" and it represents their economic externality, thus a benefit to the economy that is implemented beyond the direct effects expressed in market transactions. In general, it is assumed that such a contribution from foreign direct investment will ultimately be higher than the extent of foreign investment support by national governments, and also higher than the benefits that domestic investors would achieve with the aid of government support, reaching the extent of an investment stimulus.

⁴ EZÚS VIA CARPATIA – established by KSK and BAZ county

⁵ MÚDRA, Rozália. Skúsenosti a problémy cezhraničnej spolupráce v regióne. In. Partnerséget építünk „ A Kassai Önkormányzati Kerület és Borsod – Abaúj – Zemplén Megye szociális problematikája.” c. konferencián elhangzott előadás (HUSK/1101/1.6.1/031 számú projekt nyitókonferenciája).

Table 1 Unemployment rate in Košice region by districts

Slovak Republic	12,66	12,46	13,59	14,44	13,50	12,29	10,63	8,76
Košice region	17,30	16,78	18,76	19,58	17,23	15,92	14,39	12,76
Gelnica district	21,94	19,14	20,79	24,10	21,29	17,91	16,96	14,95
Košice I district	8,09	8,07	9,83	11,27	11,47	9,81	8,65	7,40
Košice II district	9,87	9,27	10,79	10,97	10,35	9,39	8,65	7,31
Košice III district	9,22	8,59	10,09	10,17	10,34	8,56	6,97	5,52
Košice IV district	7,82	7,82	9,38	9,58	10,28	9,37	7,57	6,37
Košice – surroundings district	21,71	21,27	22,86	24,60	19,49	19,20	17,66	15,48
Michalovce district	18,32	17,21	19,40	20,10	17,75	16,78	15,11	13,77
Rožňava district	27,75	26,82	28,73	29,04	24,83	24,27	21,58	20,93
Sobrance district	20,66	20,34	22,33	26,30	21,32	20,91	18,40	16,45
Spišská Nová Ves district	16,14	16,28	18,83	19,14	15,91	15,12	14,10	11,31
Trebišov district	25,24	24,42	26,88	26,85	22,40	20,01	18,42	17,05

Source: KSK materials

1.3 Comparative analysis of transformation in Slovakia and Ukraine

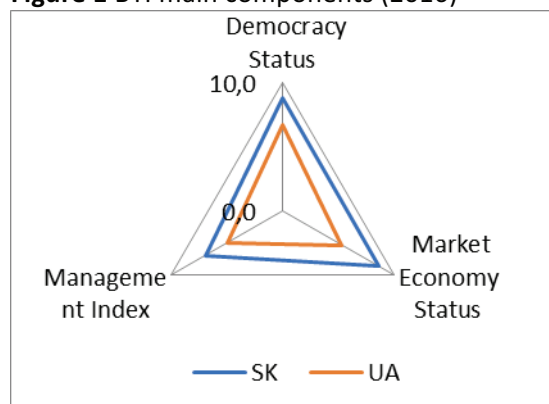
1.3.1 Institutional development

In the past two decades, both Slovakia and Ukraine have experienced turbulent times after the change of socio-economic system. In both countries, the central planned economic system was abandoned yet the post-independence transformation of economic and political institutions took different forms given the specific historical and geopolitical background.

For international comparability, the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) have been developed for comparative analysis and assessment of developing countries' and countries' in the process of transformation of the society towards democracy and a market economy. Seventeen criteria are expertly evaluated and subsequently aggregated to obtain comprehensive Status Index of (a) political and (b) economic transformation along with the Management Index. A standardized codebook serves as the foundation of the survey process, providing a single reference framework for the experts when answering the questions.

We utilize comprehensive indexes of the described dimensions as well as a detailed breakdown into the sub-categories to compare the overall trending of Slovakia and Ukraine as well as provide deeper insight into the particular components.

Figure 1 BTI main components (2016)



Source: BTI data

In Figure 1, the three main BTI dimensions for both countries are depicted. It is obvious that institutional quality in Slovakia outperforms that of Ukraine, owing mainly to the long-term membership in the European Union and the transatlantic network. A more profound analysis may have look at the constituent sub-dimensions. As an example, we report intertemporal change of the dimension Democracy Status broken down into five areas subject to evaluation comprising statehood, political participation, political and social integration, stability of democratic institutions and rule of law (Annex, Fig. A1, A2). Based on the overview it can be generally concluded that both countries lag mostly behind the maximum score of 10 in such areas as management of regional cooperation, policy implementation and coordination and efficient management of assets as constituent parts of management dimension.

1.3.2 Economic development in Slovakia and Ukraine

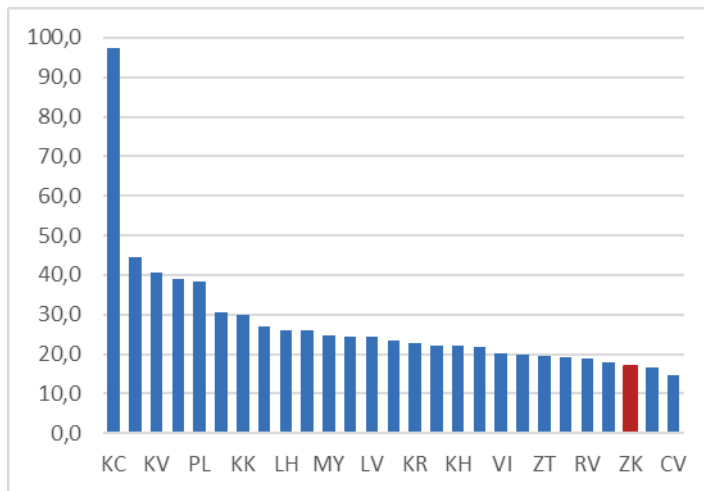
As free market open economies, Slovakia and Ukraine can be compared based on national accounts data as well as other socio-economic indicators. Economic relationships of the two countries are determined by strong European Union bonds and European market dependency of the Slovak republic. The Slovak economy is extremely open, the most important trading partners are Germany and Czech Republic. Import and export shares to Ukraine are negligible with a trading balance in favour of Ukraine. Both countries suffered an economic dip during the crisis, more so Slovakia due to its openness. The recovery and economic development in Ukraine depend heavily on political factors.

Both countries feature considerable regional differences. To identify overlapping interesting areas for cooperation, we provide a regional perspective of the main socio-economic indicators describing neighbouring regions. Due to availability of data we concentrate on provinces (oblast) in Ukraine from which Zakarpattye is a boundary region and NUTS2 regions (kraj) in Slovakia in which four boundary district are located.

To assess the economic performance of the regions we use data on regional domestic product per capita acting alternatively as a proxy for the “wealth” of the region. In the figures, Zakarpattye region (ZK) in Ukraine as well as Prešov region (PO) and Košice region (KE) are highlighted.

Focusing on economic achievements, domestic product by region in both countries is important. For the sake of comparison of the regions of different size, indicator of gross domestic product per capita in respective monetary units is used.

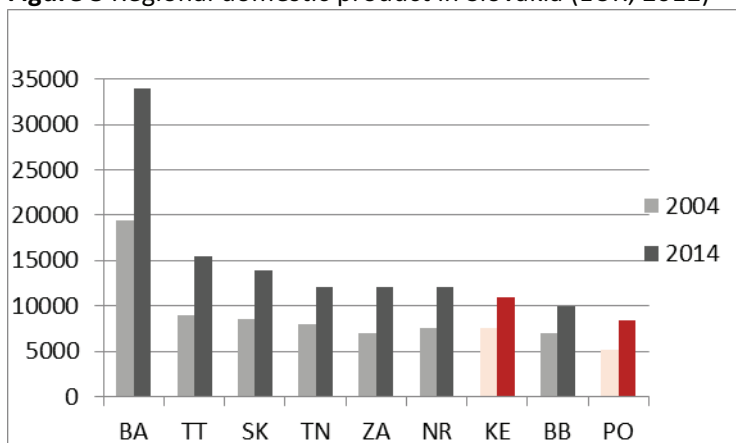
Figure 2 Regional domestic product per capita in Ukraine (1000 UAH, 2012)



Source: *Ukrainian Regional Dataset, KNOEMA*

In the Figure 2 the capital city region of Kiev is apparently the richest while Zakarpattye region is third of the poorest economic performance. Fig. 3 displays a similar layout with respect to the capital Bratislava. Košice and Prešov regions appear to be in the weak-performance tail of the distribution of the income. Intertemporal comparison reveals even more shift of the economic power towards the capital city over the decade of 2004 – 2014 in Slovakia.

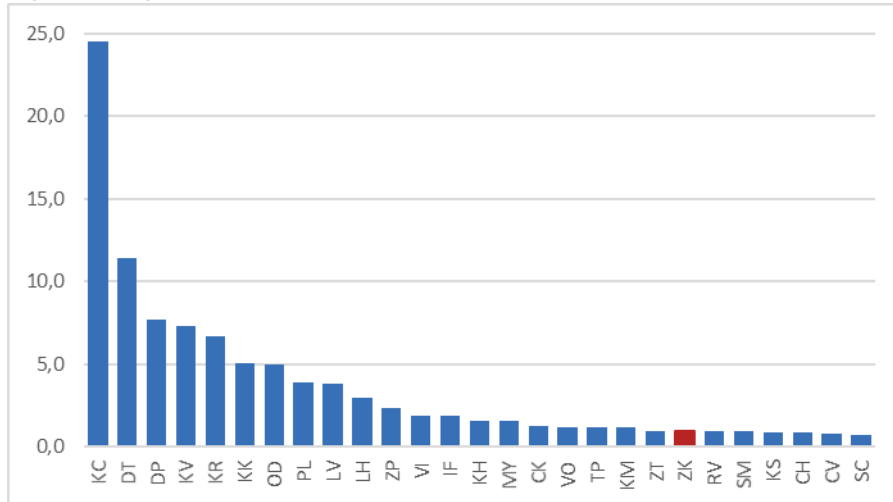
Figure 3 Regional domestic product in Slovakia (EUR, 2012)



Source: *Eurostat*

The boundary regions have thus been demonstrated to belong to the lower-income parts of the two countries. It could be insightful to examine at the factors of production involved to account for a mediocre performance. In the economic theory two primary factors of production are recognized – capital and labour, for industrial countries leaving the land aside as a less contributory component. We provide therefore a descriptive analysis of the Ukraine and Slovakia with regard to those factors. Capital stock utilized in the production process is subject to the process of depreciation as well the accumulation through investment. Investment is crucial in building up the production capacity and determines the potential for future development. We provide figures of the regional share of total capital investment in regions highlighting the ones under investigation.

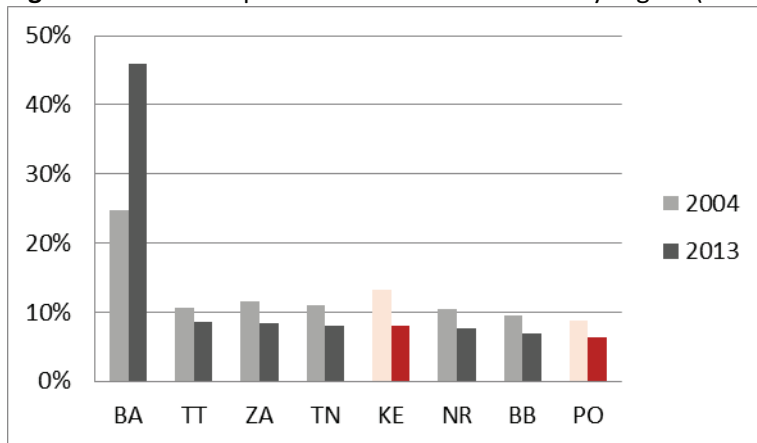
Figure 4 Regional share of investment in Ukraine (2012)



Source: Ukrainian Regional Dataset, KNOEMA

In Figure 4 can be seen obvious dominance of the Kiev region with respect of attractiveness for investment in Ukraine. Investment share in Zakarpattye region of 1% does not match the relative size of its population. In Slovakia, capital investment is quite similarly heavily dependent on the level of infrastructure and the specific position of the capital city of Bratislava and the adjacent region. Analogous regional picture for Slovakia in Fig. 5 providing an intertemporal comparison of the investment share in the period of 2003 -2014 reveals the growing capacity of the capital city region in attracting investment. Noteworthy, all regions but Bratislava (BA) district are eligible for European funding of development projects, though no clear-cut effect of the cohesion policy appears to take place. Just the opposite – the relative weight of investment has shifted westwards in favour of BA region over the decade.

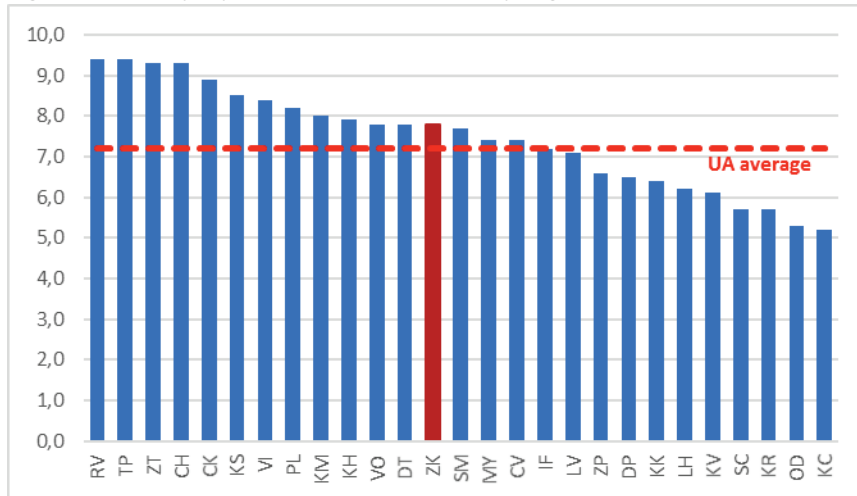
Figure 5 Share of capital investment in Slovakia by region (2015)



Source: Eurostat

Incremental capital investments accumulated in the total capital stock present a potential production capacity. Along with the capital stock the other production factor – labour – is utilized. These two are closely correlated – despite the productivity of labour growth counteracting the The use of labour is described indirectly by means of unemployment rate by region. In Fig. 6 we display unemployment rate in Ukrainian regions against the average unemployment rate over the whole country.

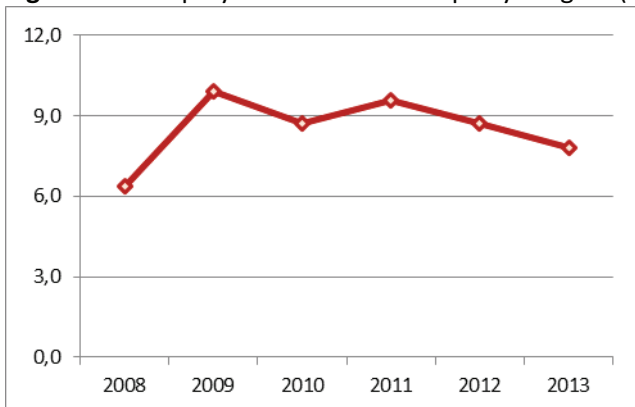
Figure 6 Unemployment rate in Ukraine by region (2013)



Source: Ukrainian Regional Dataset, KNOEMA

Focusing on ZK region a higher-than-average unemployment rate can be observed for 2013. Time series of unemployment rate in the span of 2008 – 2013 is provided in Fig 7. to demonstrate the peak of unemployment rate in the outbreak of the global crisis in 2009 and the recovery in the following years.

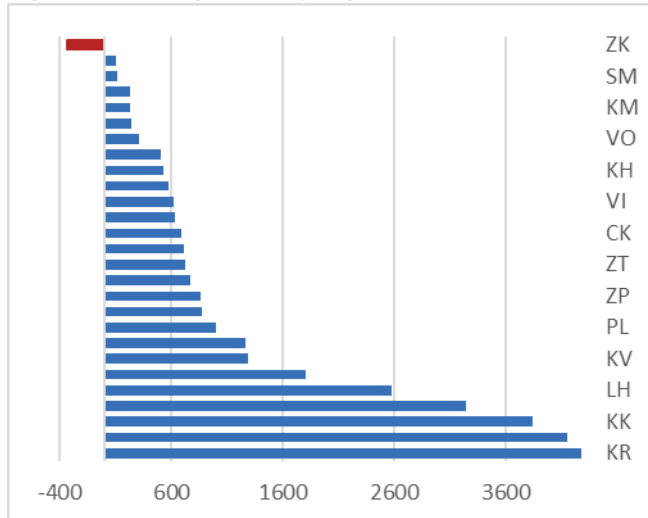
Figure 7 Unemployment rate in Zakarpattye region (2008 - 2013)



Source: Ukrainian Regional Dataset, KNOEMA

As unemployment rate is calculated as a ratio of the unemployed to the total available labour volume, the decrease of the rate cannot be ascribed to the improvement in the labour market in an outright manner. Fig. 8 shows the possible source of shrinking of active population through migration.

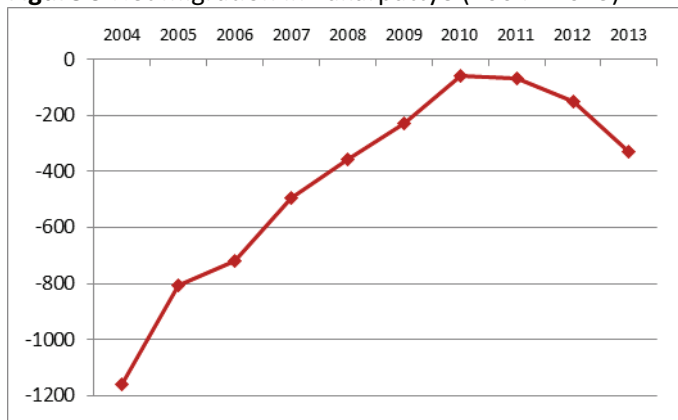
Figure 8 Net migration by region in Ukraine (2013)



Source: Ukrainian Regional Dataset, KNOEMA

Interestingly, Zakarpattye region was the only one to show negative net migration. The volume was not big enough to be supposed to affect employment rate considerably. One should though be aware of the "balance" nature of the indicator with possibly massive inflow and outflow of the different demographic composition. The fact is worth deeper investigation. Fig. 9 displays the net migration in the region retaining negative over the past decade.

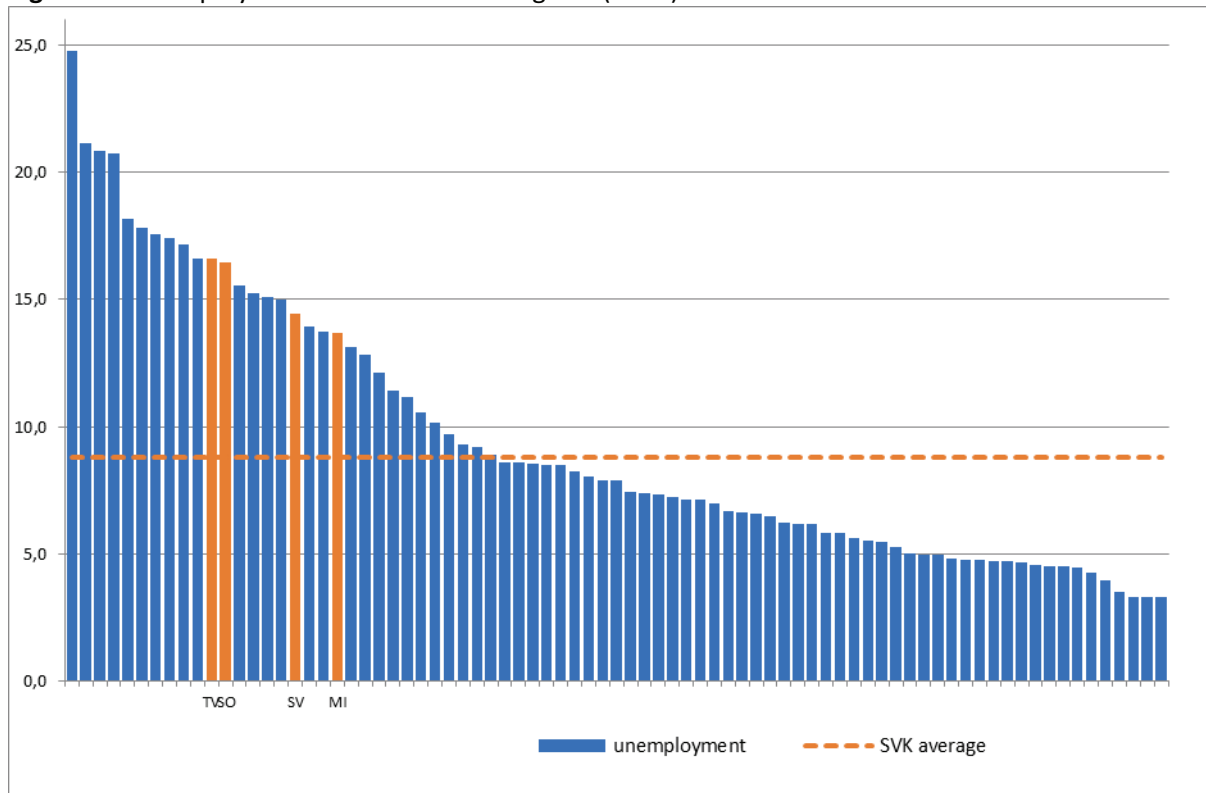
Figure 9 Net migration in Zakarpattye (2004 - 2013)



Source: Ukrainian Regional Dataset, KNOEMA

For Slovakia, more detailed information from data on unemployment rates for NUTS4 (okres) exhibited in Fig. 10 is available. Four border areas of Trebišov, Sobrance, Snina and Michalovce are labelled below.

Figure 10 Unemployment rate in Slovakia regions (2016)



Source: Central office of labour, social affairs and family of the Slovak republic

All four areas are high above Slovakia's average of unemployment rate, which is 8.8%, indicating unemployment as a systemic feature of the boundary regions. Registered unemployment rates in Slovakia and Ukraine cannot be directly compared due to presumably differing methodologies and possible considerable share of unemployment undetected by the official survey. The most distinctive feature of the data is variance. Ukrainian data span 5,2 – 9,4% while in the case of Slovakia it is 3,3 – 24,8%. A fair part of the difference can be attributed to the level of breakdown, in bigger regions some extreme values average out.

Having surveyed involvement of the main productive resources from the macroeconomic data allows to draw preliminary conclusions. On both sides of the border slacks in the use of economic resources – both capital and labour – have been indicated. Intertemporal comparison reveal that there is no notable change towards the desired magnitude of production factors' involvement. The current state-of-the-art of institutions' performance suggests there is potential and need for support and further development. Addressing the problem, there is an option to help international institutional interplay to extract a potential of coordination and cooperation. There is an indicated resource in human capital as well.

1.4 Multicultural typology of bordering regions and places

Bordering regions are characteristic by higher degree of multi-ethnicity and diversity in terms of national, ethnical and cultural population structure of the local bordering areas. This diversity plays crucial role for the development of social capital, establishing functional structures and activating local potential. Good understanding of background settings of the local diversities is inevitable factor for setting of cross-border structures when key representatives of local communities need to be involved.

Searching for source of best practice in the area of Barents region, the setups exhibit extent of similarity. In the context of multi-cultural ethnicity, the experience available from the Barents region can be considered as a source of positive inspiration. Both Carpathian and Barents regions represent multi-ethnic bordering communities, situated at the borders of two diverse geo-political areas. The differences are significant in terms of historical, administrative-legal, cultural dimensions and alike. Fostering cross-border cooperation in this context involves developing such initiatives, structures and framework so that the differences are not acting as obstacles but, on the contrary, may provide opportunities in cross border cooperation projects.

1.4.1 Carpathian region on the Slovak side

The Carpathian region has significant multi-ethnic characteristics. If we narrow the perception of the Carpathian region to just two of its parts, which are the main focus of this study (the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine and eastern Slovakia), in the case of eastern Slovakia from the administrative point of view, we are talking about the Prešov and Košice regions. The Prešov Region has a total area of 8,993 km²; there are 820,697 inhabitants (as of 31 December 2015) and it is divided into 13 districts and 664 municipalities (of which 23 are towns). The Košice Region has a total area of 6 753 km²; there are 796,650 inhabitants (as of December 31, 2015), and it is divided into 11 districts and 461 municipalities (of which 17 are towns).⁶ Thus, Eastern Slovakia represents an area of 15 746 km²; there are 1 617 347 inhabitants in total, and they are divided into 24 districts and 1 125 municipalities (of which 40 are towns). From the national point of view, the most numerous ethnic community in Eastern Slovakia is the Slovaks. Although this looks like a homogeneous group of people, it is actually made up of people of individual, so called traditional ethnographic regions and areas. The dominant ethnographic regions in Eastern Slovakia include Spiš, Šariš, Zemplín and Abov, while cultural differences between them are sometimes more pronounced than between them and other nations or nationalities.

According to the findings of the Statistical Office, more than 80.65% of population of Slovakia claim Slovak nationality. In the case of Eastern Slovakia, it is slightly lower share of 77.72%. Population census, as carried out on the territory of Slovakia, however, does not record identification of population with the individual ethnographic groups. Traditional ethnic minorities living in the region of Eastern Slovakia include the Hungarians and the Ruthenian-Ukrainians. In the case of these two ethnic minorities, there are ethnic overlaps from the so-called mother countries or regions. The Hungarian minority represents approximately 8.49% of total population in Slovakia, however, in Eastern Slovakia it is only 4.69%. In the case of Ruthenians-Ukrainians, it is 0.76% of population, but in Eastern Slovakia they represent 2.32% of population.

⁶ Source <https://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovensko>;
https://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre%C5%A1ovsk%C3%BD_kraj;
https://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ko%C5%A1ick%C3%BD_kraj;
<http://web.vucke.sk/sk/fakty-kraji/ine/obce-mesta.html>

Other ethnic or traditional nationalities in Eastern Slovakia include the Roma minority. We can consider it traditional, despite the ideas of its relatively late arrival to this territory. Considering the historical context, unlike the Hungarians or Ruthenians-Ukrainians, the Roma do not form the so-called ethnic overlap from a mother state (which is generally considered to be India), neither they do not inhabit a single compact area. According to population census, the Roma in Slovakia represent 1.96% of the population. In Eastern Slovakia, it is up to 4.95%. An overview of the national composition of Eastern Slovakia according to the results of the 2011 Population and Housing Census is presented in the table No.2.

Table 2 Ethnic composition of the Eastern Slovakia in 2011 census.

Nationality	Prešov region		Košice region		Eastern Slovakia	
	Total	% share	Total	% share	Total	% share
Slovak	668 300	82,05	580 066	73,27	1 248 366	77,72
Hungarian	646	0,08	74 743	9,44	75 389	4,69
Roma	43 097	5,29	36 476	4,61	79 573	4,95
Ruthenian	28 835	3,54	3 076	0,39	31 911	1,99
Ukrainian	3 714	0,46	1 637	0,21	5 351	0,33
Czech	2 610	0,32	3 174	0,40	5 784	0,36
German	556	0,07	1 179	0,15	1 735	0,11
Polish	630	0,08	334	0,04	964	0,06
Other	787	0,10	1 212	0,15	1 999	0,12
Not identified	64 631	7,93	88 980	11,24	153 611	9,56
Total	814 527		791 723		1 606 250	

Population structure by nationalities, based on Census in 2011.⁷

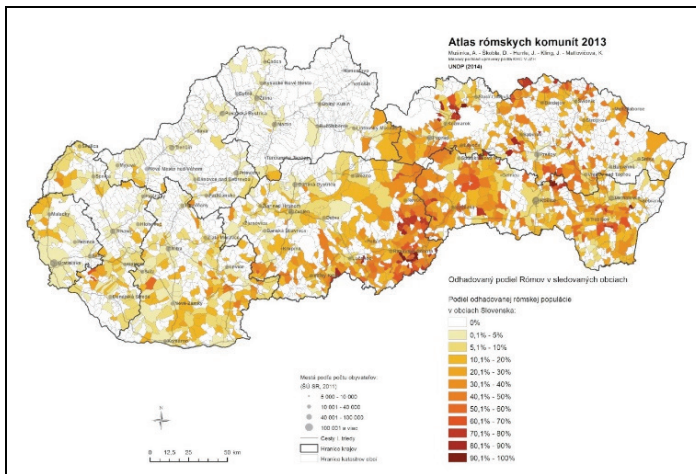
In the case of the Roma, apart from the above-mentioned differences of territorial distribution, we encounter one more specific element. Although it is generally present in all the nationalities and ethnicities of the region (basically, it is universal), in the case of the Roma it is discussed much more. This is a long-term discussion regarding the number of Roma, or a question "Who do we consider to be a Roma"? Currently, there are two (often presented as opposing) approaches. The first approach emphasizes the self-identification of an individual and the second is based on the principle of the so called attributed ethnicity. In Slovakia, the Statistical Office primarily works with the concept of self-identification. The second approach works with estimates of the numbers of people who are perceived as members of ethnic groups on a given territory. This approach was also used by the *Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013*⁸ (research hereinafter the 'Atlas 2013'). We do not consider the question which of these perspectives is better and which is worse to be relevant. In the 2011 Population and Housing Census, 105,738⁹ people claimed Roma nationality in Slovakia. However, if we use the so called attributed ethnicity, according to qualified estimates, there are at least 402,810 inhabitants living in Slovakia who are perceived as Roma by their environment.

⁷ Source: <https://census2011.statistics.sk/tabulky.html>

⁸ MUŠINKA, Alexander et al. *Atlas rómskych komunit na Slovensku 2013*. Bratislava, UNDP, 2014, p. 120. ISBN 978-80-89263-18-9

⁹ Source: ŠÚ SR. https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/wcm/connect/1f62189f-cc70-454d-9eab-17bdf5e1dc4a/Tab_10_Obyvatelstvo_SR_podla_narodnosti_scitanie_2011_2001_1991.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

Figure 11 The estimated share of Roma in Slovakia based on the results of the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013¹⁰



1.4.2 Carpathian region on the Ukrainian side

The Zakarpattye region is formally one of the twenty-five regions of Ukraine.¹¹ The Zakarpattye region is formally one of the 25 regions of Ukraine. On an area of 12,777 km² and with a population of 1,258,800, it belongs to the smallest in Ukraine. It is divided into 13 districts and 609 administrative units, of which 30 are towns or municipalities of urban type. From the ethnic point of view, the Ukrainians (80.51%) have a dominant position in the Zakarpattye region, who, like the Slovaks in Slovakia, do not form a homogeneous group. Dominant in this area are the Ukrainian ethnographic groups Lemks, Bojks and Huculs.

The second largest group in the Zakarpattye are the Hungarians (12.08%) Romanians (2.56%) and Russians (2.47%), who are statistically relevant ethnic minorities in this area, however, are absent in Eastern Slovakia. Other minorities in this region are the Roma (1.12%) and the Slovaks (0.45%). In the case of the latter two, these minorities are represented in the Zakarpattye region in the largest proportion in the total Ukrainian context.

Table 3 Ethnic composition of the Zakarpattye region (as of the 2011 census)

	Ukraine		Zakarpattye	
	Total population	share	Total population	Share
Total	48 240 902	100,00 %	1 254 614	100,00 %
Ukrainian	37 541 693	77,82%	1 010 127	80,51 %
Hungarian	156 566	0,32%	151 516	12,08 %
Romanian	150 989	0,31%	32 152	2,56 %
Russian	8 334 141	17,28%	30 993	2,47 %
Roma	47 587	0,10 %	14 004	1,12 %
Slovak			5 695	0,45 %
German	33 302	0,07 %	3 582	0,29 %

¹⁰ MUŠINKA, Alexander et al. *Atlas...* p. 82.

¹¹ Regardless of the current geopolitical situation, we still count the Crimean, Donetsk and Luhan regions in this number.

1.5 Central east European region and recent CBC development after year 1990

Since the 1990s, a democratic political system has been building in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Their national borders are relatively "newer" - the majority of the population lived in one of the three great empires at the end of the 19th century: Russian, Ottoman, Habsburg (without the difficulty of transferring internal administrative boundaries). The state borders that originated after the First World War artificially divided the integrated territory. After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the successor states were established in this area: Austria, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Italy and the SHS Kingdom - Yugoslavia since 1929). That is why effective cross-border cooperation is essential in this part of Europe to help overcome the barriers in economic, political and cultural life of border regions.

Political and social changes after 1989 created a framework for increasing the interest of Central and Eastern European countries in the current trends in the regional politics of the Member States of the European Union (the so-called "*new regionalism*"). The basis of these trends was the support of cooperation based on initiatives of the regions themselves from the bottom. Such activities occurred fairly often in border regions that existed in differentiated conditions, but they had some common features and issues which formed background for their cooperation. This is the way how institutionalized form of cross-border cooperation such as the Carpathian Euroregion was created.

The Carpathian Euroregion (CER) was officially established on February 14, 1993, when a treaty was signed in Debrecen.¹² It was the first Euroregion in the countries of the former Soviet bloc. It connected the border areas in five Central and Eastern European countries - south-eastern Poland (Podkarpackie województwo), eastern Slovakia (Košice and Prešov self-governing region), north-eastern Hungary (counties Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves, Hajdú-Bihar and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok as well as towns with the rights of counties: Eger, Debrecen, Miskolc and Nyíregyháza), northern Romania (counties Satu Mare, Maramures, Harghita, Salaj, Botosani) and Western Ukraine (Lviv, Zakarpattye, Ivano-Frankovsk and Chernivtsi region) in the area of approximately 145 thousand square kilometres with almost 15 million inhabitants.

Slovak representatives did not sign the founding treaty in Debrecen, they were present as observers. The full membership of the Slovak partners was approved at the meeting of the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion on 26 November 1999 in Prešov. The accession of Slovakia took place in accordance with international European documents such as *the European Framework Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation between Territories or Authorities, the Additional Protocol to the European Framework Convention on Cross-border Cooperation between Territories or Authorities, Protocol No. 2 to the European Framework Convention on Cross-border Cooperation between Territories or Authorities, European Charter of Local Self-Government*.¹³ Relevant internal legal and other conditions for Slovak regions have also been changed in a positive direction to support regional cross-border cooperation.

The aim of founding the Carpathian Euroregion was to provide an appropriate framework for its members to coordinate cross-border activities or contribute to faster development of the regions and their economies, as well as to create good neighbourly relations between the countries and the people.¹⁴ The development and activity of the Carpathian Euroregion are accompanied by several

¹² During the establishment of the Euroregion, its area was 53,200 km² with approximately 5 million inhabitants. At present, the area of the Euroregion is 132 651 km² (14 million inhabitants live in urban areas and counties attached to the Euroregion)

¹³ Statutes of the Carpathian Euroregion Association Slovakia, Article 2. Legal Status of the Association <http://www.ker.sk/-stanovy>

¹⁴ The objectives and tasks of the Carpathian Euroregion were as follows: to manage and coordinate activities that support cooperation between Euroregion members in the fields of economy, ecology, culture, science and education;

emerging problems arising in particular from the different starting conditions between the regions and the significantly different legal and competence conditions of the Member States concerned.

Nowadays, the structure of the members of the Slovak part of the Carpathian Euroregion differs greatly from its beginnings. Founding regions abandoned their membership: Košice and Prešov self-governing regions. However, 53 municipalities (municipalities and towns) remained as members, including the city of Košice. In addition, organisation Cassovia BIC and Slovak Foreign Policy Association, NGO, are also members. Renewing CER activities was the focus of project *“Sustainable Development of Border Regions Provided by Effective Functioning of the Carpathian Euroregion”* that was funded by the European Union through the ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Program (2007 - 2013) with the aim to develop a new strategy, objectives and forms of cooperation to intensify activities contributing to sustainable development of various areas of life in the Carpathian Euroregion.

The history of the Euroregion, despite the determined objectives and the achieved results, especially in the case of Slovakia and Romania, was more or less a struggle with governments and their authorities, which can be illustrated by the interference of politics of states in the formation of cross-border cooperation. It is evidenced by the fact that within a few years, there has been a change in the status of border regions in the above-mentioned countries and the process of decentralization of the relevant competencies of the central authorities did not continue. Although in this part of the project we do not analyse the entire territory of the Carpathian Euroregion (Poland, Romania, Hungary), we do not monitor all their activities, neither the structure of their members. However, we can state that operation of the Carpathian Euroregion in the border areas of Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary is not particularly noticeable and it does not bring extraordinary results.

to help develop specific plans; to facilitate the creation of interpersonal relationships, including the cooperation of experts in various fields; to assist the development of the region; to identify potential areas of cross-border cooperation among the members of the Euroregion; to unite and facilitate cooperation with other international organizations, institutions and business representatives.

2 DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The key objective of cross border cooperation (CBC) is to support activities which lead to sustainable development in bordering regions and to achieve improvements in the quality of life of the population living in this area while leveraging opportunities stemming from cross border exchanges. Across variety of situations and setups There might be several types of CBC agreements, initiatives and actions ranging from cultural through socio-economic to very technical projects focused on infrastructure development. In their study and development, no form of cross-border cooperation may be favoured or ignored, therefore we prefer a generally encompassing view of CBC as an activity that seeks and uses an opportunity for mutual benefit of partners and all CBC stakeholders.

In what follows we discuss the role of relevant levels of multiple governance structures and international relations including transnational and national governance levels. From there we seek to elaborate on the prerequisites of shared priorities in intersecting areas of socio-economic development of bordering regions, how this can be supported through creating local capacities. While we might not be explicitly focusing on the political geography within CBC, this is implicitly present in different governance levels and emphasised through the argued importance of transnational structures.

Local level is discussed as the locus where actions are targeted, supported and delivered. Local support to cross border initiatives rests on local capacities, the role and importance of which needs to be recognized. While the outreach from national and regional structures to local level is important as a basis for good governance, the level of complexity of cross border initiatives and the conditions in which the initiatives need to take place require additional support from transnational structures. This is supported by the discussion of the best practice example of the Barents Euro Arctic structures.

2.1 Historical institutional context of Slovak-Ukrainian CBC

The development of cross-border cooperation aimed at tackling economic, social and environmental problems at regional and local level as a means of achieving stronger unity and support of cooperation among European countries is in full compliance with the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic since its foundation. By developing activities within cross-border cooperation, the objectives of the Council of Europe and the European Union aimed at close cooperation between states in different areas and at various levels were fulfilled. Cross-border cooperation is very convenient for Slovakia, especially due to its production potential, its restructuring, lower purchasing power and a small market.

On the other hand, cross-border economic relations present an extensive set of processes, the implementation of which required the efforts and determination to adopt many administrative, technical, economic and social measures, as well as interventions in the cultural area that regulated and supported mutual relations between the various public and private subjects on both sides of the border, in accordance with already concluded treaties and agreements. Cross-border cooperation can therefore be defined as a form of international cooperation between countries and regions along their borders in the interests of mutual positive results or the achievement of common goals.¹⁵

¹⁵ GERFERT, Sonya. *Cross-Border Cooperation : Transforming Borders*. Enschede: University of Twente, 2009, p. 10 . Available on the Internet: <https://www.google.sk/webhp?hl=sk&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjDvo-Yj9LNAhUOsBQKHZaIcJEQPAgD#hl=sk&q=Gerfert+2009> .

This means that the main problem of development of such cooperation is overcoming of traditional approaches to interstate relations based on the principle of national and state sovereignty.¹⁶ It is therefore quite understandable that the occurrence and development of cooperation between border regions of neighbouring countries brought the need for a certain reinterpretation of border functions, which has been dealt with theoretically, but gradually becomes a question of practice.

Formation and development of cross-border cooperation between European countries has been since its beginning under the patronage of the Council of Europe, which enabled its creation and promotion in all European countries, regardless of the status and the level of their involvement in integration structures. International legal basis for these activities of the Council of Europe is the European Framework Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation.¹⁷ It is defined in Article 2 of the Convention as "any joint action aimed at strengthening and support of neighbourly relations between territorial units and bodies is subject to the jurisdiction of two or more parties and the conclusion of any treaty or agreement necessary for that purpose."¹⁸

Promoting cross-border relations and cooperation between cross-border regions by European structures is definitely not accidental. Integration processes are of particular importance for sustainable political and economic development of all countries and a key factor in stabilizing internal and external policies of European countries. Cross-border cooperation between bodies, institutions and organizations at the level of neighbouring states regions also greatly strengthens political and economic ties between them and the integrationist tendencies in Europe as such. Naturally, it helps successful implementation of joint projects aimed at tackling global problems and removing tensions at the borders of European countries.¹⁹

According to some constitutional and structural characteristics, we generally distinguish two types of cross-border cooperation. The first is carried out in stable and permanently functioning institutional frameworks that work with their own administration, technical and financial resources, as well as their own decision-making system, creating a certain special identity of the co-operating regions. An example in this respect may be the Carpathian Euroregion. Certainly, structures are still being created within the second type of cross-border cooperation, however, they do not usually have a separate identity and often neither administrative nor management structures. In this case, these are the so-called working communities that can establish certain associations but are largely without legal entity.²⁰

¹⁶ See for example DAHOU, Karim. *Towards a Euro-African dialogue on cross-border cooperation*. Paris: Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (OECD), 2004, 53 p.

¹⁷ *The European Framework Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation between Territories or Authorities* was signed in Madrid on 21 May 1980. The SR acceded to it by a resolution of the NA on 26 October 1999. President R. Schuster ratified the Convention on 10 January 2000 under condition that its fulfilment is pursuant to interstate agreements. It was published under No. 78/2000 Coll. 15 March 2000, the validity in the Slovak Republic took effect on 1 May 2000. On the same day, the *Supplementary Protocol to the European Framework Convention for Cross-Border Cooperation between Territories or Authorities*, concluded in Strasbourg on 9 November 1995, was published under No. 79/2001 Coll. with effect from 2 May 2000, which, among other things, also makes it possible to obtain legal subjectivity of the authorities of cross-border cooperation. *Protocol No. 2 to the European Framework Convention for Cross-Border Cooperation between Territories or Authorities*, agreed in Strasbourg on 5 May 1998 and published under No. 116/2001 Coll. 30 March 2001, in effect in Slovakia from 1 February 2001, allows implementation of cross-border cooperation, in full, also between regions which do not border each other, i.e. Inter-territorial cooperation.

¹⁸ *Európsky rámcový dohovor o cezhraničnej spolupráci medzi územnými celkami alebo orgánmi*, p. 1. Available on the Internet: <http://www.epi.sk/zz/2001-78>.

¹⁹ KOSOV, Yuri - VOVENDA, Alexei. The traditions of Russian and European perception of the state frontier in the conditions of transborder regional cooperation. In *The Baltic Region scientific journal*, year 2012, No. 1, p. 6.

²⁰ Pozri GABBE, Jens. The Euroregion as a place for transfrontier cooperation implementation. In *Quarterly of International Sociology Cooperation and Euroregions*, year 2004, 3-4, p. 30-52.

The aim of cooperation of neighbouring bodies, institutions, governmental organizations and private entities is in both cases to compensate for the structural disadvantages of various parts of the regions due to the proximity of interstate borders.²¹ Further cooperation is aimed at promoting sustainable development on both sides of the border, reducing differences in living standards, tackling problems and using opportunities for cooperation within the European Union. Since 2007, the European Commission has been working towards cross-border cooperation to support the economic and social development of border regions, to address shared challenges in areas such as the environment, prevention and fight against organized crime, effective and safe borders, and the support of cross-border activities of the population.

On the other hand, European authorities are fully aware of the fact that cross-border cooperation, despite its obvious versatility, is a rather complicated phenomenon, which originated as a result of natural processes under the influence of objective factors, as well as favourable circumstances, however, obstacles and barriers that are directly or indirectly associated with this phenomenon are also of similar character.

From this point of view, it is quite understandable that cross-border relations and mutual cooperation are occurring and developing more rapidly and more successfully between border areas, which are relatively close to each other, due to geographical, pragmatic or utilitarian reasons. In this context, substantial facilitation and simplification of processes of creation but also enhancement of cross-border cooperation of border regions, brings overlap of certain interests, common historical conditions, as well as the interdependence of regions due to economic, environmental or other objective reasons.²² Regions of eastern Slovakia and the Zakarpattye region of Ukraine largely meet several of these criteria and, moreover, they have some experience of cross-border cooperation from the 1970s, and especially the 1980s, even though this was gradually cleared of ideological limits and dominance of its formalities.²³

2.2 Conceptual views on cross border cooperation

Cross border cooperation falls by the discipline scope and thematic coverage into wide range of areas. One way to discuss and analyse CBC is to narrow the scope to specific aspects and operational levels of CBC such as the level of processes, conditions, structures and interactions. Less common are methodology approaches to CBC as comprehensive conceptualisations are not straightforward. Methodological research efforts might focus on the multilevel governance structures and map stakeholders involved at various levels of cooperation. Stakeholder analysis is a useful exercise for any development strategy including CBC actions and initiatives but it is of interest mainly for concrete configurations of bordering regions.

CBC FRAMEWORK

Cross border cooperation is a complex process embedded in different social political and economic structures of governance of bordering regions that seek to co-operate. At the beginning of monitoring of CBC process, the following areas and levels of analysis need to be addressed: governance structures and levels, thematic areas of CBC actions; types of action/intervention; stakeholders involved in CBC; processes related to CBC planning, support (negotiation and agreement) delivery and assessment. While cross border cooperation within EU regions allows for

²¹ Podrobnejšie pozri DE SOUSA, Luis. Understanding European Cross-border Cooperation : A Framework for Analysis. In *Journal of European Integration*, 2012, p. 1-19. Available on the Internet: http://www.ics.ul.pt/rdonweb-docs/ics_lsousa_understanding_ari.pdf.

²² Ibidem.

²³ DANILÁK, Michal. *Styky východného Slovenska a Zakarpatska v rokoch 1945-1990*. In DORUĽA, Ján (ed.). *Slovensko-rusínsko-ukrajinské vzťahy od obrodzenia po súčasnosť*. Bratislava: Slavistický kabinet SAV, 2000, s. 119-131.

close integration of policies and structures, cooperation at the outer border of EU face different challenges.

Drawing the essentials of a CBC model, it is crucial to map interrelationships between different actors involved in CBC. To achieve that, it is crucial to develop knowledge on functions and capacities available for local development of bordering regions (areas, cities). Tasks at the outset of CBC goals definition should include the following steps:

1. Identify policy areas of bordering regions where competencies can be communicated and/or coordinated
2. Determine the policy areas which could profit from being coordinated across borders
3. Identify the most prominent actors of CBC
4. Monitor the potential of different actors of CBC
5. Analyse interrelationships between policy actors engaged in cross-border cooperation

SOCIAL CAPITAL FRAMEWORK OF CBC

Each form or phase of CBC involves intense interaction between its actors. Such interactions are the core the social capital framework of CBC, which has been defined and explored within the framework of cross-border relations and studied also in terms of its application during their development.²⁴ Social capital and networks feeds back to interaction and participation. The logic behind this concept is that the nature of CBC requires by itself interaction which in certain conditions generate a trust generation as the first stage of social capital mobilisation. Interactions here represent social interactions, as well as interaction between business partners and governance representatives within economic exchanges and networks. This framework of CBC is particularly useful for emphasise role of interactions and the need to recognise this role and provide the CBC actors effective support. As Grix concludes, it is not a problem for border elites to interact as they are often driving forces of the process, crucial is how to extend the interaction to general population in the bordering regions.

2.3 What can we learn from results of cross-border cooperation?

The level of activities across borders of regions has increased considerably in past decades also due to change in geo-political structures on a global scale. Following the collapse of systems of central planning in 90s, we could see dramatic change in the European space, which developed towards dramatic EU enlargement. Cross border interactions increased considerable within European space and this has added to richness of experience from CBC practices of European countries in addition to other examples from countries across the world.

Because of the recent changes in urban and rural landscapes, pressures from urbanisation created more focus on direct partnership between cities in bordering regions. Cities are also centres of sub-national regional structures, even though the city and regional strategies might not be interconnected. A review of case studies is often one of the best information sources for building knowledge on good practice in locally targeted initiatives. A group of researchers reviewed 20 case studies of CBC in Europe, each case studies involved at least two countries/regions. The focus on

²⁴ Podrobnejšie pozri GRIX, J. Towards a Theoretical Approach to the Study of Cross-Border Cooperation. In *Perspectives*, 2001, č. 17, s. 5-13. Dostupné na internete <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615907>; GRIX, J. - KNOWLES, V. The Euroregion and the Maximization of Social Capital: Pro Europa Viadrina. In Liam O'Dowd, James Anderson, Thomas M. Wilson (eds.). *New Borders for a Changing Europe: Cross-Border Cooperation and Governance*. 2010

cooperation of cities and the collection of case studies was not based on availability or ad hoc selection but on a set of criteria to support decisive results.²⁵

The key research question referred to criteria which can be identified as success factors for CBC. Analysis of each case study was supported by additional evidence from different data sources on the socio-economic context of particular case, referring in particular to information on: population, territorial development strategy; distance between the cities involved in the CBC strategies²⁶; GDP/capita; official languages; border typology etc. The CBC cases subject to the analysis included projects with intensive cooperation between cities in EU countries in transportation, spatial planning, socio-economic development, culture, research and education.

The approach adopted by authors provides information contained in case studies more accessible to other CBC actors in different setups because of the following:

- clear and well described methodology define how far the interpretation of results are relevant for other CBC projects and strategies, especially for CBC practitioners involved in development of CBC plans and interventions.
- additional survey with CBC professional confirm our suggestion that, besides working with raw data on local and regional level and constructing CBC statistics, there is a knowledge at local level which needs to be recorded and collected
- to support the methodological framework for case studies analysis, additional information was collected from the main actors of the CBC process, experts and professionals (informal interviews).²⁷

CBC success factors

Castanho and his co-workers identified success factors of CBC including the following, relevant for the case of fostering Slovak Ukrainian CBC between the cities of Prešov and Kosice on Slovak side and Uzhorod on Ukrainian side:

- connectivity
- strong territorial strategy
- coordination on infrastructure
- increase sense of belonging
- diverse infrastructure offer
- strong economy
- increased quality of life
- attractiveness for youth and talents
- alignment of strategic documents/plans
- strong political commitment
- citizen involvement
- political transparency

These and other factors were analysed with respect to their impact on success of CBC on individual case studies. Summarizing the findings with relevance for the Slovak Ukrainian CBC development the following factors are most relevant:

²⁵ CASTANHO, R., et al. Identifying critical factors for success. In Cross Border Cooperation (CHS) development projects, Habitat International, 2016.

Dostupné na internete: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2016.10.004>

²⁶ studied cases of CBC were limited on cooperation between cities

²⁷ CASTANHO, R., et al. Identifying critical factors for success.

1. definition of clear objectives and strategic plans
2. political transparency and involvement
3. promoting connectivity and movement between cities
4. attract young and talented people
5. grow cities' cultural and economic potential
6. promote citizen involvement and participation
7. increase quality of life for the population and consequently improve quality of environment for the visitors²⁸

Drivers of local development and relevance for cross border cooperation

CBC in practice rests on successful results for local economies. The local development nexus is therefore logical focus point for outlining priority areas of socio-economic development at specific local areas including bordering regions. The success of development strategies in bordering regions and places is closely linked with their ability to deal with CBC challenges and respond to CBC opportunities. Integration of CBC with local development goals is a success condition as argued in preceding section.

Local development varies across regions and countries and local places can draw on rich practice experience from other developed countries comprising EU non-EU and world economies on how particular local issues have been addressed and cared for and what defines the successful outcomes for local communities.

Balancing city/urban objectives with regional/local objectives is becoming increasingly complex task. For illustration, supporting job creation and employment opportunities locally decreases pressures to commute to urban areas and improves conditions for sustainability of local areas and their ecosystems.

The drivers of development can be seen as necessary conditions for sustainable economic growth at local level and may be condensed into 3 essential pillars of local development:

- Entrepreneurship
- Social cohesion
- Innovation and skills development

In order to achieve good delivery of growth oriented strategies good governance needs to be in place and design and implement policies for competitiveness and prosperity. Inclusiveness of policies has become a must for any area and inclusive entrepreneurship is being promoted as way to tackle contemporary problems of excluded groups and troubled generations of youth with limited access to employment opportunities.

What works in local development strategies?

OECD work on local development has been for consistently following the process of social and economic development from the local angle while collecting evidence from successful local actors across the world. The list they provide on what needs to be considered for local action is a useful list of recommendations to be followed and monitored on local level:

- Co-ordinate employment, skills, and economic development policy
- Support the lifelong development of relevant skills
- Help areas move out of the low skills trap
- Tackle labour market exclusion
- Create conditions conducive to high growth firms

²⁸ Ibidem.

- Promote entrepreneurship skills.
- Support social entrepreneurship as a source of job creation
- Adopt innovative approaches to economic development.
- Respond to demographic changes
- Smooth the transition to a green economy.
- Use local data to inform local policy²⁹

Using local data to inform local policy related to building local capacities. It is important not only to use locally disaggregated data but also identify how such data can be retrieved from available statistics. Equally important is to understand what options are available for actually collecting data at the local level on specific issues.

2.4 Creating local information systems to support CBC

Creating local data capacity and intelligence to leverage synergies and opportunities in cross-border activities is one of the key favourable conditions for strengthening cross-border activities and projects in this area. Quantitative data on cross-border flows is very useful but it has only limited bearing on improved understanding of the real impact of cross-border interaction on attitudes and intentions of bordering populations.³⁰ Efforts for developing cross-border statistics are important but also long-term endeavour and designing meaningful indicators is a part of a lengthy process where collecting information and supporting capacity at the local level is crucial. Often, statistics at national/international levels are being collected for a limited period as a result of common projects. The discontinuation of joint efforts also raises the question to what extent do data contribute to building local knowledge on how to better structure and develop strategies and plans in specific areas. In case of cross-border projects and initiatives the situation is more complicated and many obstacles stem from different scope and structure of strategic planning tools such as development strategies.

The expertise on building local data capacity is particularly useful as a source of theoretical and empirical evidence leading to a shortlist of best principles for building evidence-based strategies. It is suggested that supporting local economic intelligence is about helping local organisations/governance actors. Selecting from the OECD shortlist and adapting it for the scope of this report we suggest the following steps for supporting local information capacity in relation to CBC

- identify local enablers, drivers and barriers of local development providing information for the strategy building;
- support/improve local approach to gathering and using information for the strategy building, identify local training needs to support the local capacity;
- identify support knowledge management tools (foresight);
- provide support to creating, using and properly interpreting indicators to monitor development of cross-border regions and evaluate impact of CBC projects.³¹

Local intelligence: support to integrated decision making

Key innovation and support on supporting the correct identification of goals and CBC objectives can be provided by working with locally disaggregated data. Referring to success factors of CBC and best practice in building and delivering CBC locally nested development strategies, efforts to support local

²⁹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2014. Job Creation and Local Economic Development, OECD Publishing. doi: 10.1787/9789264215009-en

³⁰ GRIX, J. Towards a Theoretical Approach to the Study of Cross-Border Cooperation. In *Perspectives*, 2001, č. 17, s. 5-13.

³¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). 2016. Job Creation and Local Economic Development. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2016. Dostupné : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264261976-en>

knowledge need to be structured in specific thematic areas defined as a part of the process of CBC plans and goals alignment.

One of the key areas is employment and skills development and the local information on labour supply and demand and skills development. In most localities and regions is situation of youth at labour market of particular interest.

Recent research in labour markets show the key role of supporting youth, fighting marginalising disadvantaged groups and supporting entrepreneurship skills as the most effective driver for local job creation and growth.

Methodology and practice – what is feasible at local level

Local level is typical facing constraints at multiple levels when it comes to professional approach to leveraging information and intelligence about development strategies and integrating those with cross-border projects. Here, expert networks and projects might target directly local level by filtering out simple methodological tools for data collection and interpretation accessible to wider range of local audience. The local level actors can then achieve autonomy in collecting and processing data and information and coordinate on individual segments with their cross-border counter parts avoiding complex methodological issues when working with complex data set which often do not allow for detail at local level. For illustration, a list of such tools could contain:

- surveys with prepared survey questions and interpretation modules for optional results;
- web-based tools, allowing for continuous feed-back and immediate feedback on variety of questions and issues;
- communication manuals for structured dialogue with local business community: subsets of variables/questions mapping labour and skills demand, indicators of business environment;
- drafts of memorandum agreements helping local CBC actors to outline concrete areas for cooperation with local academic research communities;
- best practice (Barents region, best practice examples from cross-border projects and initiatives within EU etc.);

In terms of thematic focus, it is useful to start with a subset of thematic modules which cover priority areas at both sides of cross-border partners. For illustration, first initiatives targeting information collection and coordination between bordering regions and localities can involve:

- Collecting information on local governance capacities: qualitative and quantitative data collected from local and regional professionals: i) interviews on CBC priorities and barriers with CBC actors (governance representatives, business representatives, etc.); ii) web based tool/questionnaires wider population
- local labour supply topics: employment/entrepreneurial intentions i) modules/survey for students at locally connected universities (perceptions of their skills, entrepreneurship skills, migration intentions etc.); ii) interviews modules for local business leaders; iii) interviews/questionnaires for labour market professionals/labour offices
- skills: web based modules for local youth and individuals in general on skills profiling, identification of training needs, barriers to access adult education and training

Building local information tools in coordination with cross border data is clearly a challenging task but the payoff is rewarding. Coordinating and supporting isolated data collection initiatives across borders and nesting those in local bordering communities supports building strong information base. Even more importantly, when doing so, along the process the CBC community develops and strengthens in pursuing shared vision and realising individual and common objectives towards informed decision making and improved effectiveness of CBC projects and initiatives.

3 EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE PRACTISE: BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC AND REGIONAL COUNCILS

3.1 East - West relationships and building bridges

Regional cooperation based on common projects and activities has proven to be a key factor in building mutual trust, prevention of conflicts and economic and social development on both sides of the borders between countries of the European Union and those in its neighbourhood. The proposal of Poland and Sweden, which was adopted by the European Commission, was the reason for the Eastern Partnership initiative, which officially started its existence on 7 May 2009 in Prague. The Eastern Partnership is an initiative governing the relations of the European Union with its neighbours, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Its aim is to provide a platform for social development, trade proliferation, economic strategy, travel agreements, and other issues between the EU and the 6 countries. A very specific example is Russia, which is not part of the EaP, but has a key role as the biggest and most influential country bordering the EU. This cooperation is governed by Agreement on partnership and cooperation establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States on one side and the Russian Federation on the other.

While EaP or Agreement on partnership provide kind of umbrella initiatives fostering multi-layer collaboration, there is growing number of concrete examples of regional cooperation and initiatives on the border of the EU and its eastern neighbours. One of the examples is development of cooperation among Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia through Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council. As a part of the project we analysed both institutions as an example of good practice and attempt to use this analysis as a tool for further discussion on how to institutionalise and deepen cooperation between Slovak and Ukrainian border regions.

Significance of the macropolitical tools for the CBC development is evidenced by more than twenty years of operation of North European institutions, in particular of Euro-Arctic Council and of the Regional Council.

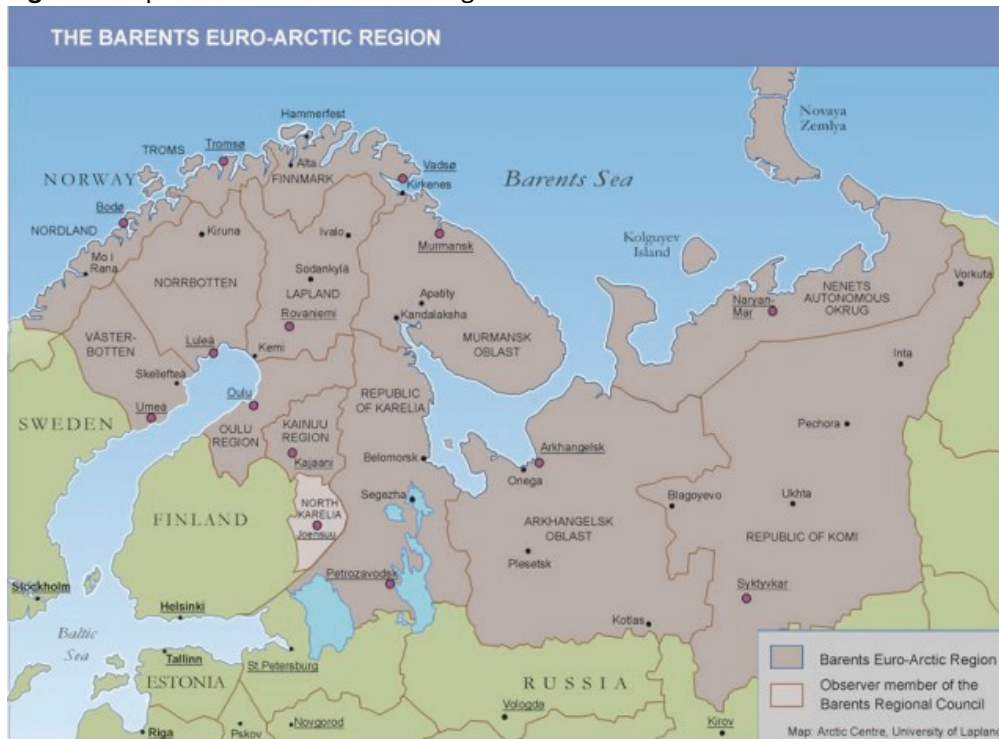
Barents Euro-Arctic Council is the organ of the Foreign Affairs Ministries of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, European Commission and Russia. It provides efficient macropolitical support and cross-border cooperation management in the Barents region.

Barents Regional Council is an institution of heads of border regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. It provides a *systematic and close cooperation of border areas in solving common problems of CBC*.

International Barents Secretariat is a standing technical body dealing with proper organizational support of multilateral cross-border cooperation. Its office is located in the Norwegian town of Kirkenes.

Norwegian Barents Secretariat is a permanent executive and administrative body, coordinates cross-border cooperation of the northern provinces of Norway: Nordland, Troms and Finnmark with partners in neighbouring countries and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries of Norway, which allocate funds for special grant programs in the areas of regional development, health, culture etc.

Fig. 12 Map of Barents Euro-Arctic region.



Source: Artic Centre, University of Lapland.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Regional Council are institutions of Northern states and the EU, aimed at promoting cross-border cooperation in the Barents region. They were created in the early 90-ies on the initiative of prominent Scandinavian politician – then Foreign Minister of Norway Thorvald Stoltenberg.

Activities of these institutions are based on *a new understanding of cross-border relations* the fundamentals of which are pragmatism and mutual understanding³²

The fundamental principles of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Regional Council and the International Barents Secretariat functioning include:

1. Consensus decision-making.
2. Equal co-financing on the basis of minimized costs.
3. Asynchronous rotation of presidency (for 2 years).
4. Activities of the presiding country are based on the biennial program approved by partners.
5. The program is implemented through the operation of specialized international working groups.

According to estimates of the European Commission, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council are *successful specialized international regional organizations*.

Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region was launched in 1993 on two levels: intergovernmental (Barents Euro-Arctic Council, BEAC), and interregional (Barents Regional Council, BRC), with sustainable development as the overall objective. There were seven basic survey questions set up for the study:

³² STOLTENBERG, Jens og Thorvald. Samtaler. Oslo: Aschehoug forlag, 2009.

- What is history and/or *raison d'etre* of the Barents Euro-Atlantic Council and Barents Regional Councils?
- What is the institutional, technical and managerial set up of the cooperation?
- What are the lessons learned in establishing of the regional cooperation and what we may learn from the achievements and problematic areas?
- How is the cooperation secured in terms of financial and human resources?
- What are the mechanisms of partners' selection?
- How is the decision-making established and what is the experience with functioning of the organization and management of the councils?
- What are approaches to select topics and issues for work groups, concrete projects and activities?

3.2 Barents region, geo-political and economic context

BARENTS-EURO-ARCTIC REGION (BEAR) is one of the largest European co-operating regions. The region has a vast area of 1.75 million km² and population of over 5 million, due to several enlargements, it includes: three northern Norwegian counties: Finnmark, Troms and Nordland (478,144 inhabitants); two counties of Sweden: Norrbotten and Västerbotten (510, 548), three regions of Finland: Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia and Kainuu (666, 527); or five administrative units of Russia at different levels: the Murmansk and Archangelsk regions, the Republic of Karelia and the Komij Republic (with centres: Petrozavodsk and Siktivkar) and the Nenets Autonomous Circuit (centre: Narjan-Mar) (3 466 302). In the region, inhabitants (78.9%) and the territory of the Russian Federation (74.8%) are predominant.³³

The Barents Region is characterized by declining population trends due to migration and declining birth rates. Population in the Barents Region is characterized by a rapid growth of population in the post-productive age. The Barents population numbers declined by 20.93% in 2014 compared to 1990.³⁴ Young and highly qualified people are moving mainly from peripheral areas to cities in the south. In the previous 25 years, they lost thousands of people in productive age due to lack of jobs, especially in the Russian regions, but also in Lapland and Kainuu in Finland.

Except for the majority members of the so-called "state-building nations" (Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians - whose minorities also exist in the neighbouring countries as the so-called ethnic overlaps), there are also several smaller nations and nationalities in this region that together form the overall multi-ethnic image of this territory. They include both the traditional nations and nationalities, i.e. those who live in that territory for a long time and are considered to be the native nations or nationalities; however, there are also many communities in the countries that are the so-called new nations or nationalities (migrants, refugees, etc.), who have lived there for only a relatively brief period of time.

Possibly the largest traditional ethnic minority in the Barents region are the Saami (before known as the Laplanders). Their total number in the region is approximately 85,000, most of whom live in Norway. It is one of the few original nomadic European nations - about 0.5% of the population in Norway, they even have a separate region in Sweden (autonomous administrative unit), Lapland;

³³ FINANCING OF BARENTS COOPERATION. Report of the BEAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Mechanism Study. p.11

³⁴ Comparison of the number of inhabitants according to Barents regions, see FINANCING OF BARENTS COOPERATION. Report of the BEAC Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Mechanism Study. p.13

however, in this region the Saami are a minority.³⁵ An important autochthonous national minority in this region are also the Nenets (Ненцы), living predominantly in the Russian part of the region. They even have their own district (Ненецкий автономный округ) in the Archangelsk area of the Russian Federation. Like the Saami in Lapland, Nenets are also a minority in this administrative unit. Of the total estimated number of about 45,000 Nenets living within the Russian Federation³⁶, 7,000 live in that district (about 18% of the total population of that district). In the Russian part of the region there is another traditional autochthonous national minority – the Vepsi (Вепсы). Approximately 6,000 members of the Vepsi nationality³⁷ live in the Karelia Republic, which also belongs to the monitored Barents region. The individual nationalities mentioned above have many similar characteristics (resulting primarily from the environment in which they traditionally live and from the way of their traditional livelihoods). Also, from the linguistic point of view, all three nationalities (the Saami, Nenets and Vepsi) belong to the Ural language group.

The context of regionalization in the early 1990s was a major motivating factor for flourishing of regional initiatives. When the East-West division was gone, other regional divisions became evident, that have affected various levels of quality of life, well-being, economic development and population of particular areas.

In response to these challenges on January 11, 1993 a Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation was launched, based on the initiative of the Norwegian foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg. The project currently includes the administrative regions – the county Nordland, Troms, Finnmark in Norway; provinces Västerbotten, Norrbotten in Sweden; provinces Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia, Kainuu in Finland; Murmansk Oblast, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Komi Republic, Republic of Karelia, Nenets Autonomous Okrug in Russia.

The substantial reason and justification for creating the Euroregion was to secure stability and peace in the northern periphery of Europe due to the geopolitical characteristics of the region:

The border of Norway and Finland with Russia in the Barents region is approximately 700 km long and there is an enormous difference between living standards, the quality of life of Scandinavian states and Russia. There is probably no other region in Europe with such great differences on both sides of the border.

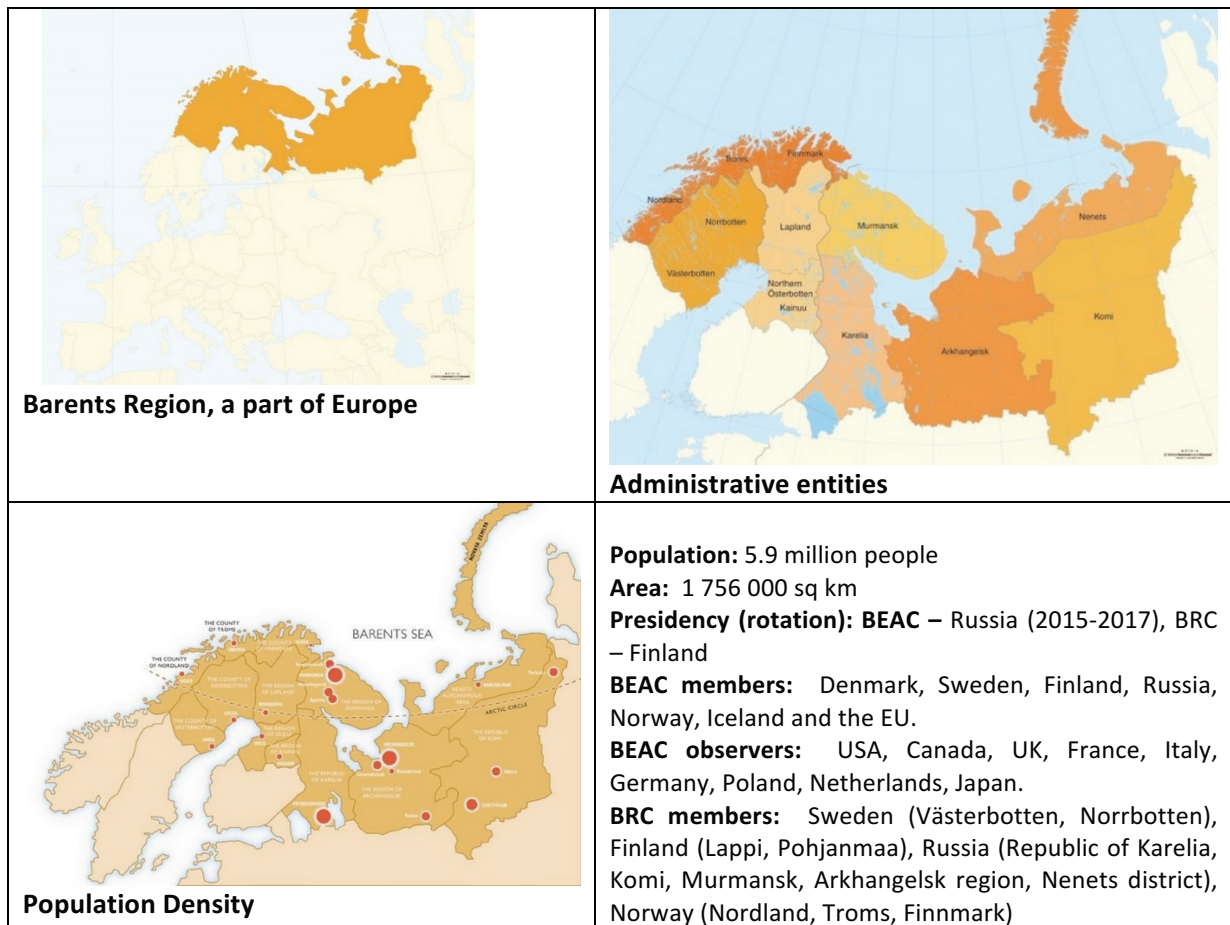
Intra-political and economic instability, uncertainty in the reform process in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union have raised concerns in neighbouring countries. Economic, business and security interests, environmental problems, dislocation of large military units and operation of military industrial complexes, outdated nuclear power plants, disintegration of control and management mechanisms, migration and epidemiological problems, cross-border crime - forced northern countries to take resolute steps.

³⁵ In the case of Sweden, the number of members of the individual nations and nationalities is highly questionable, as this country does not have such statistics. The long-term multicultural context of this state led to the fact that ethnicity (as perceived in our country) plays only a very marginal role in everyday life.

³⁶ Pozri http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/demo/per-itog/tab5.xls

³⁷ Pozri http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/demo/per-itog/tab5.xls

Figure 13. Barents cooperation³⁸



Source: www.barents.no

In the Barents region, "two worlds" stand opposite each other in economic and social sense: the Scandinavian peninsula with the most advanced and most successful economic and social models, versus economic and social inequalities and modernization fighting Russia with enormous resources of raw materials.

After the dissolution of bipolar organization of the world in the place of existing conflicts, it was and it is necessary to seek common solutions to the problems in the newly emerged situation, thus contributing to the long-term stability of the region. The intention was to create a framework that would enable Russia to engage constructively in regional cooperation. This has facilitated joint, coordinated activity in areas important for the future of the Barents region.

³⁸ Based on information from www.barents.no

3.3 Barents Euro-Arctic Council³⁹

The cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region was launched in 1993 in Kirkenes, Norway. The region consists of thirteen counties or similar sub-regional entities in Norway, Russia, Finland and Sweden. There is intergovernmental *Barents Euro-Arctic Council*, and interregional *Barents Regional Council* level.

The *Barents Euro-Arctic Council* was established on the initiative of Norway, supported by Russia and Finland. The main motive of the member countries of the Council including Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Finland and Sweden, and the representative of the European Union (nine more countries have observer status) has been striving to maintain the centuries-old commitment of the Barents region peoples to neighbourliness and cooperation, its environmental development and exploration of natural resources, creation of more comfortable and decent human living conditions. This meant that BEAC would not replace or duplicate the work already carried out on a bilateral or multilateral operation between member states, but it will promote the development of regional cooperation.

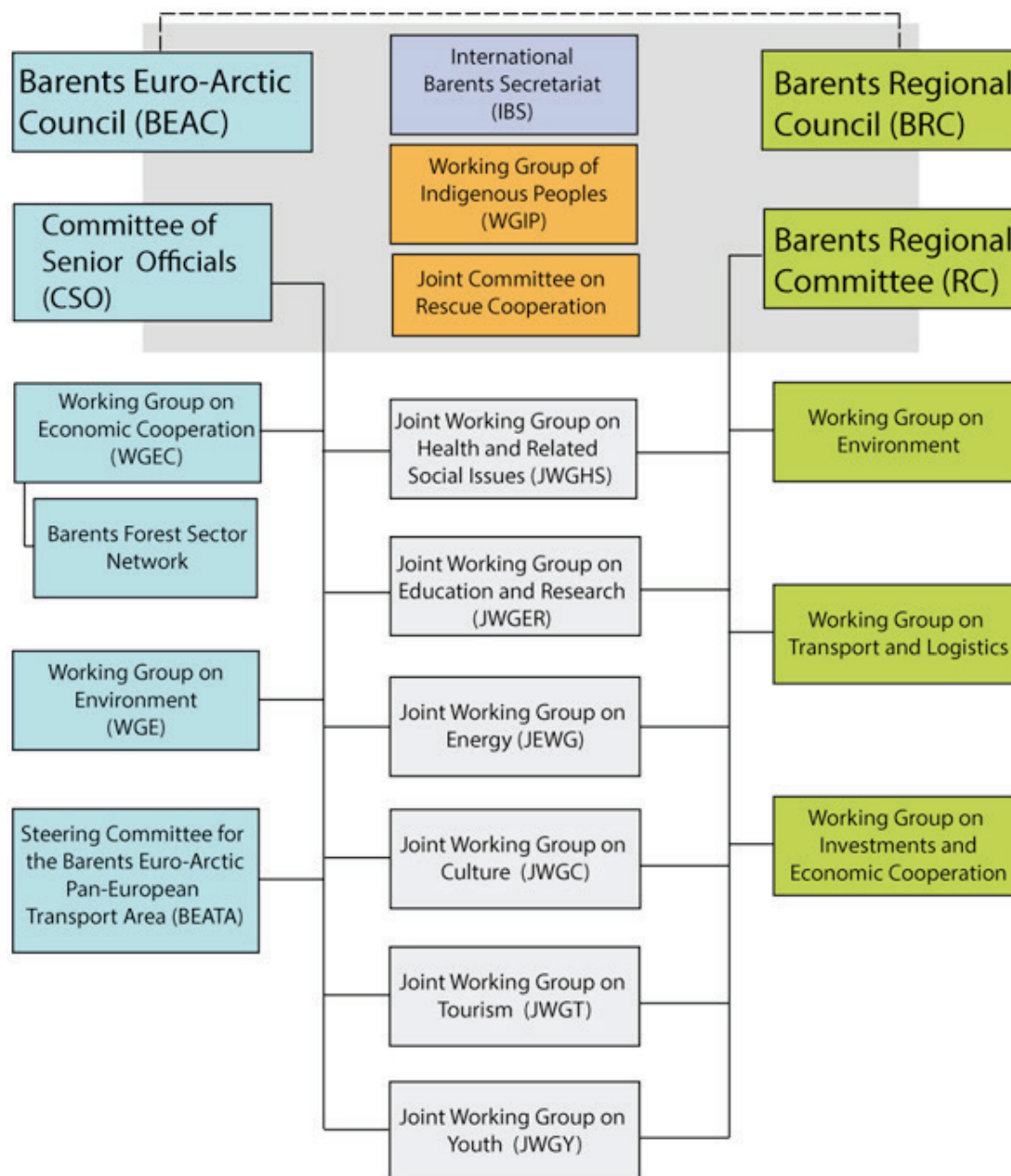
The concept of the Barents Cooperation was formulated in Kirkenes Declaration of October 11, 1993. It defines the main directions of cooperation in the field of economy, transport and communications, cultural relations and people-to-people contacts, scientific and technical cooperation, environment. The Declaration contains references to legislation, such as the European Energy Charter, the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA Convention) and some agreements and strategies for environmental protection of the Arctic region. These laws and strategies have become an important foundation for future initiatives of cross-border cooperation. They helped to create a reliable legal framework for cooperation.

The Kirkenes Declaration of 1993 clearly determined that this regional cooperation should be considered as a contribution to the security of the whole of Europe. Reflecting a new frame of reference for European security, the Declaration emphasizes inter alia: "The participants expressed their conviction that expanded cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region would contribute substantially to stability and progress in the area and in Europe as a whole. The confrontation and division that characterised the past would be replaced by cooperation and partnership. The parties believed that such cooperation would contribute to international peace and security.

Regarding the institutional framework of cooperation, the Declaration laid out principles of alternating presidency of the member countries' ministries. The supreme body of the Council is the annual session of the foreign ministers of the participating countries, decisions on which are taken by consensus.

³⁹ Propagačné materiály a webové stránky Regionálnej rady Barents, Euro-arktická rada Barents a Sekretariát Barents v Nórsku boli použité a uvedené v oddiele 3.3., 3.4. a 3.5. Spolu s informáciami z osobných rozhovorov uskutočnených počas študijných návštev projektového tímu v regióne Barents.

Figure 14 The Barents Cooperation institutions



Source: <http://www.barentscooperation.org/en/About/Organisational-chart>

Usually there had been the cyclic approach to the Secretariat formation, with each country holding the presidency in turn. However, after the Norwegian Presidency, the Secretariat became a permanent institution. From November 1998, the Secretariat is owned by the Norwegian northernmost regions: Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, and on January 1, 1999 it was registered as the Interregional Company. During 2002-2006, the Secretariat staff consisted of 10 people in Kirkenes and 1-2 people in each of the four branches: in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Naryan-Mar and in Petrozavodsk. The last branch was closed in 2008.

Barents region has also become a more open international contact. Thus, the International Barents Secretariat established in 2008 was headed by the Russian diplomat, with the second highest post

held by a Swede. Norway was responsible for 60%, and every other member state for 12.5% of the financial expense.

As already noted, the Barents Cooperation feature is its two-level management structure. There is a special body – the Regional Council, performing interaction locally. It includes senior officials of administrative units forming the Barents region from Norway (northern regions Finnmark, Troms and Nordland), Russia (Republic of Karelia, Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Nenets autonomous region), Finland (Lapland) and Sweden (Norrbotten) and representatives of indigenous peoples.

The Regional Council is actually the generator of practical ideas and cooperation projects. Since 1994 it has developed and implemented "The Barents action program» designed for 5 years, with more than 80 projects in the field of environmental protection, economy, trade, regional infrastructure, livelihoods of indigenous peoples, education, science and technology, culture. Usually these are small projects, but they have a real funding from local authorities of member countries.

The year 1996 when the program was launch, has seen implementation of programs worth about 140 million Swedish kronor (about 20 million US dollars). At the 3d session of foreign ministers in Rovaniemi (Finland) on October 6, 1995 a multilateral regional program was adopted, that addressed environmentally-safe reconstruction of metallurgical enterprises in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions of the Russian Federation, the modernization of seaports and airports in the member regions and other major projects including in Karelia and the Nenets autonomous district. During implementation, the program has been specified at meetings of the Ministers of economy (Murmansk, May 1996) and transport (Arkhangelsk, September 1996).

As described above, the history of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) goes back to 1993, when regular BEAC Ministerial session started. It was however decided in 2007, to enhance the cooperation with establishing of coordination body - the International Barents Secretariat (IBS). This body was approved by the Agreement on Establishment of an International Barents Secretariat and signed at the 11th BEAC Ministerial session on 15 November 2007. The secretariat provides technical support for the multilaterally coordinated activities within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council. Among main tasks of the IBS is back up and support of work and activities conducted within the frameworks of the Barents cooperation and secure biennial rotation of governmental and regional Chairs.

There are five working groups under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council:

- Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC)
- Working Group on Environment (WGE)
- Steering Committee for the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA)
- Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation
- Barents Forest Sector Network (BFSN)

Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC): The Region offers great possibilities for economic activities for example in the fields of extractive industry, tourism, and oil and gas production. In long term, the opening of the Northern Sea Route has been indicated to bring the Region new economic prospects. The Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC) seeks to promote economic development of the Barents Region through enhanced cooperation between the BEAC member states. WGEC works closely together with the regional business-life, the Chambers of Commerce and the Barents Business Advisory Group (BBAG). The biennial Barents Industrial Partnership meetings are the highlights of each WGEC Presidency. There is a separate forum for

forest sector cooperation in the Barents Region – the Barents Forest Sector Network (BFSN) reports to the Working Group on Economic Cooperation.

Working Group on Environment (WGE): The Working Group on Environment was established in 1999. The Barents Region is becoming a strategic region for the Europe. Its natural resources and new transportation routes will change the global map on resource use and transportation. An important challenge, thus, for the prosperity of the region is to promote responsible, sustainable and environmentally sound economic activities. The WGE is expected to cover a wide spectrum of issues and to be able to deal with both strong priorities of the Barents Cooperation and major environmental challenges. The work is therefore organized in sub groups and prioritized themes. The Regional Working Group on Environment carries out cooperation projects between the regions in the Barents region and works in close cooperation with the WGE and its subgroups.

Steering Committee for the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA): The need for cooperation on transport between the countries of the Barents Region was raised at a meeting of the Ministers for Transport of the BEAC, in Arkhangelsk in September 1996. The Steering Committee is required to submit a report once a year to the BEAC and to the European Commission. The chairmanship of the Steering Committee rotates between the members on a two-year basis.

The Barents Region was subsequently introduced into the EU transport cooperation as a Transport Area, decided at the third Pan-European Transport Conference in Helsinki in 1997. The identification of transport corridors on a European scale started at the second Pan-European Transport Conference in Crete in 1994, where several EU transport corridors and four Pan-European Transport Areas were defined. The BEATA cooperation was established and guidelines for its work drawn up at a meeting in Copenhagen in May 1998 between the Ministers for Transport from Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden and representatives from the European Commission. A Steering Committee for the BEATA was set up. The main aim is to strengthen cooperation in order to create an efficient transport system in the Barents Region that integrates the different means of transport. The cooperation includes border crossing points, customs cooperation, maintenance and reconstruction as well as new projects to improve the infrastructure.

Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation: The aim of the Barents Rescue cooperation is to improve the possibilities for the rescue services agencies to co-operate on emergency and rescue issues across county and national/federal borders in the Barents Region. Such increased cooperation would make optimal use of widely dispersed resources and provide assistance faster and more directly. Specialist functions would be made available to neighbours in need.

Focus is on day-to-day basic emergency situations, such as traffic accidents, forest fires, tourism related accidents, fires in open cabins, floods and ice plugs, and industrial and chemical accidents.

Barents Forest Sector Network (BFSN): A new operational approach emphasizing network based cooperation between the members for the BFSTF was approved in the joint meeting on May 23, 2014 in Helsinki. Accordingly, the name of the Group was changed into the Barents Forest Sector Network (BFSN). The aim of the BFSN is to promote sustainable management of forest resources, to follow and timely contribute to BEAC activities, to advocate balanced and coherent view on forests as well as on products and services they provide. To this end the BFSN is to: (i) promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable management of forest resources, and (ii) contribute to conditions of sustainable and multifaceted utilization of forest resources and to promote ecosystem services in the Barents Region.

3.4 Barents Regional Council

Barents Regional Council (BRC) involves 13 member counties and a representative of the indigenous peoples in the northernmost parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden and north-west Russia. The representatives of regions, together with the representatives of indigenous people signed a cooperation protocol that established the Regional Council for the Barents Euro-Arctic Region with the same objectives as the BEAC - to support and promote cooperation and development in the Barents Region. The protocol determined the structure and the general aims of the regional cooperation.

The Barents Region includes counties or their equivalents from each of the member states:

- Finland: Kainuu, Lapland and Oulu Region (North Karelia was granted an observer status in 2008)
- Norway: Finnmark, Nordland and Troms
- Russia: Arkhangelsk, Karelia, Komi, Murmansk and Nenets.
- Sweden: Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

In addition, the BRC also provides platform for the indigenous people in this region: Sami (in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia), Nenets (in Russia) and Veps (in Russia).

The Barents Regional Committee: The Barents Regional Committee is a forum for representatives of the member counties and a representative of the indigenous peoples. The Committee is responsible for preparing the meetings of Barents Regional Council and implements its decisions. The position of the Chairman of the Regional Committee and the Regional Council is held by the representative of the same county and consequently alternates every second year. Each Chairman is also responsible for setting up a secretariat to implement the work of the Committee. The Regional Committee meets regularly to discuss matters of multilateral character. The issues submitted for proceedings (cooperation projects, applications, initiatives etc.) are prepared in advance in each member region, within the international department of regional administration in the case of Russia, Sweden and Finland, while the Norwegian territorial units also have established a joint Secretariat in Kirkenes.

3.5 Financing cooperation in Barents region

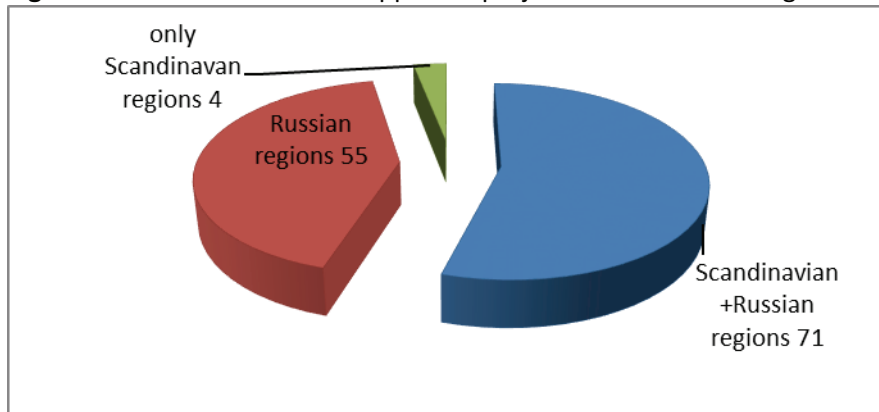
Various financial mechanisms are available to support multilateral project cooperation in the Barents region. The most important funding sources are the national and regional budgets of the Barents countries, various EU Programmes and the Nordic Council of Ministers. In addition to this, International Financial Institutions offer financing for investment projects in the region. The main financing sources for Barents cooperation projects are BEAC member states national funding, EU financial resources, regional initiatives, international and national financing institutions.

In the Barents region, during the three years since its establishment (1994-1997), 130 projects were implemented on its individual territories (only Scandinavia, Scandinavia and Russia, and only the Russian territories of the Barents region). The projects were divided into several areas: culture 17, elementary education eight, universities and research nine, indigenous people 14, agriculture, rural development, reindeer rearing ten; industry and trade 22; women's protection ten, environmental

protection 13, health care 15, communication four, informatics four, information technologies four.⁴⁰

The most supported projects in the number of 71 (54.6%) were implemented in the region Scandinavia + Russia and 55 (42.3%) in Russia. In the Scandinavian territories, only four projects were supported, two projects in the field of culture and two projects to support indigenous people). The share of projects in the region unambiguously showed that the primary objective of the northern states of Barents is to support the backward parts of the region, i.e. the border region of the Russian territory.

Figure 15 Total number of supported projects in the Barents region 1994-1997⁴¹



Projects implemented in Russian territories of the region belonged in all categories. The variety of these projects was very diverse: the implementation of projects to support the Murmansk film festival; construction of a bilingual school in Murmansk; awarding scholarships to two students, allowing students from Russian territories to study at Norwegian universities, supporting the follow up training of officials, civil servants and managers; building a cultural centre for the Saami living in the district of Murmansk and for the Nenets in the district of Narjan-Mar; organizing courses for the indigenous people, etc.

Projects implemented in the category of agriculture, rural development, industry and trade were projects to support rearing of reindeer in the Nenets Autonomous Territory, to support agricultural schools, to develop sheep breeding, to modernize forestry or to review Russian building regulations; to support the development of tourist facilities on the Russian side of the; to build a bakery in Murmansk ... and so on.

Equality of women, improvement of environment and health care also belonged to the categories of supported projects, e.g.: education of female entrepreneurs, establishment of a crisis centre in Murmansk, improving the quality of drinking water on the Kola peninsula, building a health centre for indigenous people in the territories of Saami and Nenets; improving the quality of social services, provision of equipment for hospitals on the Russian territory; holiday for disadvantaged children in Norway, conference on drugs and alcohol, fight against diphtheria ... etc.

The projects supported in the categories of communication, informatics and information technology were for example: improving the Russian postal service, spreading the Internet in the Russian regions of the territory, or creation of information offices on the activities of the Barents Euro-Arctic region in Petrozavodsk and Archangelsk.

⁴⁰ Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation-Norway. Project Directory 1997.

⁴¹ Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation-Norway Project Directory 1997.

Projects created and implemented within working groups of Barents Region were funded either from national or joint funds, or from EU programs. The most significant source of funding for the project over the past few years has been the Kolarctic Cross-Border Cooperation Program. The number of supported projects and the amount of allocated funds is gradually increasing. 17 projects in the cultural area were supported during the first three years of the existence of the Barents region. Ten years later, almost twice as many projects received financial support. Between 2008 - 2010, cultural cooperation in the Barents region was supported through 31 financed projects.⁴²

Figure 16 Total number of supported projects in Barents region 1994-1997⁴³

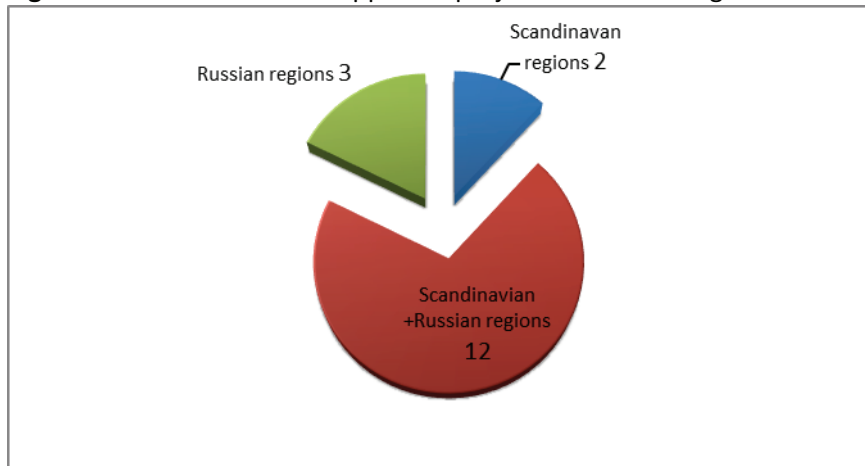
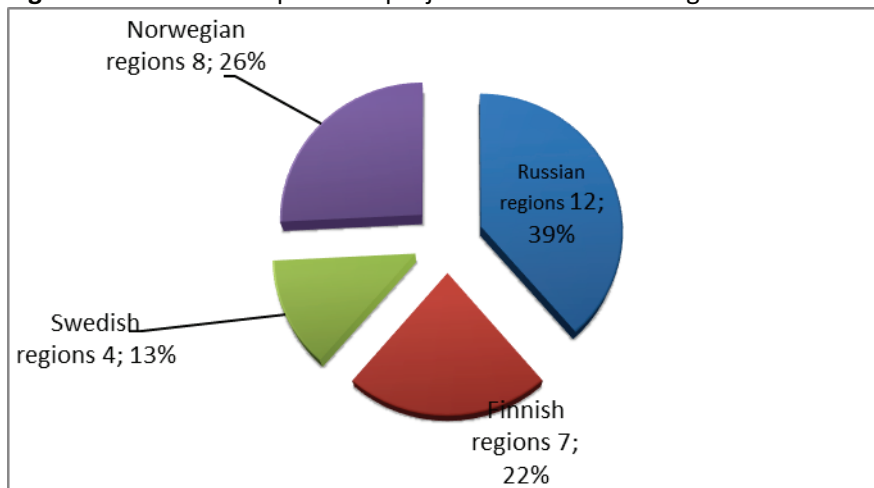


Figure 17 Cultural cooperation projects in the Barents region 2008 – 2010⁴⁴



What is important and what should be studied as an inspiration is clear focus and consensus. BEAC partners reached an understanding as to focusing efforts at 4-6 most promising and developed projects to get the most of it and to demonstrate the impact from the Barents cooperation.

⁴² Project list for New winds in the Barents Region – 2nd Programme of Cultural Cooperation 2008-2010

⁴³ Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation-Norway Project Directory 1997.

⁴⁴ http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/JWGC_Project_list_for_New_winds_in_the_Barents_Region_Kirkenes_January_29_2009.pdf

An important focus of BEAR activities, where successful cooperation between Russia and Norway is evident, is the work of the Working Group on the Northern Sea Route. The group studies the possibility of practical use of new route for international commercial shipping. The base for its activities is the Russian-Norwegian-Japanese project – International research program A Northern Sea Route which recently interested other member countries and observers from the Barents region. The interest of partners to transporting cargo on the route of the Northern Sea Route, which runs along the Russian coast of the Arctic Ocean, is quite clear. Distance, for example, between Hamburg and Yokohama along the Northern route is about 7,000 miles, while through the Suez Canal – 11.5 thousand miles, and the way from Hamburg to Pacific ports is twice shorter than via the Panama Canal.

As part of the Norwegian program for Eastern Europe, a program for research connections in the Barents region is under between the Norwegian Technology Centre and the Kola Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Its main objective is to create sustainable technological and industrial ties between the Norwegian but also Scandinavian companies and enterprises of the Russian part of the Barents Region.

The most productive area of cooperation in the region is the cooperation in the field of environmental protection and improvement of the environment quality, with five main points fixed in the Declaration of heads of BEAC environmental authorities in Rovaniemi (Finland) in December 1995. Member states set cooperation to enhance nuclear and radiation safety and for prevention of industrial pollution as priorities.

The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) and Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) have done a lot to identify priority projects on radiation safety. Preparations to increase the capacity of the facility for liquid radioactive waste treatment in Murmansk are coming to an end. This project is carried out within the trilateral Russian-Norwegian-US cooperation. There is some progress also in establishment of the system of monitoring the radiation situation in the Barents region. Russia, Norway and Finland implement a joint project to establish such a system in respect of Kola peninsula nuclear plant.

An example of successful involvement of international institutions to finance environmental projects is the Russian-Norwegian program "Cleaner Production" (Finland also joined them) that has managed to combine environmental and economic interests. It enables the companies with minimum expense, and often zero investment, to achieve significant reductions of pollutants into the environment. Pollution reduction by 20-30 percent is achieved by the introduction of new engineering solutions, thus reducing the consumption of water, energy, more efficient use of raw materials. Russian experts estimated that for every dollar invested in the "cleaner production" program the participating companies will receive between 10 and 15 dollars of economic benefit.

Norway and other Nordic countries have accumulated much experience of developing relations between the neighbouring territories. In Europe, cross-border relations in general have a longstanding tradition and are based on well-developed legal framework and naturally complementary integration processes. Interaction between local authorities, like at the Norwegian-Swedish border, may be of interest. Cross-border cooperation context enables regional authorities to initiate projects both at local and international scale. An example of such a project is the "Blue Road" – a highway and tourist route linking Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Republic of Karelia).

3.6 Barents Euro-Arctic region and importance the EU policy framework

From the perspective of possible cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia, activities of the EU in the Arctic region are extremely important. Experts analysed the features of cooperation between the European Union and “Arctic countries” – BEAC members. The study revealed that the European Union seeks to play a prominent role in solving problems in the region.

EU’s Arctic policy defines the following priorities: protecting and preserving the region’s environment; dialogue with the local population of the North and the “Arctic countries”; international cooperation on issues of rational use of natural resources etc. EU recognizes the significant economic potential of the Arctic region, large-scale research and investment programs.

To support its position, the EU states established their representation in the Arctic Council: France, Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Spain, Netherlands, Italy perform here the observer role. The priority of the EU in international areas include common policies of member countries, as well as consistent action plan towards interregional and border cooperation⁴⁵. European policy on the “north” is defined by regional cooperation and partnership. Interaction between the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia is the basement of this model. Consequently, infringement of partner ties, confrontation with Russia could change the vision of the Arctic region by the EU and result in the creation of new strategy for the Arctic.

Official European Union government documents show that it began to express increasing interest in the Arctic. EU adheres to the position that the solution of problems of the Arctic should be based on already established multilateral arrangements and mechanisms (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization) and not on the new Arctic agreement. Sovereignty and national interests of the countries of the Arctic should be considered. The European Union therefore in solving the problems of the Arctic region admits that the key role belongs to the “Arctic countries”, therefore European policy should focus on mainly on supporting successful cooperation and assistance in solving recent problems in the region⁴⁶.

Arctic EU strategy takes into account the growth of the world's geopolitical interest to the North, especially from the “non-Arctic countries” – China, Japan and India. One evidence of strengthening the role of new regional players is the fact that South Korea, China, Japan, India, Singapore were provided the observer status in the Arctic Council⁴⁷. The main interest of the EU in the Arctic has to do with global climate change with its different environmental, socio - economic and geopolitical impacts. In its new climate policy regarding the Arctic, the EU began to put high premium on the specific and relevant knowledge and information about the climate dynamics of the region, stressing the need for investing in research the Arctic environment. These efforts naturally require coordination and cooperation between the EU, “Arctic countries” and other interested parties⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ The inventory of activities in the framework of developing a European Union Arctic Policy [digital source] // European Commission Joint Staff Working Document, Brussels. – 2012. – http://eeas.europa.eu/arctic_region/docs/swd_2012_182.pdf

⁴⁶ European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2011 on a sustainable EU policy for the High North (2009/2214(INI) [digital source] // European Parliament, Strasbourg. – 2011. – <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0024+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

⁴⁷ European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2014 on the EU strategy for the Arctic (2013/2595(RSP) [digital source] // European Parliament, Strasbourg. – 2014. – <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2014-0236>.

⁴⁸ KÄPYLÄ J. The Global Arctic: The Growing Arctic Interests of Russia, China, the United States and the European Union [igital source] / J. Käpylä, H. Mikkola // The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki. – 2013. – www.fiia.fi/en/publication/347/#. UnvNynCshcY

In the Arctic strategy, the EU understands the role of the Barents - Euro Arctic Council as an important platform for cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden in social and educational area, scientific research, energy, culture, tourism and so on. However, the desire of the European Union to establish intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic or to ensure stable investment flows did not divert attention from security issues.

3.7 Comparing Carpathian and Barents region - similarities and differences

The Barents Region is currently facing the challenge of how to combine the contradiction between regional functionality and global internationalization. Numerous studies predict different scenarios of development of the region, but from all global research the most revealing and comprehensive one is "The Big Oil playground", which describes the region either as a zone of a large oil industry, Russian bear reserve or the periphery of Europe. However, these global scenarios also take into account that the day-to-day practice of "relationships of the Barents region" preserves the original intents of the region to promote the development of people-to-people contacts. Since 1993 the Barents Secretariat has funded about 3500 cross-border projects in the North. Typically, it receives about 400 applications for grants yearly. To ensure the projects are relevant for the region, all applications are reviewed exclusively by the Secretariat and not by any external institution.

For example, in fiscal year 2011, the Barents Secretariat has received 36 million NOK for the implementation of bilateral projects in the region. About 70% of these grants were allocated for capacity building, training and education. A notable result is an increased influx of Russian students to the educational institutions in the Northern Europe. As for the exchange of experience, the majority of completed projects were focused rather on transfer of the Scandinavian experience to the regions of Russia, and not vice versa.

The Barents Secretariat is also beneficial in providing specific advice to Norwegian and mixed companies located in Murmansk or Arkhangelsk region in the North of Russia. According to the 2008 poll, 100 companies received consultations in clarifying legal issues, taxation, search and recruitment in Russia. Projects cover a variety of activities and contribute to the development of civil society, culture and also education, help in the preparation of business plans and pilot projects for technology transfer and innovation. Examples of projects that received funding in 2002-2006 include a business plan of Norwegian electrical company in Murmansk, a training program for Russian workers who work at sea in the training centre Kimek (150 persons trained in 2005-2006), radio Kola Saami, a training centre for young people from an environmental protection centre and so on.

The activity profile is therefore very specific to the region and includes a variety of activities that sometimes motivate wider international projects. Support of training programs, training and education aims to increase the number and quality of opportunities for economic development and at the same time facilitating the intensification of border traffic. In this sense, funding initiatives in the region of the Barents promote closer contacts and help cultivate a special sense of community. Barents Secretariat activities are likely to promote sustainability of regional identity. North regions tend to apply for grants more often: 60% of the total number of applications come from Finnmark region, 30% - from Tromsø, and 10% - from Nordland.

On the one hand, Russian national authorities in some way often are involved into projects that are covered by grants for approximately 40%. There are indications that Russia plans to provide financial

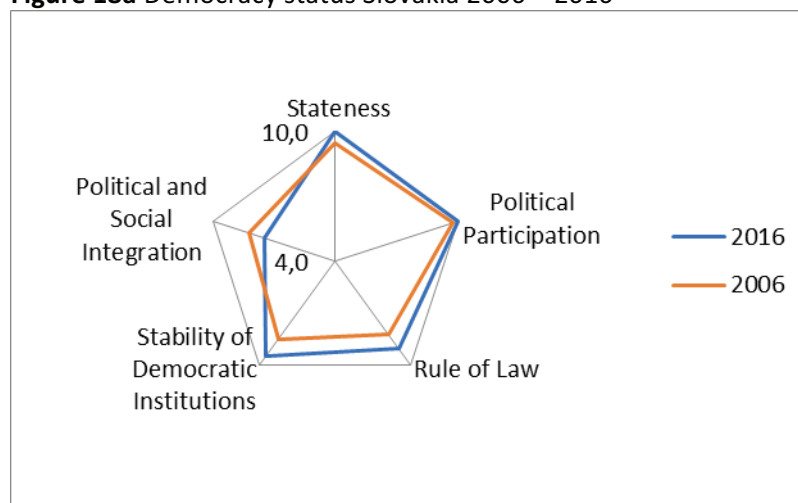
grants has increased due to the decision to allocate 122 million Euros for projects of cross-border movement under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In this perspective, we see here emerging cooperation of two dedicated sides, with strong financial commitments. What is interesting in this perspective is potential of tensions between purely economic and business interests on both sides, and broadens social and environmental visions which were declared from the beginning of the initiative. For the case of the Ukrainian – Slovak cooperation is also important to evaluate differences and similarities between these two regions. In addition, comparing to the Barents region, the economic, social and political development in this area is more turbulent and we need to understand its challenges and trends (Figure 18 a, 18b)

Table 4 Basic differences between the Barents region and Slovak - Ukrainian border area.

Barents Region	Slovak - Ukrainian border area
Developed organizational and institutional constitution;	Unelaborate and inefficient organizational and institutional system;
Active participation or representation in European regional systems;	Non-continuous participation or representation in European regional systems;
Political trust or good relationship with state authorities;	Political mistrust in some places, tension between state authorities and regions;
Active cooperation between partners, cooperation is complex and multilateral;	In individual cases, cooperation not working, cooperation is limited, but gradually expanding;
Integrated regional development policy;	Partially coordinated, mostly through financially supported cross-border cooperation programs;
Significant financial background and own resources;	Insufficient financial background, difficulties, especially in the absence of own resources;
Established regional identity;	Attempt to create regional identity
More open society, heterogeneity.	Deep historical identity, cultural, linguistic closeness of the region's inhabitants + significant efforts to preserve traditions and historical memory.

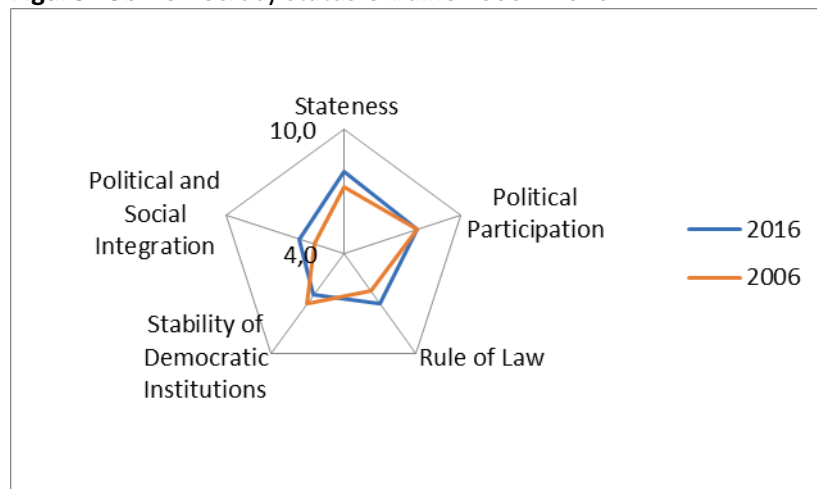
Source: Authors

Figure 18a Democracy status Slovakia 2006 – 2016



Source: BTI data

Figure 18b Democracy status Ukraine 2006 – 2016



Source: BTI data

In the context of the aforementioned brief characteristic of the Barents region, there are several apparent comparative characteristics or parallels to the Carpathian region, which includes the monitored Eastern Slovakia. These parallels can be an inspiration for (re) building the idea of cross-border regional cooperation. Although the Carpathian Euroregion still exists de jure, we can state that it has not used very significant possibilities.

Eastern Slovakia and the Transcarpathian region are the centre of cultural and social life of many ethnic minorities relevant to the Slovak-Ukrainian CSC. Prešov is the seat of significant national institutions of Ruthenian, Ukrainians and the Roma, Košice of the Roma and Hungarians, Uzhgorod of the Roma, Hungarians and Slovaks, Berehiv of the Hungarians and the like. All ethnic minorities in this region have mutual cross-border contacts, they exit sporadic cultural exchanges (mainly performances of folklore groups at various regional or folk festivals), academic exchanges and joint activities of research institutions (conferences, workshops and seminars), etc.

In the broader context of CBC, it is important to perceive the Ruthenians as well. Representatives of Ukrainian minority usually consider them part of Ukrainian nation and they prefer the name Ruthenian-Ukrainian. Ruthenians refuse this and consider themselves the fourth East Slavic nation. With regard to state, we see a very different perception of Ruthenians in Slovakia and in Ukraine. The Slovak Republic perceives this situation rather "liberally" and allows both groups an independent ethnic life, resulting in the existence of two national minorities - the more numerous are the Ruthenians and the less numerous Ukrainians. This approach is reflected in, among other things, the fact that in the context of regular censuses, in the census sheets the Ruthenian national minority and a Ukrainian national minority are exhaustively listed; or within the Government Council for National Minorities, both nationalities have a separate representation and a state grant program dedicated to national minorities, The Culture of National Minorities has a separate chapter for the Ukrainian minority as well as for the Ruthenian minority.

The situation in the Zakarpattye region, i.e. in the Ukraine is quite different. The support of ethnic minorities, as well as ethnic politics such, is currently politically very sensitive (mainly in the context of the Russian occupation of Crimea and the war in Donbass). Population census in Ukraine last occurred in 2001, and it is already highly probable that the next planned census in 2021 will not be carried out. Social, cultural and educational life in Ukraine (including the support of ethnic minorities) is far more subject to state control and state authorities than in Slovakia - it also concerns the funding of cultural (or social) life of ethnic minorities, etc. In the context of the aforementioned political sensitivity of this ethnic issue, within some circles in Ukraine, Ruthenian national movement is perceived as a manifestation of the current or potential separatism. Such perception of the Ruthenians or their activities is clearly absent in Slovakia.

If we look for a common denominator of these activities in the context of these regions, it would probably be the fact that in most cases, cross-border cooperation within this community is irregular, not according to exact rules, and these are very often initiatives based on personal relationships and contacts, which are rarely formally anchored and structured. At the same time, it is necessary to mention that Slovak-Ukrainian inter-state cooperation (national level) significantly differs from Slovak-Ukrainian regional cross-border cooperation. At national level, official and formal cooperation prevails, which is very often of global character (e.g. economic cooperation in the automotive industry, US Steel's cooperation with Ukraine, etc.). On the other hand, regional cooperation is still anchored in personal relationships, personal contacts, irregular activities and the like.

The vision of the cooperation from Barents Region is to improve living conditions, to encourage sustainable economic and social development and thus contribute to stability, environmental progress and peaceful development in northernmost Europe. These aims can only be reached through continuous, multifaceted efforts in a broad range of areas, spanning from overall security, environmental concern and economic development to the human dimension. Cooperation of Barents type promotes human contacts and economic development and also creates good conditions for interregional exchange in many different fields; e.g., culture, life of indigenous people, education, youth, trade, information, environment, health and transport. The Barents Cooperation is regarded as an integral part of creating a stable, democratic and prosperous Europe.

The lesson learned is to understand the importance of the commitment of highest authorities and institutions and organisations on regional level able to implement adequate approaches. This results in the necessity of institutionalisation of cooperation, and role of individual structures and clear work plans. While it is important to bring political and administrative structures closer to the citizens, increase level of democracy and improve democratic functions of society, it is equally significant to support local approaches through inter-governmental agreements and programs. Barents cooperation is a unique undertaking that confirms the value of wide integration, intergovernmental, interregional and human cooperation. In this aspect, it is also an important means for strengthening and developing regions.

4 TOWARDS STRENGTHENING COOPERATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cooperation between Slovak and Ukrainian government authorities and regions has already had history of more than 20 years. There has been attempts to boost the cooperation, successfully using the cooperation agreement between Carpathian Regional State Administration in Uzhgorod and Prešov County. The Agreement signed on March 15, 2005 referred to nine key areas:

- Economic activities to support the development of SMEs,
- Regional policy, regional development,
- Coordinating the preparation and implementation of joint programs, particularly through use of the EU funds,
- Transport and transport infrastructure,
- Tourism,
- Environmental protection and spatial planning,
- Culture, education, sports and science.
- Social issues and health care,
- Other areas covered by the exclusive competence on both sides.

Yet, assessment of the progress so far points out to the need of more structured and more focused cooperation. In quantitative and qualitative research within this project we formulated following key questions important for the cooperation development:

- *What are the old and what are the new challenges in regional cross-border cooperation?*
- *What have we learned from the past 20-years of the cooperation?*
- *How can we boost social/economic development in the region and simultaneously preserve valuable Carpathian environment?*
- *How to move from declarations and official meetings to more targeted, people-to-people cooperation?*
- *How to create and coordinate the work between the different NGO, inter-governmental structures and other structures?*

Analysis in progress shows very slow development that lags behind the opportunities. New challenge is the complicated situation in Ukraine, connected to Russia-Ukraine conflicts and lack of strategic initiatives on the side of the EU. It is of key importance to find out how can the regional cooperation be the driving force for approximation of Ukraine with the EU.

For the question of how can we boost social/economic development in the region and simultaneously preserve valuable Carpathian environment we use SWOT analyses.

Study of CBC in Barents region and analysis of the local conditions in Slovak – Ukrainian border region points out to several key issues in future cooperation development:

- Long-term bilateral problems should be formulated as shared challenges for the management and sustainable development.
- We should stick to local characteristics that are created over the centuries;
- Regional cooperation is intended not to change priorities, but to change the attitude to borders and border regions.

Table 5 SWOT analysis of development potential considering social/economic and environmental factors.

		SWOT analysis	
		S: strengths	W: Weaknesses
I n t e r n a l		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive legal and policy framework and declarations of Slovak and Ukrainian governments; including EU-Ukraine Association Agreement - Substantial assistance provided by the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 and allocated EU funds; - Growing number of published studies and outputs allows building research and public policy on national and regional expertise; - Sufficient quantitative data help to analyse the situation with regard to technical fulfilment of the targets and objectives; - Slovak recent experience with the EU enlargement and EU presidency, availability of key experts on both sides of the border. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of permanent, institutionalised cooperation on the regional level; - Ad hoc projects, without coordination and centralised knowledge what is planned, implemented and what are the lessons learned; - Generally weak public perception of the need of cooperation as a problem, reflected also in low interest of political parties and politicians; - Low interest of media; - Time and administrative burden affiliated with grant proposals hamper projects initiatives; -Different perspective on social/economic issues (e.g., migration, energy policies, transport) can make difficult common approaches.
		O: Opportunities	T: Threats
E x t e r n a l		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eastern Partnership and clearly defined EU interest in deepening of the collaboration; - Availability of supportive schemes and funding; - Increasing pressure for development of marginalised regions push local authorities to act; - Improving knowledge on interlinkages between measures, employment and well-being; - growing number of stakeholders interested in the cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fragmentation of the EU, dismantling of the development policies and increase of tension on the continent; - Increase of populism, radicalism and opportunism may dysfunction future Slovak and Ukrainian governments and endanger functioning of the cooperation; - Evaluation of synergic impacts of interventions going over the framework of individual OPs faces a basic problem which interventions will be taken into account and which not. In case of a comprehensive theme, as sustainable growth, there is a number of direct and indirect impacts of various interventions and some important impacts can be omitted.

Source: Authors

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

I. Strategic commitment and support of the Carpathian region

Cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine is extremely important, as evidenced by many bilateral documents and international fora. Enhancing this cooperation and increasing its efficiency are not only the objectives of central authorities of the two countries, but they are also crucial for implementation of practical steps at regional and local level. Firstly, long-term and ambitious plans based on an initiative from both Slovak and Ukrainian side and supported by the European Union are needed. Central authorities, together with local structures in both countries, should promote the sustainable economic and social development of border regions, in particular by helping to bring the products of economies and services of border regions from neighbouring countries to their markets, support the integration and spreading of the European Union, addressing environmental and healthcare issues, tackling organized crime, ensuring the effectiveness and security of borders, including the fight against illegal immigration, facilitating human contacts in border regions, all based on sufficient financial resources.

The results of long-term analyses of the potential of cooperation and the results of the project solution indicate the need to *create specialized international, regional and national structures and authorities* and to strengthen the commitments of the governments of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, the European Commission and Ukraine and to help develop cooperation. A joint declaration with a vision of cooperation could be a step in the right direction. Cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia cannot be developed only as a segment of bilateral relations, it needs to be supported in the context of the Carpathian region and within the Eastern Partnership, as well as with the possible prospects for enlargement and deeper integration of the EU. In order to implement the European Neighbourhood Policy and cooperation in relation to Ukraine and taking into account developments in the Carpathian Euroregion, participation of key EU institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions of the European Union) is also necessary.

The first recommended step is to support the idea of implementing the so-called Carpathian Summit which would create a framework for further CBC development. In order to strengthen cross-border cooperation and establish its institutional framework, the Summit of representatives of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, the European Commission and Ukraine could, in the event of a consensus, adopt a joint declaration that would lay the foundations for more effective cooperation and define commitments relating to its support and development. Based on Scandinavian experience, it is necessary to institutionalize regional cooperation and, according to analyses and agreements, to establish and fund a progressive and sustainable institutional cooperation base.

We propose to consider the possibility of creation of specialized international regional institutions for cross-border cooperation:

- **The Carpathian Cooperation Forum** – a body of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the participating countries - for macro-political support and regulation of cross-border cooperation.
- **The Carpathian Regional Forum** – a body of the representatives of border regions - for systematic, practical cooperation of border areas, its management and solution of potential problems

- **Carpathian International Secretariat** - standing authority of representatives of participating countries - for organizational and technical support for multilateral cross-border cooperation.⁴⁹

The ultimate goal could be to create an international structure in the Carpathian region (Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Ukraine) and, on the basis of the experience of Nordic cross-border cooperation and its institutions, prepare or implement the optimal form of cooperation. Compared with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the role of the European Commission could be more fundamental and ultimately could lead to a member's status in the planned institutional structures.

II. Development of Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation in strengthening the European Union and in the context of development of the Carpathian region

Institutional and technical provision of cooperation in the Carpathian region should be linked to the support of bilateral cooperation between the countries. Optimally, these two processes should be parallel and should complement each other.

Adoption of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its support mechanisms, as well as the continued support of local initiatives through EU cohesion policy, have proved to be extremely important for the expansion and development of cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia.

As part of a prominent issue for Ukraine's pro-European orientation, the implementation of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement and a comprehensive free trade area would support the development of cooperation. The introduction of visa-free travel between Ukraine and EU countries is a step in the right direction. Sustainable economic and social development of the regions at the borders of Ukraine and Slovakia should be ensured in particular by promoting the production of border regions on European markets and a joint tackling of both global and regional issues.

Within the existing Eastern Partnership mechanisms, the European Union is already politically covering and supporting cooperation also on the Slovak - Ukrainian border. It also strengthens cross-border cooperation within the cohesion policy. Given the high pace of development, the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation segment could also become one of the platforms for cross-border cooperation on a pan-European scale.

III. A more active role of Slovakia within domestic policy and the European Union

Analogically to the Nordic countries, especially Norway, Slovakia, as an EU Member State, should within EU bodies more actively seek the approval of solutions aimed at expanding and deepening cross-border processes at the EU's eastern border with Ukraine, creating new effective financial instruments for stimulating CBC. In this respect, it is also appropriate to use the possibilities and contacts of the Vysegrad Group.

On the other hand, some reserves exist in the work of local public administration authorities in border areas with Ukraine. There is a need to develop joint concepts of managing social and economic development and addressing environmental or humanitarian problems.

⁴⁹ This proposal results from a functionality structure analysis and the results of Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Regional Council and the International Barents Secretariat.

IV. Supporting development of cooperation on the side of Ukrainian government

Central state authorities of Ukraine should actively support initiatives to create specialized international and regional institutions for the development of cross-border cooperation. In this respect, it would help to complete a legislative and normative legal system of cross-border cooperation and institutional mechanisms for its implementation, the creation of effective forms and methods of state support for cross-border relations based on generally recognized European standards, especially those that have been successful in Norway. Furthermore, it is necessary to strictly define the legal framework and scope for local government, local self-government and municipalities in the international cooperation system, which will strengthen the position of the regions in the area of external relations.

V. Transfer of knowledge from the Barents Euro-Arctic area: Learning from the best

Project "Provision of Information and Implementation of Innovative Approaches to Cross-Border Cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine" (funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the state budget of the Slovak Republic) was designed to provide key proposals and new ideas for the effective development of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia.

Gaining adequate, relevant and comprehensive information on practical implementation of cross-border cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region has helped to better analyse obstacles to Ukrainian-Slovak cooperation and to create space for developing the concept of its further development. **Continuing contacts and study of the experience of cross-border cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region is one of the key recommendations.**

VI. Search for sustainable solutions: Towards institutionalisation of cooperation

Questions of common interest must be formulated as permanent challenges for regulating and managing cross-border cooperation. There is the principle that states are sometimes too big to solve small problems but too small to solve big problems.

Practical issues should not be addressed ideologically, but rather in terms of practical possibilities and sustainable results. The real and functional dimensions of cross-border cooperation are important not only as a tool but, also as an objective.

A fundamental recommendation for sustainable approaches to effective CBC development is the institutionalisation of Ukrainian-Slovak cooperation. Based on an analysis of Scandinavian experience and local conditions, we propose to work on the model proposed in Chapter III. of this draft.

5.2 TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Development based on local knowledge and experience: Search for synergies in diversity

Real experiences and examples from other countries show that although the role of official relations at the level of national governments is the cornerstone of cross-border cooperation, there must also be a pendant at the regional level. The micro level of cross-border relations, i.e. regions and locations, is not only just an important but also a necessary component of effective and successful cross-border initiatives. As a result, transnational and bilateral structures at national level can be complemented at local level and can successfully work in day-to-day practice and in specific activities.

For this purpose, local specifics should be maintained. Regions operate in a system of relations, but they also exist in their own legal system and are influenced by the specific characteristics of the neighbouring regions and the contacts that were formed in the past. The aim of regional cooperation is not to change priorities, but to change the attitudes towards borders and border regions. In some cases, there are differences between national priorities and global challenges, or at least in their understanding.

II. Strategy and legal framework support

It is necessary to clearly define the legal framework of local self-government and community participation in the international cooperation system, to provide more competencies to regions in cross-border relations, similarly to what is happening in northern Europe, especially in the Barents Euro-Arctic region.

The policy framework and regulation should prevent replacement of regional and municipal authorities, micro-management and overlapping activities. They should ensure effective monitoring of implementation of national cross-border cooperation programs that define its strategic objectives and tactical roles, control mechanisms and implementation stages. If necessary, changes to these programs are possible. Their synchronization with national and international economic and social projects aimed in particular at balancing the development of border regions is often decisive.

III. Diversified financing and support: Cooperation as an asset, not a liability

Implementation of progressive solutions and the development of local CBC structures necessarily require financial support. It is important to understand that the development of cooperation is not a liability, it is a profit-making investment.

It is necessary to increase the efficiency of spending already allocated funds. Nordic experience shows that this can be achieved by better coordination of existing programs of financial assistance, better expert training and a well premeditated selection of projects to be funded, as well as by simplification of procedures and by removal of bureaucratic decisions on the allocation of financial assistance, ensuring proper control of its use. Following the introduction of efficiency mechanisms, it would be necessary to create a long-term forecast of financial support of cross-border cooperation.

Like in northern countries, including Norway, it is essential for the European Union institutions to actively support decision making focused on extending and deepening cross-border processes at the

EU's eastern borders, especially with Ukraine, to create new, effective financial instruments stimulating CBC and to coordinate efforts in this direction, including the use of the regional association of the Vysegrad Group countries

IV. Involvement of civil society

The development of Ukrainian-Slovak cooperation will require involvement of governmental and non-governmental organizations, associations, experts and the general public. It will be necessary to initiate further ideas from other Slovak and Ukrainian experts, as well as other experts dealing with cross-border cooperation.

The next steps should be the creation (identification) of support groups that have an impact on individual parts of the Carpathian region and local communities, involvement of existing Euro-regional cooperation organizations in the region, selection of target groups with support and influence in a business environment supporting creativity and development of creative clusters of non-governmental organizations. Analysis of possible initiatives of the opponents and their background, as well as preparation of appropriate argumentation is also necessary.

V. Testing new approaches and innovative solutions

To make effective use of financial resources on eastern border, including the Carpathian region, as well as testing new cooperation mechanisms, it would be appropriate, as it is done in the Norwegian-Russian border region, to identify the most prepared areas - a type of "experimental laboratory". The successful results of cross-border cooperation in these areas would be a demonstration of the prospects, a "business card" of CBC. On the other hand, addressing the problems that arise would allow for avoiding possible mistakes of cross-border cooperation subjects in other border areas. Given the relatively high level of development, the segment of Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation could be one of such "test routes" of European cross-border cooperation

VI. Building a comprehensive and functional structure of working committees between organizations of different ethnic minorities

At present, cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine lacks the regular work of regional working committees for its individual aspects. Such committees should be set up primarily at regional level and should define and reflect its priorities. The activities could focus on the issue of minorities in the region and their mutual contacts. The funding of such a committee should be provided at national level, but their specific activities should be carried out on the basis of defined regional needs and priorities. In this respect, we recommend focusing, for example, on the little used potential of individual regions and on their activities related to national minorities (the regions are the founders of many ethnic, cultural or educational institutions).

VII. Support of local cross-border cooperation through regular meetings at regional level

Successful development of cross-border cooperation requires regular contacts in economic, social, political (municipal), cultural and academic life, including ethnic minority representations. We

recommend focusing on regular exchanges of information on both traditional and contemporary culture, education and science, media and information resources, religious life, etc. It seems very effective to focus on local self-governments in ethnically mixed areas, on the education of minorities and on nationally oriented organizations or institutions. Currently, there is no mechanism for mutual exchange of press, radio and television programs, student and pupil groups, and so on

VIII. Establish a small program of "easily accessible" grants to support cross-border cooperation between the representatives of various organizations and institutions

Implementation of some recommendations requires financial coverage. It could be regular and relatively easily accessible resources, the amount of which would allow for less costly activities. However, the definition of a supported area, the allocation and administration of such grants should remain at the regional level. It seems that the potential of both East Slovak regions could also be used in this direction. They already have positive experience with cross-border cooperation with Hungary and Poland, but also with the implementation of projects under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, and they can also engage in cross-border cooperation with Ukraine

IX. Reduce administrative obstacles to cross-border cooperation

One of the biggest barriers to CBC, which has been repeatedly identified by most stakeholders, is the considerable administrative burden associated with the real existence of borders. These are administrative restrictions when crossing borders (long waiting times, very long and inefficient checks, etc.). Many problems will be resolved by the visa-free regime for Ukrainian citizens on their way to EU countries, but others will probably arise when demonstrating their solvency. Some administrative restrictions persist in non-trade areas such as press, cultural products, and so on.

5.3 MODEL OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF COOPERATION BETWEEN UKRAINE AND SLOVAKIA

In view of the analysis of past experience and examples of best practice, institutionalised, planned and practically oriented cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia could help increase its level, improve coordination between various initiatives and boost progress in border regions on both sides of the border. The recommendations we describe in this material should provide scope for the establishment and implementation of a cooperation model based on the analysis and application of best practices implemented by the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Barents Regional Council and the Barents International Secretariat. The model would also take into account the local conditions and possibilities of the Slovak-Ukrainian border.

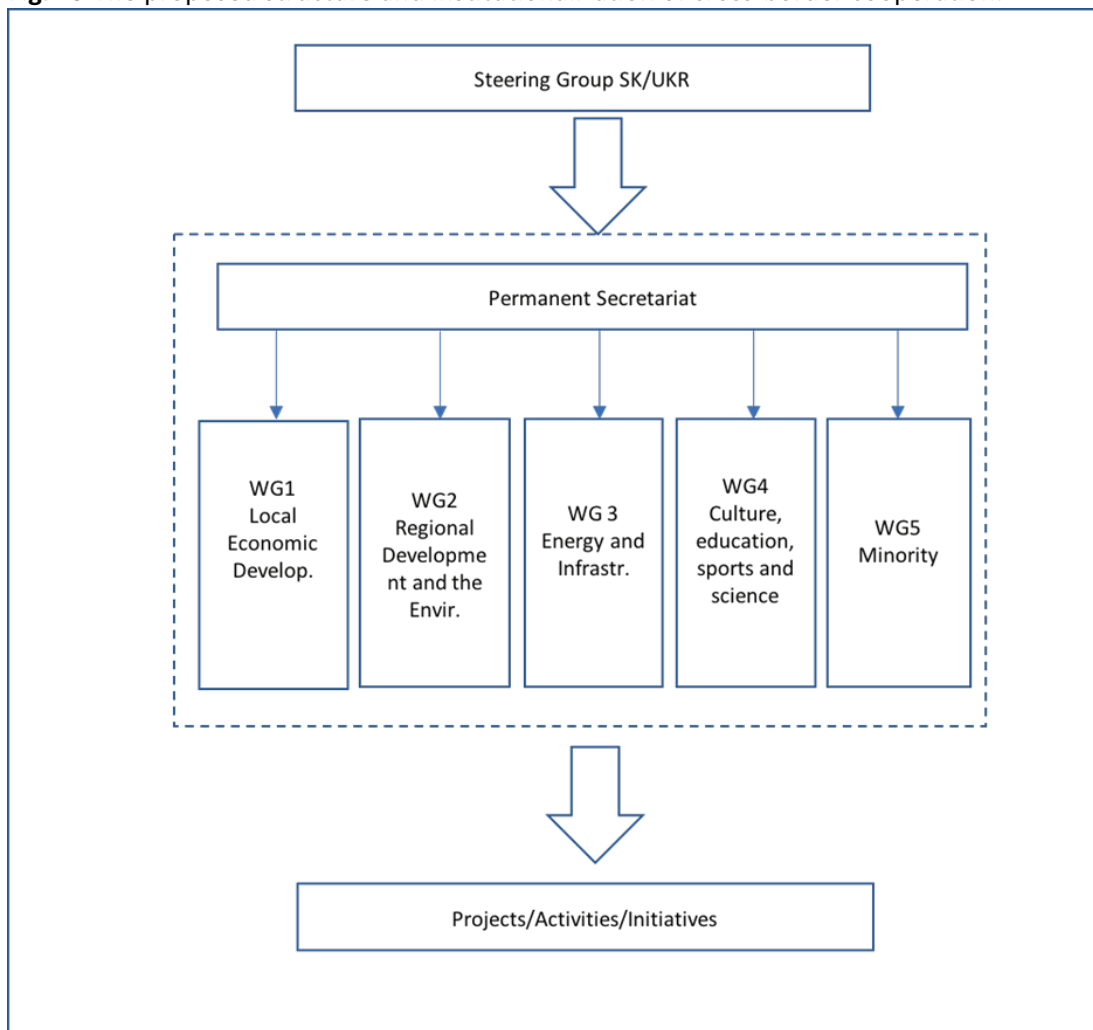
Institutionalization of cooperation and its support through standing and functioning bodies should, among other objectives:

- **in matters of state regulation of cross-border cooperation, prevent the interdependence of regional and local public authorities as well as overlapping activities at lower levels of management;**
- **ensure effective monitoring of implementation of cross-border cooperation programs that define strategic objectives and tactical roles, control mechanisms and phases of implementation;**

- synchronize implemented programs with national and international economic and social projects focused particularly on balancing the level of development of cross-border regions;
- ensure the specificity and efficiency of the work of individual institutions (bodies) providing state support for cross-border cooperation;
- establish a stable platform for the participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations, experts and the public.

The model of institutionalized cooperation would at the same time maintain its functioning and generate pressure to deepen and expand mutual relations. The proposed model would work on four levels. The controlling body would oversee covering the entire process, approving the work plan and checking and commissioning the secretariat. It would be made up of high representatives of Slovakia and Ukraine, representatives of the regional administration, the academic community and important non-governmental organizations. **The key role in this case would be that of a constant secretariat with few employees**, coordinating steering group meetings, providing technical support to working groups, and coordinating fundraising activities but also providing contact with the public and the media. The annual work plan of the secretariat and working groups would form the foundation for its work and activities. The proposed structure is illustrated in Figure 1.

Fig. 19 The proposed structure and institutionalization of cross-border cooperation.



Source: The Authors

Based on the knowledge of the CBC results in the Barents Euro-Arctic region and the qualitative research carried out as part of the project solution, the optimal number of working groups could be five, in the following key areas:

- **Working Group on Local Economic Development (PS 1)**
- **Working Group for Regional Development and Environment (PS 2)**
- **Working Group for Energy and Infrastructure (PS 3)**
- **Working Group on Culture, Education, Sport and Science (PS 4)**
- **Working Group on Minorities (PS 5)**

The main condition for functioning and productive activity of the working groups would be transparent searching, acquisition and involvement of significant regional experts and effective work management through qualified and experienced coordinators. In addition to improving mutual awareness, engaging new partners, exchanging ideas, popularizing activities and coordinating activities, the main outcome of each working group could be to develop particular projects, but also stimulating initiatives and activities to strengthen regional cooperation and promote the economic development of border regions.

Working groups could also help organize regular and dedicated events (fora, workshops, conferences, colloquia). These can be supported by discussion groups on digital portals (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn) to address the public, thereby increasing social support for cross-border cooperation. Coordination of the individual activities of the working groups would be carried out by a managing authority, which would also play an important role in identifying and supporting the funding of specific projects. At the same time, the Secretariat could help in creating a single portal of funding resources available in the region and provide analyses and documentation to project initiatives.

The results of the Scandinavian experience and cooperation development potential indicate **the three main directions of necessary interventions**

- 1. Development of a wider framework of cooperation in the Carpathian region,**
- 2. Active support on the side of governments of Ukraine and Slovakia as well as the institutions of the European Union,**
- 3. The transition from ad hoc projects and initiatives to coordination and stabilization of systematic cooperation.**

The proposed model should help implement the strategic and technical recommendations described in Chapters I and II. At the same time, it is necessary to anticipate that the **model we are presenting is not a universal solution but rather a basis for further discussion and its final form should be the result of a consensus of the concerned parties** on both Ukrainian and Slovak side, at the level of the governmental bodies and in accordance with the interests of the regions concerned.

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Note: Various texts, promotional materials and web sites of Barents Regional Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat were used and referred to in preparatoin of the report and especialyl parts descstibing technical organisation of work and bodies of the councils. More information available at:

Barents Regional Council - <http://www.beac.st/en/Barents-Regional-Council>

Barents Euro-Arctic Council - <http://www.beac.st/en>

The Norwegian Barents Secretariat - www.barents.no

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